

# Connecting with the Sunday Readings

**Second Sunday of Advent**

**Gospel Word**  
Mark 1:1–8

The first words of today's Gospel reading signal a powerful beginning to the Gospel according to Mark because the Good News is that this Jesus born in Nazareth who lived among the people, who taught and healed them, who died for them, this Jesus is the Son of God. These words signal a new beginning. They act as an overture of a great musical composition. "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1). "Gospel" means "Good News." For us the fact that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to be with us and to die and rise for us, well, that, is indeed, Good News.

A major contribution of the Gospel according to Mark is to point out how Jesus defined what was "good." Expectations were high back then that good news would mean victory over the Romans, a return to Jewish political and economic supremacy and prosperity. But that's not how it went. The Good News according to Jesus was not about "getting," but about "giving." It is about giving our time, our energy and our very lives for others, just as Jesus did. It is about the need for repentance and conversion in our lives if we are to prepare for the coming of God in our lives.

## Living the Word

It is said that to find rich meaning in everyday life is among life's greatest acquisitions. Neither money nor status nor pleasure quite measures up to having a meaning-full life. If we receive the Gospel story of Jesus Christ (the Son of God) as personally Good News for us, we open ourselves to a world of meaning that is filled with surprises, questions, paradoxes and occasionally, wonderful answers to our questions. Jesus was not the one who was expected. He was a king who gave everything away to others (including his life!), a leader who handed power over to his followers and a Messiah who suffered for our sake.

As followers of this Messiah, what does this have to say to us? There will be moments of great joy and clear understanding, but also times of confusion and difficulty. Part of the Good News is that God in Jesus went through the same kind of life. From personal experience, God knows what we're going through. And we can believe that whatever we do each day becomes our response to God who loves us no matter what.

There is also a clear call to turn away from those habits, attitudes, or actions that keep us from an intimate relationship with God. There is a clear call to examine the "paths" in our lives that may have become "crooked." Where are we giving and getting? How do we use our power or influence with others? What kinds of responses do we give to the God who is present in our lives on a daily basis?

## One-line Prayer

Dear God,  
You are the source of all goodness and salvation. Make me receptive to your coming into my life.  
Amen.