



The Gospel of St Mark – a ‘Prayer Labyrinth’

From an original painting by Peter Clare

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Introductory notes

The painting of the St. Mark's Gospel came out of a long term project to paint the Gospel of Saint Matthew in a sequence of some 250 paintings for public exhibition.

I am, as I write this, just about a third of the way through that Gospel. At the age of 70, whether I finish, really, is in the hands of God, but I hope I shall for I have gained so much personally by exploring and praying this gospel so far. It was while exploring the ideas surrounding labyrinths in a kind of sabbatical from St. Matthew, that I hit upon the idea of painting the shortest gospel, that of St. Mark, in one single painting. I have found walking a labyrinth, mindful of God's presence, a particularly enriching way of prayer and my dream for the St. Matthew cycle is that it should engage the viewer in a pilgrimage of living and praying the story of Jesus.

Typically, in a paradigm of the spiritual life, the labyrinth engages the pilgrim in a passage that starts from an entrance and takes them to the centre, – but not at once. There are many turnings towards and away from the centre that we seek, but that we will get there is not in doubt, if only we persevere. With the St. Mark painting the same attitude of mind and heart is called for. A knowledge of the Gospel is

helpful of course, but by following the map on your poster and reading the text, the labyrinth painting can be traversed in a prayerful way. However, after several passes, when the text becomes transformed into a lived experience of the gospel, the pilgrim will be able to wander freely about the story allowing their eye to rest, as the spirit leads, on places in that story that are meaningful to them at the time. Resting in those places allows the Spirit space to instruct, challenge and console and gently step by step the pilgrim is drawn into the presence of Christ and a deeper awareness and empathy with his journey to the Cross and beyond.

Using the map to interpret the painting.

The map gives chapter and verse of the text illustrated in each pictorial area.

The linkage is provided by arrows showing direction to the next section.

It is important to note that the images focus on the action or event recorded in the text that seemed to me the key to my engagement with the story. This may not be the same for you.

Although the map may seem daunting at first sight the principle of progress through the story labyrinth is a simple one: starting with St Mark's reference to Isaiah you follow through the labyrinth guided by the gold/yellow walls or boundaries until you reach the centre.

Peter Clare

A synopsis of the Gospel

To be used in conjunction with the map of chapter and verse.



1:1-3 The Gospel opens with the prophecy of the coming of John the Baptist.

1:4-8 He appeared in the wilderness and baptised the people for the forgiveness of sins in preparation for the coming of the Messiah.

1:9-11 Jesus was baptised and the Spirit descended upon him.

1:12 Then he went off into wilderness – **1:13** where he was tempted by the devil, then angels came and looked after him.

1:14 Meanwhile John was arrested and put into prison.

1:15 Jesus began to preach announcing the coming of the Kingdom.

1:16-20 He called his first disciples.

1:21 They travelled to Capernaum – **1:22-25** where he taught in the synagogue and cured a man possessed by an evil spirit.

1:26-28 The people were deeply impressed.

1:29-31 Going into Peter's house, Jesus cured Peter's mother-in-law – **1:32-34** and she got up and waited on them. People came to be cured by him.

1:35 He slipped away to pray by himself – **1:36-39** but his disciples went in search of him and they travelled on through Galilee preaching and curing the sick.

1:40-45 A leper knelt before Jesus and he was cured.

2:1-12 Back in Capernaum Jesus was teaching in a house and because of the crush of people a paralytic was lowered through the roof and Jesus cured him despite the censure of some of the people present.

2:13-14 Jesus called Levi to follow him – **2:15-17** and Jesus sat down to eat with tax collectors and sinners.

2:18 John's disciples asked Jesus about fasting – **2:19-22** and he told them that while the bridegroom was present there was no reason to fast but a time would come when fasting would be appropriate. Then he told them the parables about new cloth sewn onto an old garment and new wine put in old wine skins.

2:23-28 The disciples pick corn on the Sabbath.

3:1-6 In a synagogue Jesus cures a man with a withered arm on the Sabbath.

3:7-12 Crowds gathered around him and he preached to them from a boat. He cured many people.

3:13-19 Jesus appointed his twelve disciples.

3:20-21 The demands of the crowds made it difficult to sit down to a meal and his relatives sought to rescue him.

3:22-30 The scribes accused him of being in league with Beelzebul, but he rebutted their charges.

