



# e-Good News *The Gospel of Mark*

**New Year's Day - Sunday 1st January 2012**  
**LUKE 2:16-21 "MARY PONDERED ALL THESE THINGS"**



## Reflection

One title of Mary might be 'woman of peace'. She was not on any peace commission nor on councils. She had no great political influence but she brought her contribution to peace... the birth and education of the prince of peace, a woman of gentle peace in her world, her family, her village. She brought together the family of Jesus and the followers of Jesus as a mother of peace.

## Small Roles

Our roles in life are mostly small. Most of us have little political clout, little influence in our Church; but in many ways we can be people of peace. We are all called to be peacemakers.

These are the people in our country that over the troubled years, and still recently, who spoke well of Protestants and Catholics and didn't add to the prejudice. Putting into action the words of Cardinal Daly, at the time of great violence – words like 'Protestant tears and Catholic tears are the same... you can't bomb people into a united Ireland... you cannot force a million people into a united country they don't want.' We salute the people who worked for peace in their locality.

## Based on Justice

Our peace is to be based on justice. When we treat people justly and with respect we work for peace, as well as when we try to make up for past misunderstandings, we are working for peace.

While we can't influence world events that much maybe we can be people of peace in words and in our willingness to work for peaceful relations in our small circle of the world. That was Mary – and she brought the biggest influence for peace into our world. We can all be peace workers, peacemakers, doers of peace, speakers of peace.

## Pointers For Prayer

- 1 The story tells us that the shepherds helped Mary to realise the significance of the child born to her. She treasured their words and pondered their meaning. Who have been the people who have helped you to understand the meaning of significant events in your life? Remember them gratefully.
- 2 We are told that Mary "pondered these things in her heart". What part has prayerful reflection on life played for you? How has it been helpful to you in deepening your appreciation for the gift of life?
- 3 When the shepherds realised that they had been witnesses to a wonderful manifestation of God's love for his people they glorified and praised God. Recall ways in which you have been made aware of God's love for you. How have you expressed your gratitude?

## Prayer

MOST high God,  
 you come near to us this Christmas season  
 in the child born of the Virgin Mary.  
 In the depths of darkness, she gave birth to light;  
 in the depths of silence, she brought forth the Word.  
 Grant that we who ponder these things in our hearts  
 may recognise in her child our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ,  
 who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
 in the splendour of eternal light, God for ever and ever.  
 Amen.





Sunday 8th January 2012

MARK 1:7-11 "JOHN BAPTISES JESUS IN THE JORDAN RIVER"

## Reflection

Somebody said once about their view of God:

**I need a God with skin.** Not one who just looks after angels and lives in the skies. At his baptism Jesus is seen as the pilgrim God from heaven to join with us our pilgrim way to heaven.

Jesus joins fully his sinful people. Jesus does not expect a perfect people.

## The Adult Christ

His birth said that. Now the baptism has him joining his people as an adult. He is a person of care and of love, and the source is his prayer.

He loved the relationship with his mother and friends. His love is real love.

Our baptism means something like that, we take on a particular Christ-centered way of life because of it.

## Community of Prayer, Love and Care

A simple understanding of the Church is one of a community of people, committed to prayer, love and care, committed to the reign of justice. This comes before any of our moral stances or our Church structures.

Our present situation actually challenges our understanding of what it means to be a Catholic in this day and age. We can find strength in a daily life of prayer and love which helps to deepen our friendship with Jesus.

Our humanity joins with Christ's humanity and makes us better human beings. God has skin.



## Pointers For Prayer

- 1 John describes humility as a person confident in his own role but not seeking to claim to be more than he is. He is able to acknowledge that Jesus is greater. There is a freedom in being able to acknowledge the gifts of others without losing a sense of one's own giftedness. Recall times when you were able to do this.
- 2 The baptism of Jesus was an extraordinary religious experience for him. Something happened that was a major step forward for Jesus in coming to know that he was the beloved Son of God. We all have events in our lives that are milestones along the road of discovering who we are. What have been these milestones for you?
- 3 "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." Bring to mind memories of experiences in which you knew you were the beloved (of God or of another person) and that the one who loved you was well pleased. Bring these experiences to mind with gratitude, knowing that the only proper response to love received is thankfulness. Perhaps you have also given that experience to another.

## Prayer

GOD of salvation,  
in the river Jordan you bathed your Son Jesus in glory  
and revealed him as your obedient servant.

In spirit and in power  
rend the heavens and come down to us.  
Strengthen us to acknowledge your Christ,  
that we who are reborn in his likeness  
may walk with him in newness of life.

