

## One

### **Today is the Feast of St. Mark also known as John-Mark.**

Papias, a disciple of St. John the Apostle, relates that Mark became the interpreter and secretary for Peter, presumably because Peter did not speak Greek well enough to be easily understood while preaching. Mark stood beside Peter and repeated his preaching about the life and teaching of Jesus. Mark then wrote down accurately the teaching of Peter, very careful not to omit anything or to add anything that was not related by Peter. In the second century, St. Justin Martyr calls the Gospel of Mark "the Memoirs, the Recollections of Peter." The Gospel of Mark is really the Gospel of Peter. When you read the Gospel of Mark, realize it's the testimony of Peter's personal friendship with Jesus.

St. Epiphanius testifies that St. Peter sent Mark to establish the Catholic Church in Alexandria, Egypt sometime between 53 and 60 AD where he became the first Bishop of Alexandria.

When Mark entered the city, his shoe was torn because of the great distance he walked as a missionary. He went to a cobbler in the city, called [Anianus](#), to repair it. While Anianus was repairing the shoe, the awl pierced his finger. Anianus shouted in Greek saying, "Eis Theos!" which means, "O, one God!" When St. Mark heard these words, his heart rejoiced exceedingly because this man might be open to hearing about Jesus the one God. So Mark took some clay, spat on it, and applied it to Anianus' finger, saying "in the Name of Jesus Christ the Son of God," and the wound healed immediately as if nothing had happened to it.

Anianus was exceedingly amazed by this [miracle](#) that happened in the name of Jesus Christ, and his heart opened to the word of God. Mark

asked him who was the “only God” that he cried out to when he was injured. Anianus replied, "I heard about him, but I do not know him." Mark then explained everything about Jesus. Anianus was so happy he invited Mark to come to his home and baptize his whole family.

## **Two**

### **The Martyrdom of St. Mark**

Easter in the year 68 A.D. coincided with the celebration of the Egyptian god Syrabis. While Mark was celebrating Mass, a horde of pagans assembled, attacked the church, seized St. Mark, and drug him behind horses through the city streets until he died. In this way, he received the crown of martyrdom. The Christians took his body and buried him in a secret place in this church.

In 828, Venetian merchants in Alexandria learned that the Arab Governor of Alexandria had decided to take the marble and columns from the Church and use them for a palace he was building, thus destroying the Church, and desecrating the remains of St. Mark who was buried in the Church.

To save the relics of St. Mark the merchants needed to sneak his body out of the Church and out of Alexandria to Venice. But it wasn't going to be easy to take the bones of Mark from under the noses of the Muslims. However, the Muslim faith forbade them from touching pork. The Christians used this to their advantage. They smuggled the body of Mark out of Church and Egypt in a container covered with cabbage leaves and pork. So the shipment was never searched. At the customs post, they simply said, “Pig, Pig!”

There is a detailed mosaic that tells this story as you enter the Basilica of St. Marks in Venice.

That is why, among other reasons, we thank God for bacon!

### **Three**

In Acts 13, St. Paul and Barnabas took Mark with them on Paul's First Missionary Journey to Turkey. For an unknown reason, as soon as they reached Turkey, Mark headed back to Jerusalem.

At the outset of Paul's Second Missionary Journey to Turkey in Acts chapter fifteen, a sharp conflict broke out between Paul and Barnabas because Barnabas suggested taking John Mark, but Paul was not in favor of taking Mark because he felt he deserted them the first time. Then after a heated conflict they parted company, and Barnabas sailed off with Mark to Cyprus.

Sometime later Paul and Mark were reconciled as evidenced by what Paul writes in in Colossians 4:10 and Philemon 24 in which Paul sends greetings from Mark, so they must have been together. And Paul calls Mark his "fellow worker" in the Gospel. Furthermore – All three, Paul, Barnabas, and Mark became Saints.

So, there is a great lesson here for us. Not all conflict is bad and good people, even saintly people can experience conflict.

### **Four**

#### **Guiding Principles for Facing Conflict**

**Acknowledging Conflict's Role:** Recognize that conflict is not inherently negative. It is a natural and sometimes healthy aspect of human interaction.

**Prioritizing in Conflict Resolution:** Effective conflict resolution begins with distinguishing between what is essential and what is secondary. The foremost priority should be the love of God, commitment to His will, and adherence to moral principles. This commitment may require embracing conflict and potentially sacrificing other aspects to maintain this core value.

**Choosing Fidelity Over Relationships:** When faced with a choice between maintaining a relationship and fidelity to God, choose fidelity to God without hesitation.

**Preserving Valuable Aspects:** Beyond our commitment to God we need to also consider protecting and preserving the good of unity and relationships with others, truth and justice, the welfare of others, the collective well-being of the family, and the interests of the organization or community.

**Balancing Unity and Higher Goods:** While the preservation of unity and relationships is important, it should not supersede higher goods. It involves identifying the goods at stake, understanding your responsibilities towards them, and prioritizing the preservation of more significant goods over lesser ones.

**Striving for Dual Preservation:** Aim to maintain both higher goods and the relationships whenever possible. However, if a relationship threatens the preservation of higher goods, it may be necessary to end the relationship. If an employee, vendor, or customer is causing harm to the organization, then the organizational good is more important and we must sacrifice the relationship because we are responsible for the common good.

**Ending Relationships That Lead to Sin:** If a relationship causes you to sin, it is imperative to sever ties, prioritizing your spiritual and moral integrity.

## **Five**

### **Surrender to the Sacred and Immaculate Hearts**

While the seven guiding principles on conflict are necessary, I have found that if I stop thinking I am God, stop trying to control everything, thinking I have to make everything happen, and instead, surrender the potential conflict, people, and circumstances to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, they often times take care of things in such a way that I really don't have to do anything.

Try this. The next time you face a potential conflict, entrust it to Jesus, refuse to worry, give it a little time, and watch what Jesus and Mary can do!