

# Resilient Faith An Advent Spirituality for Today

*Reading Mark in Advent:*

**Wakefulness in Winter as  
We Attend to the Gift  
Part 2**



# Mark's Readers and a Resilient Faith that seeks "watchfulness"!

- The Gospel of Mark divides neatly in two
- The first half the Gospel asks: who is this?  
Answer: Messiah (8:29)
- The second half asks: How is he this?  
Answer: The Crucified Servant
- In the first half the disciples are slow to grasp the answer!
- In the second half they are unwilling to take it on board!

# Mark begins with Isaiah

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'" (Mk. 1:1-3)



# Gospel of the Second Sunday of Advent

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "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. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

(In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, **he saw the heavens torn apart** and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.)

Mark 1:1-10

- Story begins with John seen as a fulfilment of the what Isaiah was pointing to
- Second Isaiah (40-55) – the new exodus, the new creation of the people of God.
- Yet he is cast a prophet in the style of Elijah – with an emphasis on repentance – metanoia. (seeing differently)
- Elijah was led out into the wilderness to rediscover God – not in the fire, nor the earthquake but in ... “the sound of sheer silence” (1Kgs 19:11-13)
- John points the way to the coming of an answer to the prayer “Oh that you would tear open the heavens and come down...” (Is 64:1)
- You are my son, the Beloved (cf Is 42:1)
- The readers/hearers are privy to knowledge not yet given to the participants in the truly remarkable of the Good News of the Kingdom.

# How Mark tells the Good News

## *PART ONE 1:1- 8:27 Who is this?*

Jesus presents the kingdom in words and deeds.

- Ch 1 Teaching, Exorcisms, Healings.
- Chs 2-3 Beginnings of Conflict
- Ch 4 Parables of the Kingdom (the verb ***listen*** 13x)
- Chs 5-8 Further Signs of the Kingdom

(The incomprehension of the disciples runs through the story)





# How Mark tells the Good News

## ***PART TWO 8:28 – 16:9*** ***How can this be?***

Chs 8-10 The "Way" to Jerusalem

Chs 11-13 Conflict in Jerusalem

Chs 14-16 The Passion Death and Resurrection

(The disciples still fail to understand how the News is Good)

# A Central Question (Mk 8:27-36)

Who do you say that I am?

- “On the way” .... (remember Isaiah and the way in ch1)
- Peter acknowledges him as the Messiah
- First Prediction of the Passion
- Peter fails to see that as the “Son of Man” he must go to Jerusalem to suffer and die
- Jesus teaches that the way of the cross is the way of the disciple, i.e. self sacrificing love

# Along the Way to Jerusalem...

- Urged once to “Listen to him” (9:7)
- 9:30-37 Second prediction of the Passion and welcoming children – the powerless.
- 10:13-31 What must I do ...?
- 10:32-45 Third Prediction of the Passion and again the disciples fail to understand that the Son of Man came to serve.
- 10:46-52 Bartimaeus sees clearly and follows on the way to Jerusalem

# The Way...where?

**To Golgotha**

**This is the way the disciples must learn to embrace**

**On that way they are to learn to become like**

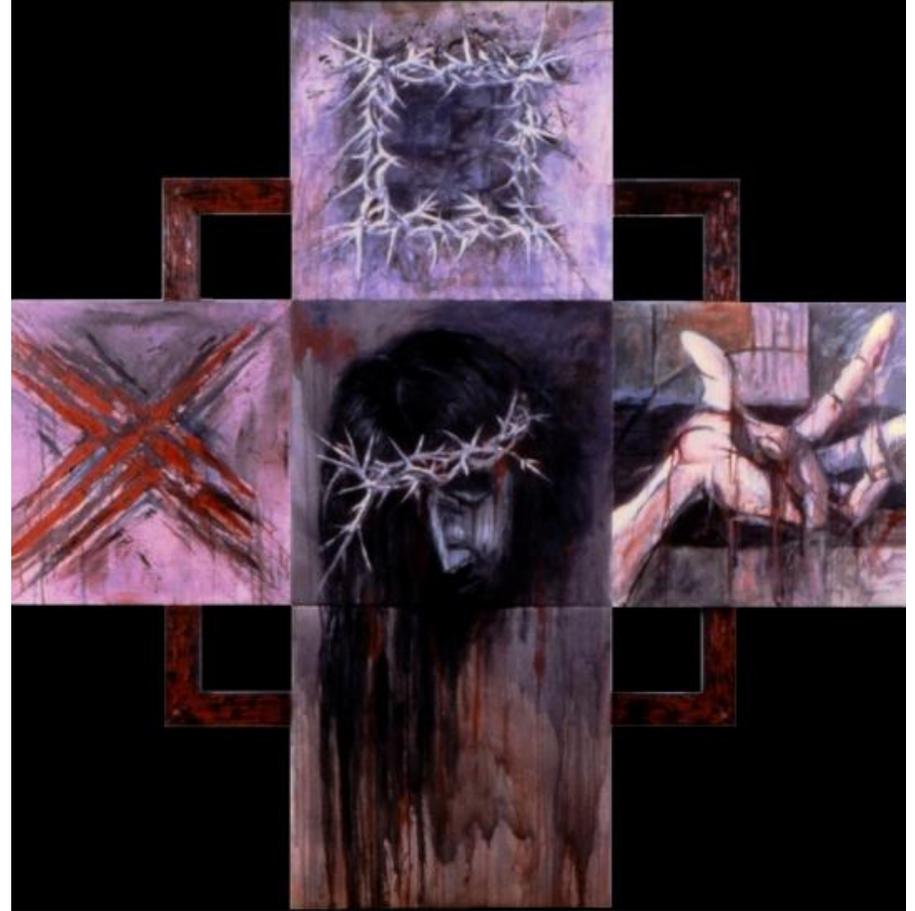
**Children,**

**Servants**

**Slaves!**

# On Calvary

- The disciples are absent
- Jesus crucified amidst mockery and derision
- Jesus dies “alone and screaming”
- In this the way is opened up and an outsider recognises that God is at work.
- “Truly this man is the Son of God”





## What the Disciples did not “see”

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- That their Messiah was a suffering servant who came to give his life as a ransom for many.
- That his kingdom is a way of life that subverts the values of this world, reaching out to all those on the edge; manifesting the covenant “justice” of God.
- That he is with them in all the storms as they undertake the journey of faith and share in his ministry and his cross.

