

## A Note from St. James' Pastoral Care November 2023, Pentecost/Advent



Dear Friend,

This Note "straddles" the last two Sundays of Pentecost and the first two Sundays of the Church's liturgical New Year. That means that we move from "Year A" of the Lectionary Readings to "Year B", and the Gospel readings switch from Matthew to Mark.

The late Frederick Buechner gives an amazing description of St. Mark and the Gospel he wrote. Although, unfortunately, it is far too long to quote here in full, I'm giving you enough to get the "flavour" of both the writer and his writing:

Mark writes for people who already believe instead of the ones who need things explained, and therefore it's who Jesus was, rather than what he said, that Mark's book is bursting with-who he was and what he did with what little time he had. He was the "Son of God," that's who he was. Mark says it right out in the first sentence so nobody will miss it (1:1). And he came "not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (10:45). That's what he did, and he died doing it....

Why did [Jesus] die? He died because that's the way he wanted it-that "ransom for many" again, a wonderful thing to be bought at a terrible price. He died because that's the way God wanted it....

Then the end comes, and even Mark has to slow down there. Half his book has to do with the last days in Jerusalem and the way Jesus handled them and the way he was handled himself....

Mark's last word in his Gospel is *afraid*, and it makes you wonder if maybe the theory is true after all that he was the boy who streaked out of Gethsemane in such a panic. He knew how the women felt as they picked up their skirts and made a dash for it anyway. Wonderful and terrible things were happening, and more were still to come. *(continue on page 2)*

He knew what fear was all about-the scalp cold, the mouth dry, the midnight knock at the door-but he also knew that fear was not the last thing. It was the next to the last thing. The last thing was hope. "You will see him, as he told you," the young man in white said (16:7). If that was true, there was nothing else that mattered. So Mark stopped there.



Now here are the Gospels for these four Sundays. As we finish one Church Year and begin anew, I hope you will be able to note the difference in style and tone between these two Gospel writers, each with their particular perspective on Our Lord Jesus Christ:

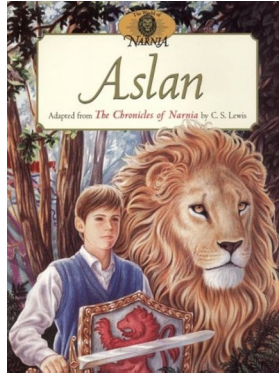
<b>November 19</b>	<b>Matthew 25: 14-30</b>
<b>November 26</b>	<b>The Reign of Christ Matthew 25: 31-46</b>
<b>December 3</b>	<b>Advent I Mark 13: 24-37</b>
<b>December 10</b>	<b>Advent II Mark 1: 1-18</b>



My favourite poet of the moment, Malcolm Guide, has a wonderful introduction for his sonnet on St. Mark, part of which I would like to share with you:

### [A Sonnet for St. Mark](#)

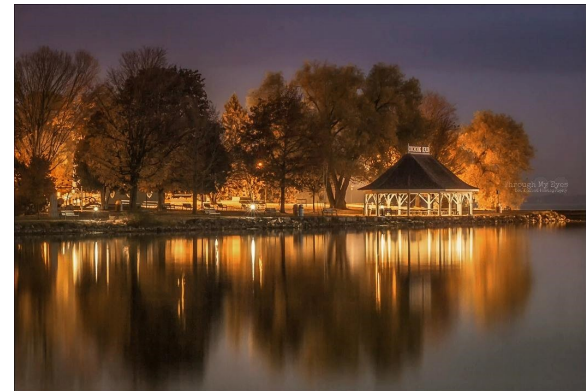
...The traditional association of each of the evangelists with one of the 'four living creatures' round the throne helps us to focus on the particular gifts and emphasis of that Gospel writer. Mark is the Lion. There is a power, a dynamic a swiftness of pace in Mark, his favourite word is 'immediately'! and that suits the lion. His Gospel starts in the wilderness and that suits it too



But the great paradox in Mark is that the Gospel writer who shows us Christ at his most decisive, powerful, startling and leonine is also the one who shows us how our conquering lion, our true Aslan, deliberately entered into suffering and passion, the great 'doer' letting things be done unto him.

I'm leaving you with an Advent Prayer that I found, simply signed "M.E.N.W."

Holy Spirit, who once came to Mary, come now to us; Come. Cleanse, purify and calm our restless minds and bodies. Then, Power of the Most High, overshadow us; Prepare within our hearts a place of inner peace; - a space - a space - a silence - a manger, a child-shaped, love-lined manger waiting to receive the Son of God, the Saviour.



May we expectantly await His coming! (M.C.)

With Love and Prayers from your  
St. James' Parish Family

A wingèd lion, swift, immediate  
Mark is the gospel of the sudden shift  
From first to last, from grand to intimate,  
From strength to weakness, and from debt to gift,  
From a wide desert's haunted emptiness  
To a close city's fervid atmosphere,  
From a voice crying in the wilderness  
To angels in an empty sepulcher.  
And Christ makes the most sudden shift of all;  
From swift action as a strong Messiah  
Casting the very demons back to hell  
To slow pain, and death as a pariah.  
We see our Saviour's life and death unmade  
And flee his tomb dumbfounded and afraid.



ST. JAMES' ANGLICAN CHURCH  
58 Peter St. North (corner of Peter and Coldwater)  
Orillia, Ontario L3V 6J6 705-325-2742  
office@stjamesorillia.com  
<http://www.stjamesorillia.com>

