

SERMON - ST. MARK THE EVANGELIST (EASTER III) - 25 APRIL 2010
St. John's Anglican Church, Greensboro, North Carolina

Ephes. 4:7, 11-12 (KJV)

But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; [12] For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Some thirty-odd years ago I had the opportunity to visit the tomb of Saint Mark at the Cathedral of Saint Mark in Cairo, Egypt, which contains some of his relics, the remainder being in the Cathedral of Saint Mark in Venice. The tomb was impressively beautiful. So was the cathedral which is the largest church in North Africa with a capacity, as was told me, of fifty thousand people.

But what impressed me more than the tomb and the building was meeting the 116th successor to Saint Mark, the Coptic Orthodox Pope, Shenoudah III, who, when I was introduced to him, was a kindly man in his sixties with a long white beard, sitting on a plain straight chair in the church yard tending his goats.

The sight and presence of this humble servant of the servants of God made a lasting imprint on me at the time which has remained with me since then.

Saint Mark, the author of the Gospel of the same name, was traditionally supposed to have been the first Patriarch of Alexandria and who was martyred there sometime around the year 74. This successor of his, in his humility, still speaks volumes to me.

I wonder if Saint Mark was the same.

Paul wrote that grace is given to all of us to further the Kingdom, the Kindom of God, the Body of Christ, the Church. He tells us this is *For the perfecting of the saints, for the*

work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

He also tells us that each one of us is given a different grace *But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*

And this grace is to perform the tasks that He has assigned each one of to do, *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.*

Each one of us here at Saint John's this morning has been assigned, by God, a different job, a job, a task in life, to accomplish for Him in the furtherance of His Kingdom.

The Readers, the Choir, our Treasurer, our Parish Clerk, on and on, each one of us have our unique and God-given jobs to accomplish.

We all can't be the Vicar. We all can't be the Organist no more than we can all be the eyes or the ears of a human body.

But. we are all, all of us, without any exception, the eyes and ears, the feet and hands of the Body of Christ.

Saint Teresa of Avila put it so well when she wrote,

God has no body now on earth but ours.

No hands but ours.

No feet but ours.

Ours are the eyes through which He must look out on the world with love.

Ours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good.

Ours are the hands with which He is to bless all His people.

God expects us to use those gifts, those talents for Him, not ourselves. Those of us who received ten talents are expected to produce another ten for Him. You know the story

and must remember the consequences if we don't use our gifts for the Kingdom.

Matthew 25:28-29 (KJV) *Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. [29] For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.*

Just as and no less than Saint Mark, we are all called upon to tell the Gospel.

Jesus commanded us in Matthew 28:19-20 (KJV) *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: [20] Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

We are All, let me emphasize the word ALL, called upon, no matter what talents we have to spread the Gospel, to use those talents.

And the best way to tell the Gospel is how we live, by example; humbly, kindly, gently just as that Patriarch successor to Saint Mark illustrated.

Amen.