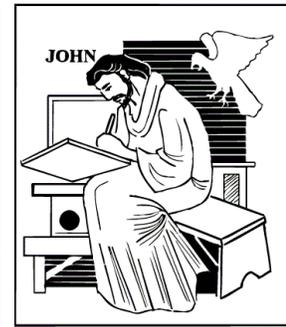
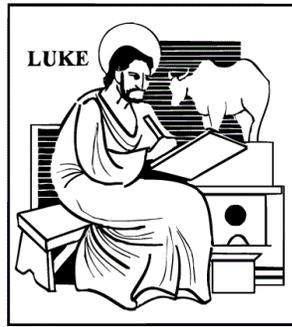
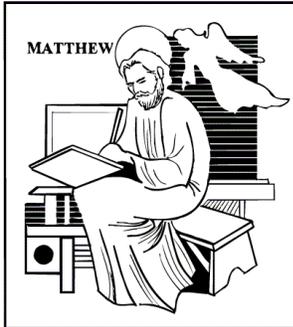


Breaking Open the Word



September 6, 2015 Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time Lectionary: 128 Gospel [Mk 7:31-37](#)

Again Jesus left the district of Tyre and went by way of Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, into the district of the Decapolis. And people brought to him a deaf man who had a speech impediment and begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him off by himself away from the crowd. He put his finger into the man's ears and, spitting, touched his tongue; then he looked up to heaven and groaned, and said to him, "*Ephphatha!*"— that is, "Be opened!" — And immediately the man's ears were opened, his speech impediment was removed, and he spoke plainly. He ordered them not to tell anyone. But the more he ordered them not to, the more they proclaimed it. They were exceedingly astonished and they said, "He has done all things well. He makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

Spiritual Reflection: A young mother listen to her son's teachers tell her that he was too stupid to learn but she never gave up. It was soon learned that Thomas was not stupid but partially death. Thomas would eventually be fired from his first two jobs as being "non-productive" but learning from his mother's example he kept trying and eventually invented the light bulb. Thomas Edison made 1,000 unsuccessful attempts at inventing the light bulb. When a reporter asked, "How did it feel to fail 1,000 times?" Edison replied, "I didn't fail 1,000 times. The light bulb was an invention with 1,000 steps." Are we open to the possibility that our defects and failures can lead us to a personal encounter with Christ?

Spiritual Questions:

1. Why do you think we label others?
2. Why do we allow ourselves to be labeled?
3. How can our weaknesses bring us to Christ?
4. What does the idea of "Being open" mean to you?"
5. Has anyone every surprised you by breaking out of the label you had given them?