

59// HERE FOLLOWETH OF ST. MARK THE EVANGELIST

Mark the Evangelist was of the kindred of the Levites, and was a priest. And when he was christened he was godson of St. Peter the apostle, and therefore he went with him to Rome. When St. Peter preached there the gospel, the good people of Rome prayed St. Mark that he would put the gospel in writing, like as St. Peter had preached. Then he at their request wrote and showed it to his master St. Peter to examine; and when St. Peter had examined it, and saw that it contained the very truth, he approved it and commanded that it should be read at Rome.

THE MISSION TO AQUILEIA

And then St. Peter seeing St. Mark constant in the faith, he sent him into Aquilegia [Aquileia] for to preach the faith of Jesu Christ, where he preached the word of God, and did many miracles, and converted innumerable multitudes of people to the faith of Christ. And wrote also to them the gospel, like as he did to them of Rome, which is in to this day kept in the church of Aquilegia, and with great devotion kept.

After this it happed that St. Mark led with him to Rome a burgess of that same city whom he had converted to the faith, named Ermagoras, brought him to St. Peter, and prayed him that he would sacre [consecrate] him bishop of Aquilegia, and so he did. Then this Ermagoras, when he was bishop, he governed much holily the church, and at the last the paynims martyred him.

Mark is as much to say as high to commandment, certain, declined, and bitter. He was high of commandment by reason of perfection in his life, for he kept not only the commandments common, but also the high as be counsels. He was certain in the doctrine of the gospel, like as he had received of St. Peter his master, he was declined by reason of perfect and great humility, for because of great meekness he cut off his thumb, to the end that he should not be chosen to be a priest. He was bitter by reason of right sharp and bitter pain, for he was drawn through the city, and among those torments he gave up his spirit. Or Mark is said of a great mallet or beetle, which with one stroke maketh plain iron and engendereth melody, and confirmeth it. For St. Mark by his only doctrine quencheth the unsteadfastness of the heretics, he engendered the great melody of the praising of God, and confirmed the church.

ST. MARK IN ALEXANDRIA

Then St. Peter sent St. Mark into Alexandria, whereas he preached first the word of God, and as soon as he was entered a great multitude of people assembled for to come against him. There was he of so great perfection that by his predication and by his good example, the people mounted in so holy conversation and in so great devotion that, at his instance they led their life like monks.

He was of so great humility that he did cut off his thumb because he would be no priest, for he judged himself not worthy thereto; but the ordinance of God and of St. Peter came against his will, for St. Peter made and sacred him bishop of Alexandria.

St. Mark and Anian the Shoemaker

And anon, as he came into Alexandria, his shoes were broken and torn; when he saw that he said: Verily I see that my journey is sped, ne the devil may not let [hinder] me sith that God hath assoiled me of my sins.

Then went St. Mark to a shoemaker for to amend his shoes, and as he would work he pricked and sore hurted his left hand with his awl, and when he felt him hurt he cried on high: One God!

When St. Mark heard that he said to him: Now know I well that God hath made my journey prosperous.

Then he took a little clay and spittle and meddled them together and laid it on the wound, and anon he was whole. When the shoemaker saw this miracle he brought him into his house and demanded him what he was, and from whence he came. Then said St. Mark that he was the servant of Jesu Christ, and he said, "I would fain see him." Then said St. Mark, "I shall show him to thee." Then he began to preach to him the faith of Jesu Christ, and after baptized him and all his meiny [household].

When the men of the town heard say that there was a man come from Galilee, that despised and defended the sacrifices of idols, they began await how they might deliver him to death. When St. Mark espied that, he made his shoemaker, which was named Anian, bishop of Alexandria, and he himself went to Pentapolin whereas he was two years, and after, came again to Alexandria and found then there the town full of Christian men, and the bishops of the idols awaited for to take him.

The Martyrdom of St. Mark

Now it happened on Easter day, when St. Mark sang mass, they assembled all and put a cord about his neck, and after, drew him throughout the city, and said, "Let us draw the bubale [wild ox] to the place of bucale [slaughterhouse]." And the blood ran upon the stones, and his flesh was torn piecemeal that it lay upon the pavement all bebled.

After this they put him in prison, where an angel came and comforted him, and after came our Lord for to visit and comfort him, saying: *Pax tibi Marce evangelista meus*, Peace be to thee Mark, mine Evangelist! be not in doubt, for I am with thee and shall deliver thee.