Amen.



Sunday 15th January 2012

JOHN 1:35-42 "BEHOLD, THE LAMB OF GOD"



## Reflection

Some people welcome others warmly into their home. You feel they are glad to see you. In other times, it was the half door open, or the door on the latch. Jesus says to us – welcome, come and see.

The first step into the Church is welcome. Baptism is the welcome of the Christian community to the Christian family. This is the welcome of Jesus. His Church welcomes you with great joy.

## Welcomed

Many people feel unwelcome in the Church. For Jesus, nobody is rejected. You may know people, young and old, who feel unwelcome for their sins, their lifestyle, their personality or their attitudes. So they come at funerals or weddings and they are may be uneasy.

## The Doorkeeper

One of the ancient ministries of the Church was the doorkeeper – the porter, the *welcomer*. We have lost this sense at Mass of spending energy on the welcome. It is important to be welcomed into the Church on Sunday.

When people met Jesus they stayed a long time. People may find much fault with the Church and the Church gives many reasons – nobody seems to find fault with Jesus.

His invitation was and still is – Come and see, come and listen, come and be loved by God in Jesus Christ, in his community of the Church. Come and share this bread which endures forever.

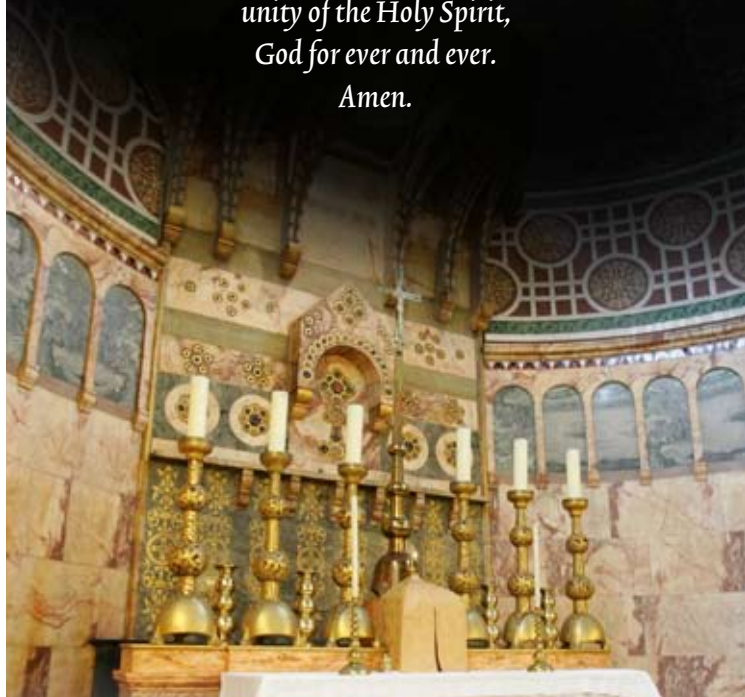


## Pointers For Prayer

- 1 John pointed the disciples towards Jesus as the one they should follow. Remember the people in your life who have pointed you in a new and life-giving direction? Perhaps in some cases this may have involved directing you away from your association with them - e.g. leaving home, changing jobs, etc.
- 2 Accepting an invitation to "Come and see" may be part of exploring a new path in life. When has this been so for you? Who issued you the invitation? What benefits came to you from accepting the invitation?
- 3 Andrew did not keep the good news to himself but also invited his brother to join him in following Jesus. What is your experience of receiving, or giving, an invitation to join in some worthwhile venture?
- 4 Jesus looked at Peter and could see what he would become. Who have been the people who have been able to name for you your potential? For whom have you been able to do this?

## Prayer

FROM our earliest days, O God,  
you call us by name.  
Make our ears attentive to your voice,  
our spirits eager to respond  
that, having hear you in Jesus your anointed one,  
we may draw others to be his disciples.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the  
unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God for ever and ever.  
Amen.





Sunday 22nd January 2012

MARK 1:14-20 "THE CALL OF THE FIRST DISCIPLES"

## Reflection

The men and women who followed Jesus seemed to find something in him that spoke to the heart, and they needed that. They were called from their work to follow this man with the dream of goodness, love and brotherhood, to share in the vision of Jesus for the world.

## Ag Críost an Síol

An Irish hymn *Ag Críost an Síol* sings – *Let us rest in the nets of God.* We are netted by God. We are saved from danger –as the ocean is the depths of danger, darkness, evil. The nets don't just catch us like poor fish, but save us from immortal danger. Also, we are netted; we are caught by God so that from the inside we know his love and his truth. We are caught also in community.

