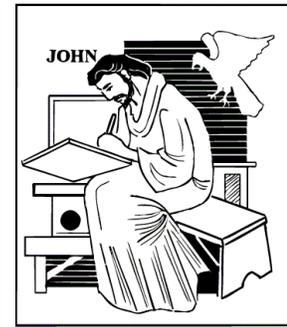
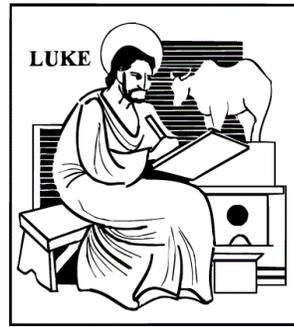
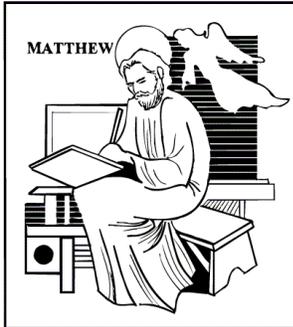


Breaking Open the Word



August 30, 2015 - 22nd Sun. in Ordinary Time Lectionary: 125 Gospel [Mk 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23](#)

When the Pharisees with some scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus, they observed that some of his disciples ate their meals with unclean, that is, unwashed, hands. —For the Pharisees and, in fact, all Jews, do not eat without carefully washing their hands, keeping the tradition of the elders. And on coming from the marketplace they do not eat without purifying themselves. And there are many other things that they have traditionally observed, the purification of cups and jugs and kettles and beds. — So the Pharisees and scribes questioned him, "Why do your disciples not follow the tradition of the elders but instead eat a meal with unclean hands?" He responded, "Well did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites, as it is written: *This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines human precepts.* You disregard God's commandment but cling to human tradition." He summoned the crowd again and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand. Nothing that enters one from outside can defile that person; but the things that come out from within are what defile. "From within people, from their hearts, come evil thoughts, unchastity, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, licentiousness, envy, blasphemy, arrogance, folly. All these evils come from within and they defile."

Spiritual Reflection: Human nature is base when it headlines and parades crimes of others before their fellow men. The pot thinks it is clean if it calls the kettle black. Some faces are never so gay as when regaling a scandal, which the generous heart would cover and the devout heart pray over. The more base and corrupt a man, the more ready is he to charge crimes to others. Those who want credit for good character foolishly believe the best way to get it is to denounce others. Vicious people like a monopoly of their vices; they condemn them with an intensity that the good never feel. All one has to do to learn the faults of men is to listen to their favorite charges against others. - Archbishop Fulton Sheen

Spiritual Questions

1. How much time do the Pharisees, Scribes, etc. spend pointing out Jesus' faults instead of pointing out all the good He is doing?
2. Why are they trying to point out Jesus' faults?
3. What does it say about them that they spend all their time focused on Jesus' faults and not his love?
4. How does their focusing on Christ make them blind to their own faults?
5. How would their relationship with God be different?