

**1. Read (Seek)** — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out:

**2. Meditate (Find)** — Now begin to reflect on the verses and ask God what it means and how he wants to speak to you through the passage. **God what are you saying to me through this?**

**3. Pray (Ask)** — Respond from your heart to what God has been saying to you. **What do you want me to know?** Write down your prayer to him or record whatever he says to you.

**4. Contemplate (Taste)** — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence. **How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

[1] Navarre Bible, Gospel of Mark pg. 67

[2] CCC 515

[3] CCC, Glossary, pgs. 880-881

[4] CCC 126

[5] Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, Introduction to the Gospels, pg. xvii

[6] Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, Introduction to the Gospels, pg. xvi

[7] CCC 139

[8] St. Therese of Lisieux, ms. Autob. A 83v.

[9] CCC 2419

[10] Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, Introduction to the Gospels, pg. xv

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# Quick Connect

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## Gospel Reading – Mark 1:1-8 – Roman Missal

As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: *Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way. A voice of one crying out in the desert: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths."* John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. People of the whole Judean countryside and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they acknowledged their sins. John was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He fed on locusts and wild honey. And this is what he proclaimed: "One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

## Spiritual Reading

*From a letter by Saint Ambrose, bishop*

You have entered upon the office of bishop. Sitting at the helm of the Church, you pilot the ship against the waves. Take firm hold of the rudder of faith so that the severe storms of this world cannot disturb you. The sea is mighty and vast, but do not be afraid, for as Scripture says: *he has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the waters.* The Church of the Lord is built upon the rock of the apostles among so many dangers in the world; it therefore remains unmoved. The Church's foundation is unshakeable and firm against the assaults of the raging sea. Waves lash at the Church but do not shatter it. Although the elements of this world constantly beat upon the Church with crashing sounds, the Church possesses the safest harbor of salvation for all in distress. Although the Church is tossed about on the sea, it rides easily on rivers, especially those rivers that Scripture speaks of: *The rivers have lifted up their voice.* These are the rivers flowing from the heart of the man who is given drink by Christ and who receives from the Spirit of God. When these rivers overflow with the grace of the Spirit, they lift up their voice. There is also a stream which flows down on God's saints like a torrent. There is also a rushing river giving joy to the heart that is at peace and makes for peace. Whoever has received from the fullness of this river, like John the Evangelist, like Peter and Paul, lifts up his voice. Just as the apostles lifted up their voices and preached the Gospel throughout the world, so those who drink these waters begin to preach the good news of the Lord Jesus. Drink, then, from Christ, so that your voice may also be heard. Store up

in your mind the water that is Christ, the water that praises the Lord. Store up water from many sources, the water that rains down from the clouds of prophecy. Whoever gathers water from the mountains and leads it to himself or draws it from springs, is himself a source of dew like the clouds. Fill your soul, then, with this water, so that your land may not be dry, but watered by your own springs. He who reads much and understands much, receives his fill. He who is full, refreshes others. So Scripture says: *If the clouds are full, they will pour rain upon the earth.* Therefore, let your words be rivers, clean and limpid, so that in your exhortations you may charm the ears of your people. And by the grace of your words win them over to follow your leadership. Let your sermons be full of understanding. Solomon says: *The weapons of the understanding are the lips of the wise;* and in another place he says: *Let your lips be bound with wisdom.* That is, let the meaning of your words shine forth, let understanding blaze out. See that your addresses and expositions do not need to invoke the authority of others, but let your words be their own defense. Let no word escape your lips in vain or be uttered without depth of meaning.

### Gospel – Lesson and Discussion

**What does “Gospel” mean?** “The word ‘gospel’ means good tidings, the good news God sends to mankind through his Son. The content of this good news is, in the first place, Jesus Christ himself, his words and his actions.”[1] The term used in the Greek is *euangelizo* and it is actually a verb that means to announce good news. We must remember that the gospel is something that must be shared.