One weakness of Irish Catholicism has been its individualism. We need personal but not individualistic prayer. It can be strange at Mass to see people on their own at the back of the Church, or praying at the shrines. It kept us going once, we need more now. We need now to share faith with each other and support each other in faith, called as the apostles were, in community. This is now a community with people of many backgrounds.

## Vision of Jesus

In Jesus we find something 'big enough to live for, large enough to die for'; a meaning that will keep us going for all of life. Let's hope we can move into the future and with eyes fixed on the horizon and God's grace upon us, for there is always a future with Jesus. That is why they left their nets, and their journey brought them to the end of the earth carried by the same faith that gathers us here this week.



## Pointers For Prayer

- 1 "The time is fulfilled" – this is a decisive moment in the life of Jesus. His public ministry is about to begin. Recall turning points in your own life when something new happened and with hindsight you can say the time was ripe for it to happen, "the time was fulfilled".
- 2 "Repent and believe the good news". Jesus called for a change of heart, as a response to the good news of the gospel message. A new level of faith in yourself leads to a new way of seeing yourself. A new way of understanding God leads to a conversion in how we relate to God, a change of heart. A growth in awareness of who we are can lead us to a new level of self-confidence, another change of heart. Can you recall times when "good news" led you to a change of heart?
- 3 The Spirit of God who was at work in Jesus calling the disciples continues to work in our day and in our lives. That is why the gospel message is one of good news. In the everyday events of our own lives we can see the grace of God at work. When have you had what you would consider a "call experience" that led you to a different style of life? Who was the "Jesus person" through whom the call came to you? To whom have you been a "Jesus person" in this way?

## Prayer

YOUR SOVEREIGN rule, O God,  
draws near to us  
in the person of Jesus your Son.  
Your word summons us to faith;  
your power transforms our lives.  
Free us to follow in Christ's footsteps  
so that neither human loyalty nor earthly attachment  
may hold us back from answering your call.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
in the splendour of eternal light,  
God for ever and ever.  
Amen.





Sunday 29th January 2012

MARK 1:21-28 "HE TAUGHT THEM WITH AUTHORITY"

## Reflection: Taboos

Every culture has its taboo subjects – the topics we don't like to deal with seriously. In Jesus' time an unclean spirit was a type of taboo – not to be spoken of. The person would be sent outside the city, like the leper. Jesus entered that taboo area, and healed it. In the same way we are all often afraid or ashamed of things.

Taboos today - death, old age, a child on drugs, a family member in prison, family suicide, a possible vocation to religious life, sexual abuse, and any topics you feel a deep unease comes over people when they are mentioned. Some more than others and some with one age group more than another.

## Not with Jesus

There are no taboo topics with Jesus. God is bigger than any taboo. What he brings is love and compassion, with the grace of healing. Nothing you feel in any taboo area can be so dark that the light of Jesus cannot shine through.

We become more at ease with all of life when we are at ease with God. That's what happened to the man of the Gospel today and everyone around him. When real healing happens it's told to everyone. The community rejoices!



Archdiocese of Dublin



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A resource prepared by the Office of Evangelisation & Ecumenism. [www.evangelisation.ie](http://www.evangelisation.ie)  
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## Pointers For Prayer

- 1 In first chapter, Mark familiarises his readers with the type of things Jesus did to proclaim the Kingdom, the Reign of God. Our passage today touches on two of these, the first being that 'he taught as one having authority'. It makes a difference when you listen to someone who is clearly speaking from experience and personal knowledge. Remember people who impressed you in this way.
- 2 Jesus combined teaching with healing, and he drove the evil spirit out of the man. The power of God that worked this wonder through Jesus is also at work in and through us today. When have you been freed from some bad habit?
- 3 The evil spirit convulsed the man before it left him. The path to liberation can be a painful struggle. If you have found it so, who was the Jesus person that helped you through the struggle to freedom?
- 4 It is not only individuals but groups that can be struggling with an evil spirit – jealousy, rivalry, malicious gossiping, abuse of power, etc. Sometimes a Jesus person comes into the group and drives out that evil spirit. Have you experienced this? Perhaps you yourself have been this person on some occasion?

## Prayer

FAITHFUL GOD,  
your Holy One, Jesus of Nazareth,  
spoke the truth with authority,  
and you confirmed his teaching by wonderful deeds.  
Through his healing presence,  
drive far from us all that is unholy,  
so that by word and deed  
we may proclaim him Messiah and Lord  
and bear witness to your power to heal and save.  
Amen.

