

## Isaiah 50:4-9a<sup>ii</sup>

The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens— wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. The Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together.

Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. It is the Lord GOD who helps me; who will declare me guilty?

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### <sup>ii</sup> About Isaiah 50:4-9a

Today's passage is the third of the four servant songs found in Isaiah (see also 42:1-4, 49:1-6 and 52:13-53:12). The servant probably represents Israel in its ideal form, which some thought would be fulfilled only in the unique person of the Messiah.

The servant was considered a corporate personality, a single individual who would represent and incorporate in himself all the features of Israel's election and mission. The servant songs first provided a way for Israel to understand the significance of the suffering and humiliation of the exile and later helped the Church understand and proclaim the meaning of Jesus' suffering and resurrection.