

1 A Russian called Anthony Bloom was an atheist when he was a university student in Paris. Simply to please somebody, he attended a meeting to which a Russian priest had been invited. Anthony Bloom hated the thought of being there, and grew more and more annoyed at what he heard about Christ and Christianity. When he got back home he asked his mother for a copy of the Gospels, because he wanted to prove that the priest had been lying.

2 Anthony decided to read quickly one of the Gospels. He counted the number of chapters in each of the four Gospels, and found that the Gospel of Saint Mark was the shortest - he didn't want to waste too much time reading what he thought was rubbish!

3 Before he reached the third chapter of Saint Mark's Gospel, he became aware of a Presence on the other side of the table. He became so sure that the Presence was the Risen Jesus, that his life changed forever. He became a Christian, and later became a priest. He is now an archbishop in the Russian Orthodox Church.

4 From having hated all that he thought Christianity was about, Anthony Bloom's life changed when he had some kind of experience that Jesus was alive and was beside him. It was St Mark's Gospel that he had read, and today is the feastday of Saint Mark.

5 *Let us pray:*

**Lord Jesus,  
we remember that you said  
that you would be with us,  
so we do know in our minds  
that you are present.  
But there's a difference**

**between knowing that you're present  
and growing in the faith  
that you are beside us.**

**We ask for the power of your Spirit  
in our lives each day,  
so that we may live more fully  
in your presence.**

**Only then will our attitude  
and words and actions  
better reflect yours. Amen.**

This is an excerpt from the page of this date in  
*'Praying Each Day of the Year'*,  
a 3-volume book  
by Nicholas Hutchinson, FSC.

For details:

<http://www.matthew-james.co.uk/>

Could make use of a search engine  
to research this topic further.

This material is part of  
the prayer and education website  
of the De La Salle Brothers  
in Great Britain:

[www.prayingeachday.org](http://www.prayingeachday.org)