3:31-35 Whilst Jesus was preaching to the crowds his mother and brothers turned up.

4:1-9 Again he got into a boat to teach the crowds. He told them the parable of the sower.

4:10-12 Later his disciples asked him to explain the parable – **4:13-20** which he did.

4:21-23 Then he told them other parables of the lamp – **4:24-25** the measure – **4:26-34** the seed and about how the Kingdom was like a mustard seed that grew to a tree.

4:35-36 Jesus and his disciples got into a boat and sailed out across the sea.

4:37-38 A storm blew up and Jesus was asleep.

4:39-41 Waking he rebuked the wind and it became calm. He also rebuked his disciples for their lack of faith. ►



5:1-13 Reaching the other side of the lake they encountered a demoniac among the tombs. Jesus ordered the demons to go into a herd of pigs.

5:14-20 The people of that area came to Jesus and asked him to leave their land.

5:21 They returned to Galilee and – **5:22-24** Jairus, an official of the synagogue, in desperation asked Jesus to heal his sick daughter.

5:25-34 On the way to Jairus' house a woman with a haemorrhage sought to be healed by touching Jesus.

5:35-36 Messengers came and told Jairus that his daughter had died, but Jesus told him to have faith.

5:37-43 Jesus went into the little girl and told her to get up.

6:1 Jesus and his disciples then went to Jesus' home town of Nazareth – **6:2-5** but he was not well received.

6:6 He was amazed at their lack of faith.

6:7-13 Then he sent out the twelve disciples to preach the good news and heal the sick.

6:14-16 Herod thought Jesus must be John the Baptist come back from the dead – **6:17-29** for, after a night of debauchery Herod had had him beheaded.

6:30-31 The disciples returned full of excitement.

6:32 Jesus greeted them and they went off, in a boat, to rest in a quiet place – **6:33-43** but when they arrived they found a crowd of some five thousand waiting for them and they were hungry so Jesus fed them miraculously.

6:44 There were twelve baskets of left-overs.

6:45 He told the disciples to sail back while he dismissed the crowd.

6:46 Then he went off into the hills to pray.

6:47-52 As the disciples rowed against a strong head wind they saw Jesus walking on the water.

6:53-56 When they reached the other side the people were waiting for him and he cured the sick.

7:1-5 As Jesus and his disciples sat down to a meal some Pharisees asked why his disciples did not observe the cleansing rituals.

7:6-13 Jesus berated them for their hypocrisy – **7:14-23** and he preached the need for cleanliness of the heart.

7:24-30 Then he travelled off on his own to the neighbourhood of Tyre, where he was accosted by a Syrophenician woman who sought a cure for her daughter.

7:31-37 On his return he healed a man suffering from deafness.

8:1-9 Again Jesus was surrounded by a huge crowd in need of food and once again he fed them miraculously and there was a lot of food left over.

8:10 Then, getting into a boat, they sailed to Dalmanutha.

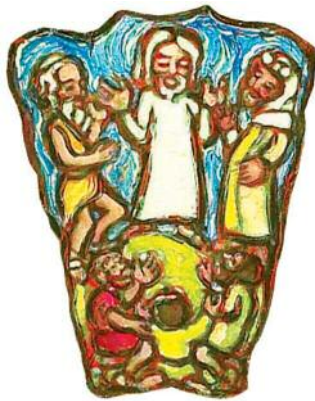
8:11-12 Here Pharisees came up and asked him for a sign – **8:13-21** so leaving them he sailed back to the other side but the disciples were hungry and Jesus was amazed at their anxiety after they had seen how he had fed so many people.

8:22-26 Reaching Bethsaida Jesus cured a blind man.

8:27-30 Reaching Caesarea-Philippi Peter professed his faith in Jesus as the Christ.

8:31 Then Jesus began to tell them – **8:32-33** how he would be killed and three days later would rise from the dead, but Peter protested.

8:34-9:1 Jesus warned them that if they wished to follow him they would have to take up their own cross. ►



9:2 He then took Peter, James and John up a high mountain – **9:3-8** where he appeared to them transfigured with Moses and Elijah.

9:9-13 As they came down the mountain they talked about the coming of Elijah.

9:14-27 When they met up with the other disciples who were having difficulty healing an epileptic boy. Jesus berated them for their lack of faith and healed the boy.