# First Reading Reminds us

Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"

See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

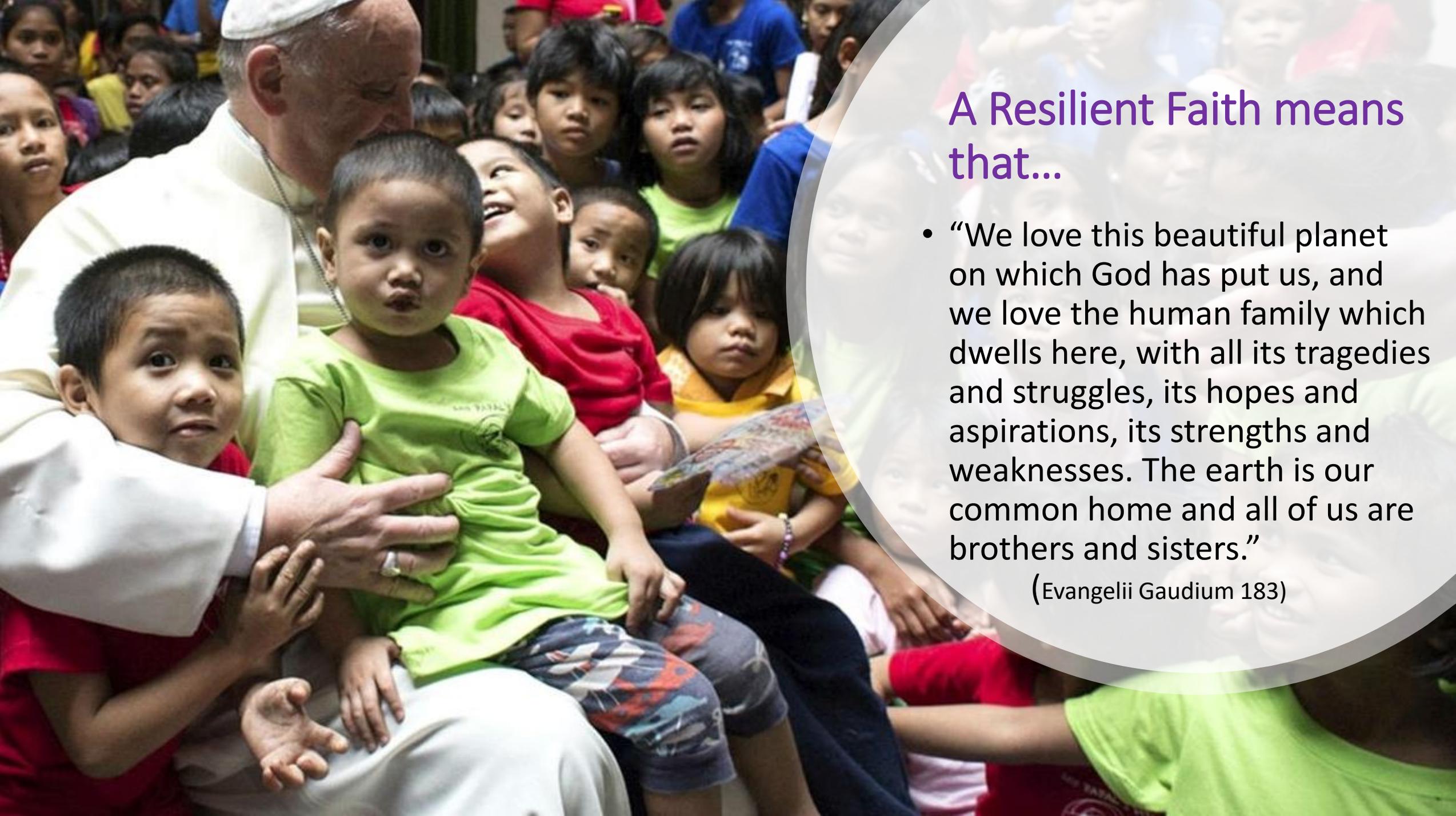
He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep. (Isa. 40:9-11)

**Jesus reveals the all-powerful God not as the warrior but  
as the shepherd!**

# The Good News in Mark calls us to a resilient faith today by



- By attending to the Word that inspires hope and action and that does seek passivity but an active trust in God present in a graced world.
- As Disciples this Advent we are called to humbly attend to this gift... to wake up!
- Our faith is not in a God who sent us Covid 19 but in the God who sends his Son through us and who is with us “on the Way”



## A Resilient Faith means that...

- “We love this beautiful planet on which God has put us, and we love the human family which dwells here, with all its tragedies and struggles, its hopes and aspirations, its strengths and weaknesses. The earth is our common home and all of us are brothers and sisters.”

(Evangelii Gaudium 183)



**Μαράν άθά**

**Maranatha**

**Come Lord**