

26th April - Mark the Evangelist

Mark, the son of Mary, whose home in Jerusalem became a place of rest for Jesus and his 12 apostles, is considered the traditional author of the second gospel. He is also usually identified as the young man, described in Mark 14.51, who followed Christ after his arrest and then escaped capture by leaving his clothes behind.

Papias, in 130, said that in later years Mark became Peter's interpreter. If so, then this close friendship would have been how Mark gathered so much information about Jesus' life. Peter referred to him affectionately as his 'son'.

Mark was also a companion to Paul on his journeys. When Paul was held captive at Rome, Mark was with him, helping him.

Mark's Gospel, most likely written in Italy, perhaps in Rome, is the earliest account we have of the life of Jesus.

Early in the 9th century Mark's body was brought to Venice, whose patron he became, and there it has remained to this day. The symbol of Mark as an evangelist, the lion, is much in evidence at Venice.

**Wisdom is oft times nearer
when we stoop than when we soar.**

William Wordsworth

23rd April - St George's Day (circa 300 AD)

The Saint of an English Army, before he was Patron Saint of England, St George may have been a soldier, but he was no Englishman. He was an officer in the Roman army under Diocletian, who refused to abandon his faith during the Terror, and was martyred at Lydda in Palestine about the year 300 AD - supposedly 23 April.

Over the years St George became the example of a Christian fighting-man, a powerful helper against evil powers affecting individual lives. He was the soldier-hero of the Middle Ages, of whom remarkable deeds were reported. St George became a symbol of the war against evil, and is usually portrayed trampling the dragon of sin under his horse's hoofs. The Crusaders had a vision of him helping them against the Saracens at Antioch, during the first Crusade, and so brought the story of St George back with them from Palestine. Presently England put herself under the protection of the Saint. His day was declared a holiday in 1222. A red cross on a white field is the flag of St George.