**Who wrote the Gospels?** “The Gospels were written by men who were among the first to have the faith and wanted to share it with others.”[2] “The four Gospels are the books written by the evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John which have for their central object Jesus Christ, God’s incarnate Son: his life, teachings, Passion and glorification, and his Church’s beginnings under the Spirit’s guidance.”[3] We hold the tradition that Matthew and John were written by the apostles Matthew and John who were by the side of Jesus throughout his life. Luke and Mark were written by followers of Paul and Peter respectively. They were given the Apostolic Tradition of the true teachings of Christ. The gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke are commonly referred to as the “synoptic gospels” because they are relatively in sync with their stories of Christ. The gospel of John stands in its own category.

**How were the Gospels formed?** The formation of the Gospels are distinguished in three categories[4]:

- 1.The life and teaching of Jesus. The Church holds firmly that the four Gospels, ‘whose historicity she unhesitatingly affirms, faithfully hand on what Jesus, the Son of God, while he lived among men, really did and taught for their eternal salvation, until the day when he was taken up.
- 2.The oral tradition. “For, after the ascension of the Lord, the apostles handed on to their hearers what he had said and done, but with that

fuller understanding which they, instructed by the glorious events of Christ and enlightened by the Spirit of truth, now enjoyed.”

3.The written Gospels. “The sacred authors, in writing the four Gospels, selected certain of the many elements which had ben handed on, either orally or already in written form; others they synthesized or explained with an eye to the situation of the churches, while sustaining the form of preaching, but always in such a fashion that they have told us the honest truth about Jesus.”

**Why are there 4 Gospels?** These four gospels through the authority of the Magisterium, supported by Sacred Tradition, and guided by the Holy Spirit have been deemed to be infallible writings and divinely inspired by God. The Sacred Tradition is not to be overlooked, it is the apostolic tradition that helps validate these four gospels. “So established was the four fold Gospel canon by the late second century that writers such as St. Irenaeus were beginning to reflect on its theological significance (A.D. 180). For him, the Church’s acceptance of four Gospels signified that the good news was to spread forth in all direction – to the four winds, as it were (Against Heresies 3, 11, 8).”[5]

“Christianity recognizes and reveres four Gospels, no more and no less. Only the texts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are accepted as inspired witnesses to the life of Jesus and to what he accomplished for our salvation. These four writings stand as four pillar supporting the Church’s faith and proclamation for all time.”[6]

**Why are the Gospels important?** First, the Gospels are the source material on the life and teachings of Jesus. “The four Gospels occupy a central place because Christ Jesus is their center.”[7] Secondly, no matter how many times we read the gospels we can find something new, fresh, and beautiful from them. “But above all it’s the Gospels that occupy my mind when I’m at prayer; my poor soul has so many needs, and yet this is the one thing needful. I’m always finding fresh lights there, hidden and enthralling meanings.”[8] Thirdly, we can receive an indulgence by prayerfully reading Scripture for just 15 minutes a day especially the gospels. Fourth, without the gospels we do not have a mission. It is in the gospels that we read and are given our order to proclaim the good news. “When she fulfills her mission of proclaiming the Gospel, she bears witness to man, in the name of Christ, to his dignity and his vocation to the communion of persons. She teaches him the demands of justice and peace in conformity with divine wisdom.”[9] Finally, the gospels give us access to the words and actions of Jesus Christ and thus they possess the highest authority. Because of this, “The Church acknowledges this in various ways, most obviously in the liturgy, where the Gospels are held aloft in procession, perfumed with incense, and proclaimed as the word of God. Selections from all parts of the Scriptures are represented in the Church’s lectionary, but the Gospel reading is always featured as the highpoint of the Liturgy of the Word. The belief is that Jesus is made present to his people in word and sacrament, both in the inspired accounts of the evangelists and in the consecrated elements of the Eucharist.”[10]