

# Connecting With the Sunday Readings

## Second Sunday of Advent

An important word used in Scripture is “beginning.” There are many beginnings reported in its pages, but two stand out above all others as really important. First, there is the one in the Book of Genesis where we read that “In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth...” (Genesis 1:1). Today we might imagine God poised to create a whole new universe! At one instant, there was nothing and in the next, wow! Every bit of matter and energy that is found in the universe today was there, fourteen or so billion years ago. How great is God!

In memory of that first beginning, every day can be a kind of new beginning for us. Prayers from all the major religions of the world greet each new day. They note that each day offers an opportunity to do God’s work here on earth. No two days are alike. Each comes with its own shape and color, its own music.

### A Gospel Word for the Home

#### Mark 1:1–8

Then there’s the second great beginning. The first words of today’s Gospel reading signal that beginning, and 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, was indeed, Good News. And still is.

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 have to 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. We might also note that this is what many parents do every day.

So we are led to conclude that the living of the Good News begins with the dawning of each new day.

## Parent Survival

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 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. As Jesus lives out his life, he does not always appear to the Jewish people as the kind of savior 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 others.

So what does this say to parents? 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.

## Car or Meal Talk

When have we thought that *this* (each one name a time) is the beginning of something good?

## One-Line Prayer

Dear God,  
You are at the beginning of all our days.  
Thank you for this day.  
Amen.