

In The name of Our Creator  
The Son Our Saviour and Redeemer  
And  
The Triune Spirit Who is With Us Always.

## NOTES

To an observant reader, one that the first verse in the Gospel of Mark does not contain a main verb "The beginning of the good news of JESUS, the Son of God. The significance of this observation is to see that these words do not compose a sentence; they rather serve to express the title of the Gospel of Mark. What ever the story, miracle, parable, exorcism, teaching or narrative event of Jesus is in the Gospel of Mark, it is the beginning of the good news of the ministry of Jesus.

This beginning takes place in our hearing or reading of the Gospel of Mark. The words and action of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark speak to our lives with good news.

The good news begins with the witness of two prophetic texts from malachi and Isaiah that announce a forerunner who will go before the coming of God's messiah. A messenger of God will go "ahead of you" malachi 3-1 one who will " Prepare the way of the lord" make his paths straight". The faith in witch God's people have

lived in messianic hope serves as the inaugural word, bringing together the anticipation and fulfilment times of God's Grace.

The messenger, witness and forerunner of this time of fulfilment is John the baptizer, in our text from the Gospel of Mark, we hear an extensive description of John's identity. John lives in the wilderness near the river Jordan where Jesus is baptized. The baptism he offers is for his people from the Judean countryside as “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of losing their faith in the One True God.

John's baptism is preparatory in anticipation for the coming of the messiah. John draws the people from the city of Jerusalem, the city of religious leaders, who were baptized by him in the river Jordan, asking God's forgiveness. John's baptism of repentance and forgiveness is a call to the people of judea and those in the city of Jerusalem to turn from their ways back to the one true God. The description of John stretches our imagination. He is identified as a wilderness man, he was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. However, the primary intention of John was not to draw attention to himself, but to the

one of whom he is the forerunner; “the one who is more powerful than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals”. John's role is that of a servant to the one he is called to serve.

The baptism of this one is to come is radically different from that of John's baptism: “I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit”. This is the role that John plays out in a significant way, calling attention to the one who ushers in God's kingdom. Jesus is the messiah whose ministry is empowered by God's Spirit. The baptism of Jesus by John in the river Jordan is a baptism in which the manifestation of the Spirit of God is evident; “and just as he was coming up out of the water JESUS saw the heavens open and the Spirit descending like dove on him”. And a voice came and said “you are my Son the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased”. John fulfils the role of the one who is the forerunner, the one who is called to make know “The Son of God. The one who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. Within the opening verses of the Gospel we are introduced to Jesus, we see and hear for ourselves the one who has come, who is present in our lives today. You and I are called to

serve as Jesus served and to make know God's Son in this season of Advent. Like the witness of John, we too are witness to the one who incarnates, the beginning of the good news. At the midpoint of the Gospel, in the story of the transfiguration, we will again hear God's voice announcing the role and mission of Jesus. “a voice from the clouds said “this is my Son , The Beloved, listen to him. As we move into the second half of the Gospel of Mark, we are called to listen to the final teachings and deeds of Jesus, along with the witness present in present in The Son of Man, who came to serve, to show us the way, but not to be served.

From “the beginning” the Gospel of Mark leads us through the pages of his Gospel with intention and goal of seeing Jesus as the risen Spirit and becomes the second part of the Triune Spirit. In the resurrection we see Jesus has fulfilled the will of the Father, Mark Gospel is the beginning of the good news as you and I lead into Advent season.