

Reflection from Fr. Colm on the feast of St Mark

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Good morning everybody. Hope you're okay. Today we celebrate the feast of St Mark, shortest of the four Gospels written by St Mark the evangelist, we know more about Mark I think than any of the other three evangelists because he's described in the Acts of the Apostles as being very much in and out of St Paul's missionary team. He lost, seems to have gone out of favour with St Paul at one stage, was in the dog house as they say but somehow managed to be brought back in again because we know that when Paul was in prison in Rome, St Mark was with him.

But the glorious thing about St Mark's Gospel are not the incidentals surrounding it but the reality and the Jesus that we find there especially. Everything is done in haste, breathless haste as one scripture scholar describes it and it's all about, I feel, in relation to where we are at this point in time, it's all about people being brought from isolation into the community again. That word isolation it comes up and up and up again all the time in St Mark. It's a different type of isolation to what we're going through. It's an enforced isolation within the context of community rejecting the individuals.

I'm thinking of the self-hating, self-destructive demoniac who's brought in by Jesus. Jesus shows His power over him. I'm thinking also of the woman with the haemorrhage, because of the Jewish regulations, isolated by religious law. Again, Jesus is bringing her back from isolation into the community, bringing her into the broader community. These are two, there are many, many more examples of that in St Mark's Gospel. But the wonderful thing about the Gospel of St Mark is the swiftness, and the I suppose the determination of Jesus that is brought out to us and I just mention St Mark at length this morning because you know I find he is absolutely wonderful.

And I recall a marvellous retreat that we had here some of our, you parishioners now, were on that. Short series of retreats we had on Saturdays some years ago with Joe Cassidy, the Reverend Joe Cassidy, head of St Chad's and Joe brought into the discussion the Jesuitical background of using one's imagination in order to create a scene and he had us try to use our imagination of going with Jesus down to the Jordan to be baptised, following Jesus in haste because He was determined.

And how do we follow behind Him and what strength does He give us in that journey down to the Jordan to be baptised, what reassurance?

We all need these things now I feel very much that reassurance, brought maybe not from the isolation that we would like brought into the community, we can't do that just yet. But it does give us an opportunity to realise those who are in I suppose enforced isolation, those in prisons, in solitary confinement, all those other places in which we don't have to suffer. So, let us pray on this day of St Mark for each other. God bless you.