And on the morn they put the cord about his neck and drew him like as they had done tofore and cried: Draw the bubale, and when they had drawn he thanked God and said: Into thy hands Lord, I commend my spirit, and he thus saying died.

Then the paynims would have burnt his body, but the air began suddenly to change and to hail, lighten and thunder, in such wise that every man enforced him to flee, and left there the holy body alone. Then came the Christian men and bare it away, and buried it in the church, with

great joy, honour, and reverence. This was in the year of our Lord fifty-seven, in the time that Nero was emperor.

THE TRANSLATION OF ST. MARK'S BODY TO VENICE

And it happed in the year of grace four hundred and sixty-six in the time of Leo the emperor, that the Venetians translated the body of St. Mark from Alexandria to Venice in this manner. There were two merchants of Venice did so much, what by prayer and by their gifts, to two priests that kept the body of St. Mark, that they suffered it to be borne secretly and privily unto their ship. And as they took it out of the tomb, there was so sweet an odour throughout all the city of Alexandria that all the people marvelled, ne knew not from whence it came. Then the merchants brought it to the ship, and after, hasted the mariners and let the other ships have knowledge thereof. Then there was one man in another ship that japed [joked], and said: Ween ye to carry away the body of St. Mark? Nay, ye lead with you an Egyptian.

Then anon, after this word, the ship wherein the holy body was, turned lightly after him, and so rudely boarded the ship of him that had said that word, that he brake one of the sides of the ship, and would never leave it in peace till they had confessed that the body of St. Mark was in the ship, that done, she held her still.

Thus as they sailed fast they took none heed, and the air began to wax dark and thick, that they wist not where they were. Then appeared St. Mark unto a monk, to whom the body of St. Mark was delivered to keep, and bade him anon to strike their sails for they were nigh land, and he did so, and anon they found land in an isle. And by all the rivages whereas they passed, it was said to them that they were well happy that they led so noble a treasure as the body of St. Mark, and prayed them that they would let them worship it.

Yet there was a mariner that might not believe that it was the body of St. Mark, but the devil entered into him, and tormented him so long that he could not be delivered till he was brought to the holy body; and as soon as he confessed that it was the body of St. Mark, he was delivered of the wicked spirit, and ever after he had great devotion to St. Mark.

It happed after, that the body of St. Mark was closed in a pillar of marble, and right few people knew thereof because it should be secretly kept. Then it happed that they that knew thereof died, and there was none that knew where this great treasure might be, wherefore the clerks and the lay people were greatly discomfited and wept for sorrow, and doubted much that it had been stolen away. Then made they solemn processions and litanies, and the people began to fast and be in prayers, and all suddenly the stones opened and showed to all the people the place and stead where the holy body rested. Then rendered they thankings to God of this, that he had relieved them of their sorrow and anguish, and ordained that on that day they shall hold feast alway for this devout revelation.

MIRACLES OF ST. MARK

The Young Man and the Ship in Peril

A young man on a time had a cancer in his breast, and worms ate it which were come of rotting, and as he was thus tormented he prayed with good heart to St. Mark, and required him of help and aid, and after, he slept. And that same time appeared to him St. Mark in form of a pilgrim, tuckered and made ready for to go hastily over sea; and when he demanded him what he was, he answered that he was St. Mark, which went hastily for to succour a ship which is in peril.

Then he stretched and laid his hand on him, and anon as he awoke he found himself all whole. Anon after, this ship came unto the port of Venice, and the mariners told the peril where they had been in, and how St. Mark had holpen them

Then for that one miracle and for that other the people rendered thankings to our Lord.

The Conversion of the Saracen Sailor

The merchants of Venice went on a time by the sea in a ship of Saracens towards Alexandria; and when they saw them in peril, they hewed the cords of the ship, and anon the ship began to break by the force of the sea. And all the Saracens that were therein fell in the sea, and died that one after the other. Then one of the Saracens made his avow to St. Mark and promised him that if he delivered him from this peril he would be baptized.

Anon a man all shining appeared to him, which took him out of the water and remitted him again into the ship, and anon the tempest ceased.

When he was come into Alexandria he remembered no thing St. Mark, which had delivered him from peril, he went not to visit him, ne he did him not do be baptized. Then appeared to him St. Mark, and said to him that he remembered evil the bounty that he did to him when he delivered him from the peril of the sea.

