

St Mark's Day – 25th April

**Mark, Evangelist, writer of the earliest Gospel, sparse, sharp as thorns,
Your words well-turned, but of you we have only glimpses.
On the periphery, watching, noting, not quite sure about yourself or Jesus.
Not suited to the rough disciple's life, all that face-to-face witnessing,
Running naked from Gethsemane's angry conflict,
Flight, not fight, on your cowardly lion's golden wings.
But later, still there, complementing bold outspoken Peter,
Writing an action Gospel from his restored memories of that Jesus.
Then gradually finding prayerful spoken words
For your more thoughtful, thought through, faith in Him.**

**Brief mentions acting with the Apostles, Peter, Barnabas, Paul.
Journeying through words as scribe, companion, preacher, to Egypt,
Chosen as Bishop of Alexandria, that great city of library and learning,
Pastor of growing North African flocks. No more shame, no more running.
Martyred, revered across two thousand Aprils by all Christians,
By Coptic Churches through times of flourishing, persecution, perseverance,
Now so needing our prayers and support.
Translated, in that other sense, your holy relics crossed the sea
Finding refuge in Venice, foundation of the gold domed Basilica di San Marco.
Fulfilling Pax tibi Marce, evangelista meus. Hic requiescet corpus tuum.**

**Much later, 1974, this holy God-sent day made such a mark on me,
Not quite a Damascus Road, but a renewed recognition
That I needed and had that faith based in beauty, forgiveness and longing,
And Jesus was giving me St Mark & St Andrew as guides upon the way.**

Richard Barnes – May 2016, rev Apr 2020.