9:28-29 He told them that sometimes they needed to pray.

9:30 They travelled on through Galilee.

9:31-32 He then told again how he was to be put to death and would rise again.

9:33-37 As they walked along the disciples discussed among themselves who was the greatest but Jesus told them that they must become servants and welcome even little children.

9:38-40 John told how he had stopped a stranger from using the name of Jesus.

9:41 Anyone who showed charity to the disciples was to be welcomed.

9:42-50 He then went onto warn them about betraying little children and avoiding falling into sin.

10:1 Moving on he continued his preaching.

10:2-12 Some Pharisees challenged Jesus on the matter of divorce.

10:13-16 The disciples tried to stop children coming to him but he rebuked them.

10:17-22 Later a rich young man approached Jesus.

10:23-27 Jesus warned the disciples about the danger of riches – **10:28-31** and the disciples were anxious even though they had given up so much to follow him.

10:32 They travelled on towards Jerusalem – **10:33-34** and he again told them of his forthcoming passion.

10:35-40 The sons of Zebedee made their request – **10:42** and when the others heard they were indignant.

10:43-52 Jesus told them that to be great in the Kingdom they must be slave to all.

11:1-6 They finally reached the outskirts of Jerusalem and Jesus sent two disciples to get an ass.

11:7-10 Riding the ass Jesus entered Jerusalem.

11:11 After visiting the Temple he returned to Bethany.

11:12-14 The next morning he returned to the Temple but on the way he cursed a fig tree.

11:15-18 Arriving in the Temple he expelled the money changers.

11:19 That evening they returned to Bethany – **11:20-25** and on the way they passed the blighted fig tree and he told them by faith they could move mountains.

11:27-33 Back in Jerusalem the chief priests demanded by what authority he acted.

12:1-11 Jesus then told them the parable of the vineyard and the wicked husbandmen.

12:12 They were afraid of the crowds and let Jesus go.

12:13-17 Next he was asked about giving tribute to Caesar.

12:18-27 Some Sadducees challenged him on the resurrection of the dead.

12:28-34 A scribe asked Jesus what was the greatest commandment.

12:35-37 Later in the Temple Jesus spoke of himself in talking about the words of King David.

12:38-40 The scribes began to plan his capture and death – **12:41-44** and Jesus observes a poor widow putting offerings into the treasury. ►



13:1-2 Leaving the Temple Jesus prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem – **13:3-4** The disciples asked when this would happen.

13:5-8 He told them there would be wars and earthquakes, Jerusalem would be like a woman in labour – **13:9-13** they should be on their guard for they would be handed over to persecution – **13:14-23** the temple would be desecrated and the people slaughtered – **13:24-32** then the Son of Man would return in glory – **13:33-37** Be alert then.

14:1-2 The scribes and chief priests plotted to have Jesus put death.

14:3-9 While Jesus was in Bethany eating a meal a woman came and anointed him with precious oil.

14:10-11 Meanwhile Judas went to the chief priests to betray Jesus.

14:12-16 The preparations for the Passover supper were made and – **14:17-21** Jesus sat down with the twelve and told how one of them would betray him and then – **14:22-25** he broke bread and instituted the Eucharist.

14:26-31 They went to the Mount of Olives singing psalms.

14:32-42 Coming to Gethsemane, Jesus went to pray while the disciples slept.

14:43-49 Then Judas came with soldiers to arrest him.

14:50-52 The disciples all ran away, one leaving behind his robe.

14:53-60 Jesus was taken before the Sanhedrin and accused.

14:61-64 He was then condemned to death.

14:65 They blindfolded him and abused him.

14:66-71 Meanwhile Peter denied him three times and – **14:72** the cock crowed.

15:1-5 Next morning Jesus was taken before Pilate – **15:6-15** finding him innocent Pilate offered to release Jesus but the mob wanted his death.

15:16-20 The soldiers took him and crowned him with thorns mocked him.

15:21-22 He was then led out with his cross to Golgotha.

15:23 There they offered him drink – **15:24** stripped and crucified him.

15:25-32 They crucified him with two robbers.

15:33-39 With a loud cry he died and the veil in the Temple was torn from top to bottom.

15:40-41 Women were gathered at a distance.

15:42-47 In the evening Jesus was taken down and laid to rest in a tomb nearby.

16:1-3 When the Sabbath was over three women went to the tomb.

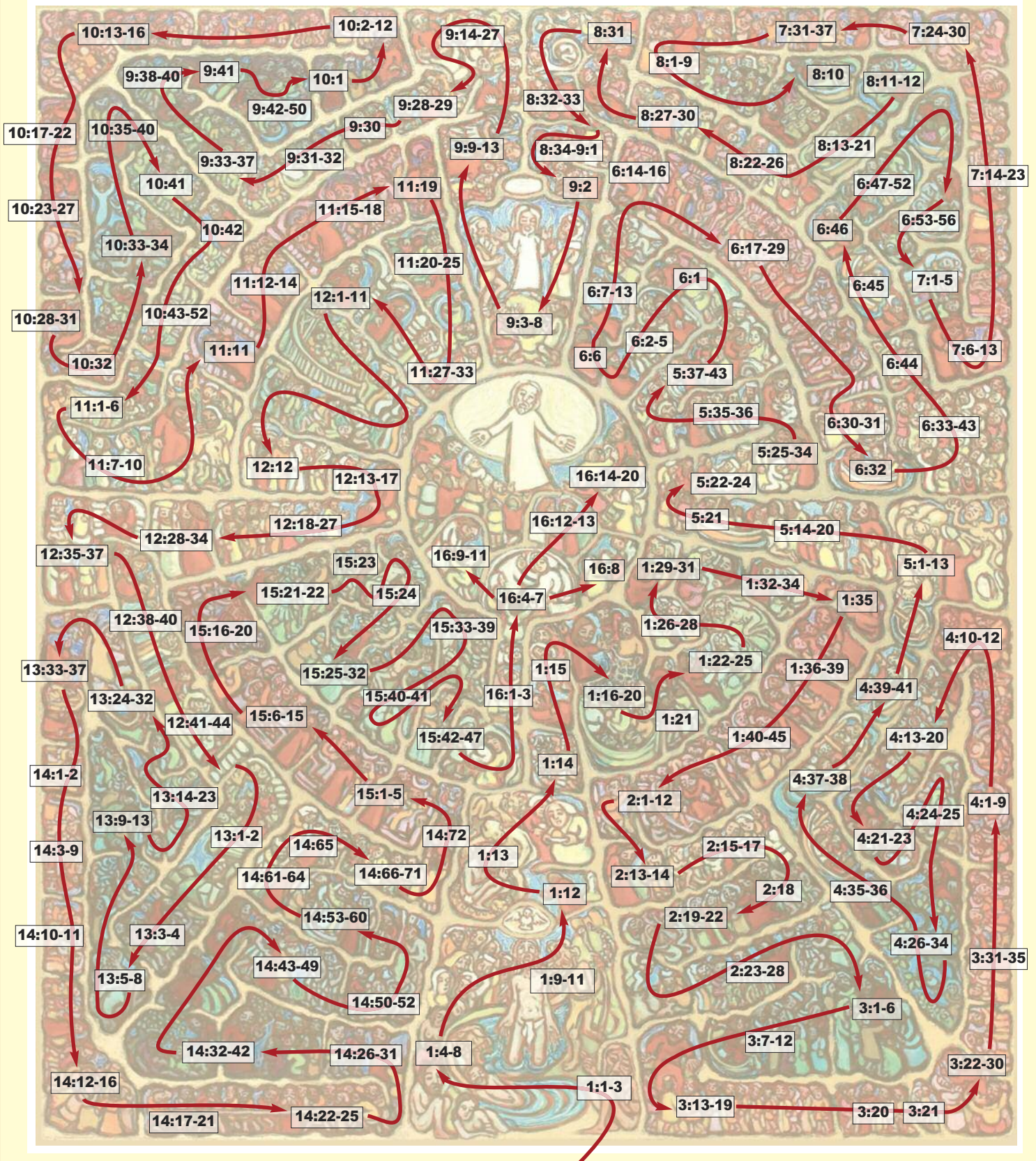
16:4-7 The women were greeted by an angel.

16:8 But the women ran away.

16:9-11 The risen Jesus first appeared to Mary of Magdala – **16:12-13** then to two disciples – **16:14-20** and then to the disciples who he sent out to proclaim the good news to the whole of creation. ■



Map of chapter and verse



Start at Mark 1:1-3 and follow the arrows in the direction they point.

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