And anon the Saracen came again to his conscience, and he went to Venice, and was there baptized and named Mark, and believed perfectly in God, and ended his life in good works.

The Man Fallen from St. Mark's Steeple

There was a man gone up in the steeple of St. Mark at Venice; and as he intended for to do a work, he was troubled in such wise that he fell, and was like to have been all to-broken in his members, nevertheless in his falling he cried: St. Mark! and anon he rested upon a branch that sprang out, whereof he took none heed, and after, one raught [reached] and let him down a cord, by which he aualed [descended] down and was saved.

The Angry Master

There was a gentleman of Provence which had a servant that would fain go on pilgrimage to St. Mark, but he could get no licence of his lord. At last he doubted not to anger his lord, but went thither much devoutly.

And when his lord knew it he bare it much grievously, and as soon as he was come again his lord commanded that his eyes should be put out; and the other servants that were ready to do the lord's will made ready sharp brochets [spikes] of iron, and enforced them with all their power and might not do it.

Then commanded the lord to hew off his thighs with axes, but anon the iron was as soft as molten lead.

Then commanded he to break his teeth with iron hammers, but the iron thereof was so soft that they could do him no harm.

Then when the lord saw the virtue of God so openly by the miracles of St. Mark, he demanded pardon and went to Venice, to St. Mark, with his servant.

A Knight's Hand is Healed

There was a knight on a time so hurt in battle that his hand hung on the arm in such wise that his friends and surgeons counselled him to cut it off, but he, that was accustomed to be whole, was ashamed to be maimed, and made it to be bound in his place, and after he called much devoutly to St. Mark, and anon his hand was as whole as it had been tofore, and in the witness of this miracle a sign of the cutting abode still.

A Knight Saved from Deep Water

Another time there was a knight armed which ran upon a bridge, and his horse and he fell in a deep water, and when he saw he might not escape he cried on St. Mark, and anon he raught him a spear by which he was saved, and for this cause he came anon in pilgrimage to Venice and told this miracle.

A Man Delivered from Prison

There was a man taken, by envy of them that hated him, and was put in prison, and when he had been there forty days, and was much grieved, he cried on St. Mark. And when St. Mark had appeared thrice he supposed that it had been a fantasy. At the last he felt his irons broken, as it had been a rotten thread, and passed by the keepers of the prison openly by day, he seeing them all, but none of them saw him, and after, came to the church of St. Mark and thanked God devoutly.

A Famine in Apulia

It happed in Apulia was great famine, and the land was barren that nothing might grow thereon. Then was it showed by revelation to a holy man that it was because that they hallowed not the feast of St. Mark; and when they knew this, anon they hallowed the feast of St. Mark, and anon began to grow great plenty of goods throughout all the country.

The Dying Friar

It happed at Papia, in the convent of the friars preachers, in the year of our Lord one thousand two hundred and forty-one, that a friar, a much religious man, was sick unto the death, named Julianus, which sent for his prior for to demand him in what state he was in, and he told him that he was in peril of death, and that it approached fast.

And anon his face was all bright and joyful, and with gladness be began to say: fair brethren, my soul shall depart anon, make room and place, for my soul joyeth in my body for the good tidings that I have heard.

And lift up his eyes unto heaven and said: Lord God, take away my soul out of this prison; and after he said: Alas! who shall deliver me from this corrupt and mortal body?

Among these words he fell in a light sleep, and saw St. Mark come to him and standing by his bedside, and he heard a voice saying to him: “O Mark, what makest thou here?” He answered that he was come to visit this friar because he should die. Then he demanded him wherefore he came more than another saint. He answered, “because he had a special devotion to me, and because he hath oft devoutly visited my church, and therefore am I come to visit him in the hour of his death.”

Then entered into that place great plenty of people all white, to whom St. Mark demanded wherefore they were come. And they said and answered that they were come for to present the soul of this brother tofore God. And when the friar was waked he sent for the prior and told to him advisedly all this vision, and after, anon, in the presence of the prior, he died with great joy.

And all this the prior recounted to him that wrote this book named *Legenda Aurea* [*Golden Legend*].

The [iconography of St. Mark](#) is available at the [Christian iconography website](#).

For other saints, see the [index to this Golden Legend website](#).

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