

## SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT - ISAIAH 40: 1-5, 9-11. MARK 1: 1-8

After listening or watching bad news every day about violent crimes, accidents on the road, increasing number of pandemic cases, we surely could use some good news. Perhaps it will come in the form of an effective vaccine or of a new found cure for the corona virus...

Whatever medical science can do, we are grateful for the relief it will provide to our physical health.

But what about the emotional, psychological and spiritual suffering that people are experiencing? Is there any vaccine or cure available?

The Word of God for this Second Sunday of Advent provides the answer.

The Reading from Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-15 begins with a message of encouragement for the people of Israel: "COMFORT, O COMFORT MY PEOPLE, SAYS YOUR GOD...". The Prophet consoles his people because their exile in Babylon is over, and they may now look forward to their return home. That was GOOD NEWS for Israel, who had for many years suffered the humiliation of forced labor away from home.

Israel of Jesus' time were living in their own land, but again were enduring the humiliation of being under the rule of the Roman Empire. But their spiritual situation was not any better: God was not at the centre of their life; relationship with God was not a priority. Their religiosity was mostly on the exterior, made up of empty rituals and heartless obligations.

In the Gospel for this Sunday, the evangelist Mark begins with the encouraging message: "THE BEGINNING OF THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST, the Son of God." (Mark 1:1-8)

Throughout the Gospels, in each page, in each phrase, in each word the GOOD NEWS will unfold, until we realize that the GOOD NEWS is not just the message, but it actually is a person: JESUS CHRIST.

He HIMSELF IS THE GOOD NEWS, that gives hope, that gives healing, that gives new life, and brings reconciliation between God and his people.

John the Baptist, the Prophet who prepared the people of Israel to the coming of Jesus, he made it clear that what everyone really needed was to repent of their sins, in order to experience true freedom and peace. This way they would be ready to receive from the Messiah (Jesus) the gift of God's Holy Spirit, who would provide a spiritual vaccine and spiritual cure for the restoration of the human person.

WHAT ABOUT US? ADVENT IS A GOOD TIME TO EXAMINE OURSELVES. WHERE WE ARE IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD?

IS THE PRACTICE OF OUR FAITH MEANINGFUL?

This is a good time to approach the sacrament of Reconciliation. Our Priests are available and within a phone call. Jesus is waiting.

WE PRAISE AND THANK YOU, LORD JESUS, FOR THE GOOD NEWS!

