

GOD'S GOOD NEWS: 3rd SUNDAY A

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, friendly, and helpful: 'So-and-so is such good news!' A lady called Sue gives a convincing example of such a 'good news' person. 'When my son Joe was small,' she writes, 'he was constantly sick. Exhausted, I trudged from doctor to doctor, and eventually to hospital with Joe near death. Then a friend told me about Rod, a chiropractor. After the first day of treatment, Joe was more at ease than he had ever been. Each time the illness recurred, I phoned Rod, and he would fit Joe into his schedule straight away. Rod became like an angel of healing in our lives.'

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 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 by fear. No, our God, yours and mine, is a God who leads and guides with gentleness, affection, and compassion.'

God is like Jesus, 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 caring. So is God. Jesus is accepting and affirming. 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 really is a God, and that this God is the fullness of love.

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

Jesus is the good news of the strength we need. We mean well, but we are frail and weak and liable to flop, fail and fall without him. He is the good news of the peace we crave. We become worried and troubled about too many things. He calms our fears and heals our anxious hearts.

By his words and deeds Jesus leaves us in no doubt that he is, in summary, our Way, our Truth, and our Life. Today we hear and heed him saying to us: 'Repent'. He is saying, 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 completely, and follow me.'

As we renew our faith and trust in him today, and particularly during 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!'

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