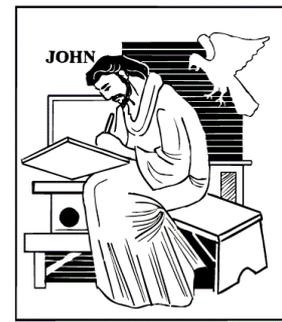
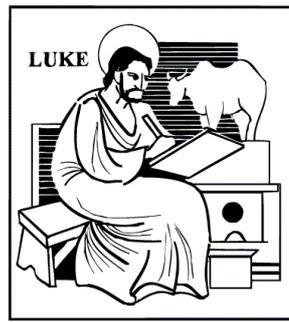
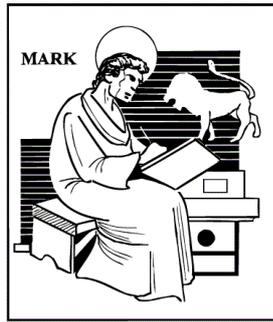
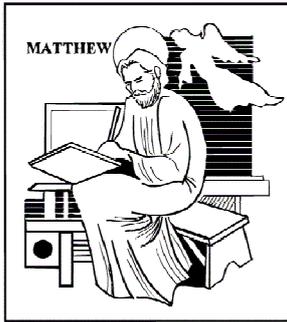


Breaking Open the Word



February 1, 2015 Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time Lectionary: 71 Gospel [Mk 1:21-28](#)

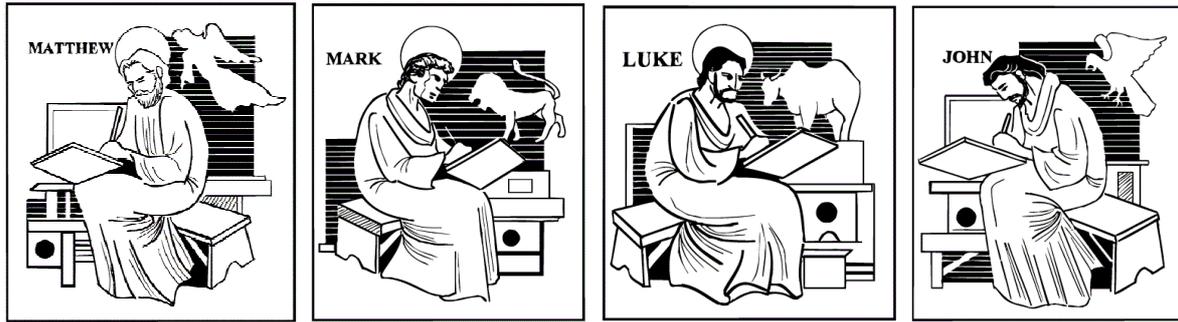
Then they came to Capernaum, and on the Sabbath Jesus entered the synagogue and taught. The people were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes. In their synagogue was a man with an unclean spirit; he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!" Jesus rebuked him and said, "Quiet! Come out of him!" The unclean spirit convulsed him and with a loud cry came out of him. All were amazed and asked one another, "What is this? A new teaching with authority. He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him." His fame spread everywhere throughout the whole region of Galilee.

Spiritual Reflection: Notice that the first place Jesus encounters someone possessed by a demon is not in the wilderness or along the streets but rather in a synagogue - a church. There is all so no description of the man who is possessed. The man could have been the choir leader, the rabbi, an elder, etc. The Good News is that he is healed. The moral of the story is that the Church is not a place to avoid because we have given into temptation but rather the place to go in order to receive God's love and mercy.

Spiritual Questions:

1. St. Augustine said "The Church is a hospital for sinners not a hotel for saints." What are your thoughts?
2. Who are some of the people at Church that inspire you?
3. Who are some of the people at Church that annoy you (don't mention by name)? Do you pray for them?
4. How can the Church help you find Christ's healing?
5. Why do you go to Church?

Breaking Open the Word



February 8, 2015 Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time Lectionary: 74 Gospel [Mk 1:29-39](#)

