

JESUS, GOD'S GOOD NEWS THEN AND NOW: 3rd SUNDAY A

Brian Gleeson CP

Our English language is full of interesting expressions. For example: 'So-and-so is real bad news!' Or, on a more positive note, of someone who is a fine person, likeable and acceptable: 'So-and-so is such good news!'

In the gospel today we meet a most impressive 'good news' person - none other than Jesus Christ. Not only is he a good and wonderful person himself. But he also preaches a message of 'good news' when he says to his followers: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.'

What Jesus is saying is that the time has arrived for God to come out of the shadows and darkness surrounding him, and to demonstrate through Jesus just how God is our King. He is implying: 'To know what kind of King God is, just look at me. See what I do. Hear what I say. Notice the kind of person I am. Then you will discover that the God I represent, the God I bring to you, is not a God who rules in fear. No, your God and mine is a God who leads and guides with gentleness, with affection, and with compassion.'

Everything, in fact, that we can say about Jesus the man we can say about God. About God who is in Jesus, about God who is one with Jesus. Jesus is warm and friendly. So is God. Jesus is honest and truthful. So is God. Jesus is loyal and faithful. So is God. Jesus is welcoming and forgiving. So is God. Jesus is unselfish and generous. So is God. Jesus is kind and loving. So is God. Jesus is accepting and caring. So is God. Jesus lays down his life for others. So does God. In a nutshell, Jesus is God's 'good news' in person.

Jesus is the good news of the truth we are searching for. In a thousand and one ways he shows us that there is a God, and that this God is the fullness of love.

Jesus is the good news of the hope we need. That this life is succeeded by a new and better life! That we can die to sin and walk in the footsteps of Jesus!

Jesus is the good news of the peace we crave. We become worried and troubled about too many things. We mean well, but we are frail and weak and

liable to fail and fall. Jesus is the strength and peace we need, to calm our troubled hearts and to heal our divided hearts.

By his words and deeds Jesus leaves us in no doubt that he is our Way, our Truth, and our Life. 'Repent,' he says. In effect: 'Change your attitudes and change your ways. Recognise me for the good news I bring and the good news I am. Trust me. Follow me.'

As we renew our faith and trust in the person of Jesus today, and particularly in the precious time of Holy Communion, may we join all those people of whom the messenger of God speaks in our first Reading: 'The people that lived in darkness has seen a great light; on those who dwell in the land and shadow of death a light has dawned!'