

**SCHOOL OF THE WORD 2017**  
St Mark's Gospel (2)

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**Programme**

- Introduction to Mark's Gospel
- **What is a Gospel?**
- Mark in the readings at Mass
- Reading Mark
- Mark's portrait of Jesus
- Mark's portrait of the disciple

**Sequence**

- The word "gospel"
- Gospel and Gospels
- Biographies
- Task

**The Word "Gospel"**

- Old Testament (Isaiah)
- New Testament (throughout)
  
- What Jesus preached
- What early Christians said about Jesus
- The "Gospels" in the New Testament

Since **providence**, which has divinely disposed our lives, having employed zeal and ardour, has arranged the most **perfect culmination** for life by producing **Augustus**, whom for the **benefit** of mankind she has filled with excellence, as if she had granted him as a **saviour** for us and our descendants, a **saviour** who brought war to an end and set all things in **peaceful** order and since with his **appearance Caesar** exceeded the **hopes** of all those who had received **good news** before us, not only surpassing those who had been benefactors before him, but not even leaving any **hope** of surpassing him for those who are to come in the **future**, and since **the beginning of the good news** on his account for the world was the **birthday of a god...** (Priene Calendar Inscription)

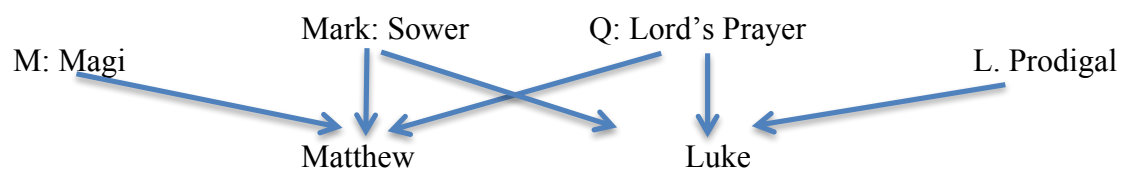
**Gospel and Gospels**

- Four Gospels used in the Church
- Familiar through the cycle of readings
- At heart, each Gospel is a "life" of Jesus
- The four Gospels do differ in approach
  
- Written from faith
- Written for faith
- To be read in faith
- The guiding light is the Resurrection

*Different contexts, different portraits*

- Matthew: Jewish Christians
- Mark: persecution?
- Luke: non-Jews or Gentiles
- John: mixed congregation
  
- Mark 16 chs
- Matthew 28 chs
- Luke 24 chs

- (John 21 chs)
- Matthew and Luke are expansions of Mark
- Matthew and Luke share about 252 verses not found in Mark
- Matthew and Luke also have material unique to each one
- Opening scenes...
  - Matthew: The Sermon on the Mount
  - Mark: A typical day
  - Luke: Preaching in Nazareth
  - John: Call of the first disciples
- You've been called / inspired / invited to write a Gospel
- How would you do it?
- What would you definitely include?
- What would you perhaps leave out?
- The Gospel writers used various sources
  - They used sources differently
  - They used sources freely
  - Examples: Preaching in Nazareth, Sermon on the Mount, Cleansing of the Temple
- 252 verses = the Sayings Sources (Quelle)
- Q survives only in Matthew and Luke
- Q written, probably, in Palestine, in Greek



- Not everything was written down
- Awareness of traditions
- Offering a structured account
- Differing, to a greater and lesser extent
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- Awareness of traditions
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70 years				45 years					
Jesus 6 BC—AD 30		Paul 6 B —AD 64		Mark 70		Matthew 85—90		John 95— 100	Luke 110— 115
Galilee, Judea		Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, Italy		Syria? Rome?		Syria		Syria, Asia Minor	Rome?
Augustus	Tiberius	Caligula Claudius	Nero	Vespasian	Titus	Domitian	Nerva, Trajan	Trajan,	
31-14	14-37	37-41 41-54	54-68	69-79	79-81	81-96	96-98, 98-117	98-117	

### **Biographies**

- Before the Gospels, we find fragments of narrative:
  - In hymns, such as Phil 2
  - In short “creeds” such as 1 Cor 15
  - In passages about the Christ event, such as 1Cor 11
  - These traces presume a longer narrative
  - This longer narrative was oral until a double crisis triggered the writing down of the proclamation, always in the light of Easter
- Our Gospels resemble biographies of the time, but
  - The purpose is proclamation, in the light of Easter
  - The writers felt free to select, arrange, edit and add
  - Each Gospel has a viewpoint (a “theology”), a kind of religious DNA which enters every cell of the text
  - The story continued in the lives of believers
- So, the Gospels are not biographies in our modern sense
- Mark: probably oppression, if not persecution
- Matthew: a difficult relationship with Jews
- John: a community with a special history and leadership
- Luke: a text for the Gentile seeker, perhaps at a time when some were against the OT

### **Task**

Imagine only Mark has come down to us:

1. What do we find only in Mark?
2. If we had only Mark, what would we miss?

Reading suggestions: [www.tarsus.ie](http://www.tarsus.ie).

### **Conversation**