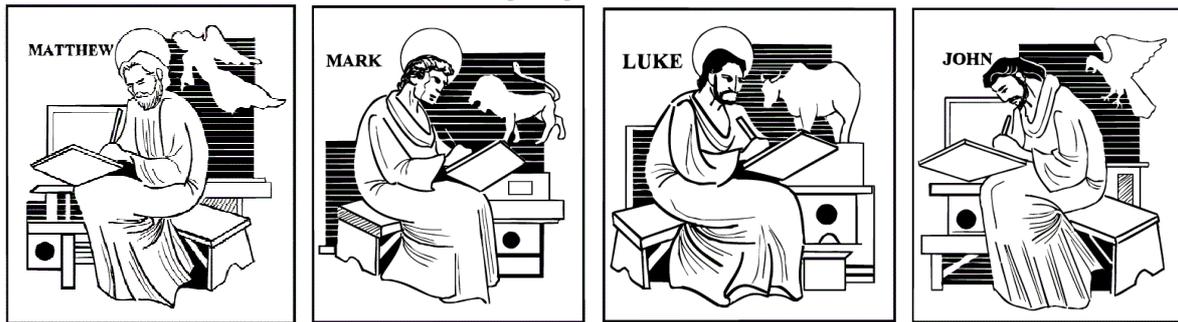
On leaving the synagogue Jesus entered the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John. Simon's mother-in-law lay sick with a fever. They immediately told him about her. He approached, grasped her hand, and helped her up. Then the fever left her and she waited on them. When it was evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were ill or possessed by demons. The whole town was gathered at the door. He cured many who were sick with various diseases, and he drove out many demons, not permitting them to speak because they knew him. Rising very early before dawn, he left and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed. Simon and those who were with him pursued him and on finding him said, "Everyone is looking for you." He told them, "Let us go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also. For this purpose have I come." So he went into their synagogues, preaching and driving out demons throughout the whole of Galilee.

Spiritual Reflection: In this brief's story about Simon's mother-in-law we receive a glimpse into what a life of a disciple is all about. She is healed by Christ and then serves others in gratitude. We are healed by Christ (if we let Him) and then we are commissioned to serve others.

Spiritual Questions:

1. Why does Jesus go off and pray?
2. What do you want to do if you were in Jesus' position - stay and let others come to you or go out and search for those people to help?
3. How hard do you think it was for Jesus to walk away from the crowd?
4. How does Jesus know his purpose?
5. How are you serving others repaying Jesus?

Breaking Open the Word



February 15, 2015 Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time Lectionary: 77 Gospel [Mk 1:40-45](#)

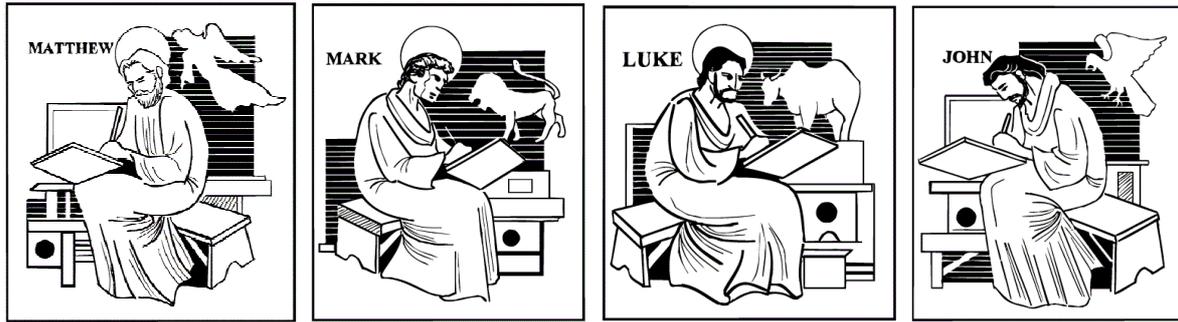
A leper came to Jesus and kneeling down begged him and said, "If you wish, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, "I do will it. Be made clean." The leprosy left him immediately, and he was made clean. Then, warning the him sternly, he dismissed him at once. He said to him, "See that you tell no one anything, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses prescribed; that will be proof for them." The man went away and began to publicize the whole matter. He spread the report abroad so that it was impossible for Jesus to enter a town openly. He remained outside in deserted places, and people kept coming to him from everywhere.

Spiritual Reflection: The man who was healed probably thought that he was doing something nice for Jesus by telling everyone about Jesus' great power even though Jesus told him not to. This leads to Jesus' ministry being made more complicated than it needed to be. Anytime we do things our way instead of God's way we slow God's plan down.

Spiritual Questions:

1. Does God want what is best for you?
2. If yes why do we fight His plan?
3. What has God done for you?
4. How do you show God gratitude for His many blessings?
5. How can you better align your will with God' will?

Breaking Open the Word



February 22, 2015 First Sunday of Lent Lectionary: 23 Gospel [Mk 1:12-15](#)

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the desert, and he remained in the desert for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among wild beasts, and the angels ministered to him. After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

Spiritual Reflection: Mark's description about Jesus' temptation is very short. We know that He was tempted, it was a dangerous time (among wild beast) and that God provided for Him (angels ministered to Him). How can Jesus' example of being tempted teach us about life?

Spiritual Questions:

1. How can Jesus example of being tempted teach us about life?
2. What is the difference between temptation and sin?
3. Why did temptation have to be a part of Jesus' life?
4. How did rely on God help Jesus overcome temptation?
5. How did His experience of temptation prepare Him for ministry?