

A Few Words on the Readings

Isaiah 40.1-11 The prophet speaks at a time of desolation. The Israelites are in captivity in Babylon and Jerusalem has been destroyed. The people are discouraged, dazed and destitute, feelings that many of us are experiencing at the moment. Just like them we need these words of consolation and hope, our faith needs to be sustained just as their 's did. The prophet paints a picture of divine love, of the dawning a new era, of God as a shepherd-king who carries his people.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem.... he will feed his flock as a shepherd; he will gather his lambs in his arms.

2 Peter 3.8-15a Peter strives to answer the question of the timing of the second coming of Christ. The Early Church believed it was imminent and Christians were often challenged by others about it. Peter speaks of God's time where one day is like a thousand. He reminds us of God's patience and exhorts us ***to strive to be found by him at peace without spot or blemish.*** We can use this time of Advent to reflect on our lives and to try to be more Christ-like in all we do and say.

Mark 1.1-8 Mark begins his gospel with a clear definition of what it is about – the **Good News** of Jesus Christ, **the Son of God**. He plunges immediately into the story of our salvation by showing how Christ's ministry started when he came to be baptised by John, who had prepared the way for him. John is the Advent voice calling to us to repent and to make way for Jesus in our lives.

A prayer for those affected by coronavirus (Church of England)

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious,
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen