



A Costly Freedom: A Theological Reading of Mark's Gospel

By Brendan Byrne SJ

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With this study of the Gospel of Mark, Brendan Byrne completes his trilogy of works on the Synoptic Gospels. Mark, the Cinderella gospel, as Byrne says, languished for millennia in the shadow of Matthew ("the first gospel") and Luke. Beginning in the nineteenth century, scholars uncovered what is now generally accepted as the more likely scenario: that Mark was the pioneer, creating a new literary genre ("gospel") in which to communicate the "Good News of Jesus Christ." This Good News according to Mark is essentially a message of freedom a freedom, however, that does "not come about without cost: a cost to Jesus, a cost to the Father, and a cost to those called to associate themselves with his life and mission." Mark holds out to us both the price and the promise of freedom.

A Costly Freedom joins *The Hospitality of God* (on Luke) and *Lifting the Burden* (on Matthew) to make up a set of indispensable companions to the gospels for preachers, teachers, and those who simply want to read the gospels for understanding and a deepening of their spirituality and faith.

Brendan Byrne, SJ, is professor of New Testament at Jesuit Theological College, Parkville, Victoria, Australia. A member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission (1990 '96) and Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities (2000 '), he is the author of nine books and editor in chief of the theological journal Pacifica.

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Editorial Review

Review

Byrne's *Costly Freedom* is perhaps the best work on Mark that I have ever read. It is clear that Byrne, an Australian Jesuit, writes with an experienced hand, drawing from his years of teaching and preaching for the church. Byrne's book is an exhilarating commentary on an exhilarating gospel.

Concordia Theological Quarterly

With this book Byrne has added an important interpretation of the Gospel of Mark which stands alongside many of the best hermeneutical efforts rather than against them. Presented in this format, the book can be well-used as part of a substantial comparative exegesis project in an upper level undergraduate course.

Catholic Books Review

This book is the fruit of years of teaching and interpreting Mark. It is suitable as a college or university textbook, but also for personal study.

Catholic Library World

Byrne offers a cohesive reading of the Gospel of Mark, bringing mainline scholarly insights to a popular audience.

Theological Studies

This is a very fine work by Australian Jesuit Brendan Byrne, which with *The Hospitality of God* (on Luke) and *Lifting the Burden* (on Matthew) completes a Synoptic trilogy. . . . I will return to this commentary again and again.

Review of Biblical Literature

. . . a revitalizing study of the Markan narrative and a sure complement to any library. . . . [a]n incredibly rich and invaluable resource.

Anglican Theological Review

Brendan Byrne's brief and readable commentary on Mark completes his Synoptic Gospels 'trilogy.' . . . Byrne is clearly passionate about, and an expert in, assisting preachers and those who hear them to interpret the Synoptic Gospels theologically.

The Catholic Biblical Quarterly

Those searching for a sound and theologically rich commentary on Mark's gospel for this lectionary year might well consider this fine study by Australian biblical scholar Brendan Byrne.

The Bible Today

About the Author

Brendan Byrne, SJ, is a professor of New Testament at Jesuit Theological College, within the United Faculty of Theology, Parkville, Melbourne, Australia. He is the author of *Romans* (1996) from the Sacra Pagina series, *Galatians and Romans* (2010), *A Costly Freedom: A Theological Reading of Mark's Gospel* (2008), *Lifting the Burden: Reading Matthew's Gospel in the Church Today* (2004), and *Life Abounding: A Reading of John's Gospel* (2014), published by Liturgical Press.

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