

As we share this period of "Ordinary Time" we pray you discover a new awareness of God's Word and God's love and presence in your lives through these reflections.



Next Week: The Gospel of Mark.

Having completed our study of the Acts of the Apostles with today's insert, our continuing exploration of the Bible will turn next week to begin a study of the Gospel of Mark.

Our aim in this study (as with all our endeavors) is that the church will "... know the Lord more clearly, love Him more dearly and follow him more nearly" as written by Prof. William Barclay so many years ago.

Our weekly study will begin by placing Mark in the context of the synoptic gospels (from the Greek) *to see together*; because the three (Matthew Luke and Mark) can be set side by side with so much common matter between them. And we will see that Mark's writing is the most important of the three, since it is generally agreed to be the earliest, unique effort by the believers' community to capture the story of the life and meaning of the Lord's journey among us.

The synoptic gospels have come to us as a unique representation of the common faith of the first Christians. There are remarkable similarities between the Synoptic Gospels, almost down to identical words, phrases and stories. And in all, Matthew and Luke largely follow Mark's order of events in their Gospels. It seems nearly certain that Mark's Gospel was known to the authors of Matthew and Luke as they each shared their accounts of faith.

In addition this section of the rendition will include questions for your continuing prayer and reflection on the gospel's meaning and application to our lives as believers. I hope by drawing on good questions I might invite you to a deeper appreciation of the Gospel's meaning and application to our common life in faith. Til next week... Rest in the Lord!

Our Lady of the Fields Church
Scriptural Review & Reflections
Saturday & Sunday January 20 & 21, 2018

For more information on any of the parish Faith Enrichment programs contact the Evangelization and Faith Formation Office & Staff or Dr. Little at tlittle@olffparish.com

**The Acts of the Apostles: A Book for Disciples:
Acts Ch. 28 How Little They Understand!**

The final scenes in the book of Acts begin with a tragic rendition of the attempt to lose the boat for Rome from a shoal with a tragic outcome for the ship. Paul is undaunted and he and his travel companions are saved from a plan to execute all the ship's prisoners (a normal Roman procedure when prisoners might be lost a in a ship run aground) through the goodness of the Roman centurion on board. Thus, the company lands on Malta where all aboard were treated with great kindness and Paul was again noticed by the natives as a viper latched onto his hand while gathering materials for the fire. When the natives saw the viper they decided he was a receiving justice from the gods. However, when Paul shook off the creature with no harm to himself they proclaimed him a "god." In return for their ensuing hospitality Paul prays over the natives and cures the ill father of the island's chief leader. All the natives, in turn, help to prepare any needed provisions for the ship's resulting trip to Rome.

Finally, the Apostle reaches his long sought destination – Rome! And to his delight receives the privilege of being able to stay by himself in house arrest with only a single guard. Paul directly connects with the religious leaders in Rome who wish to hear about his ventures on behalf of the gospel and a new round of preaching the word to all who would come to his place of confinement from morning to night. Thus the book ends with Paul, always the teacher and preacher of the Word; even to the end challenges his hearers to accept God's word as a lamp to their feet. And we last see Paul, sharing the caution of Isaiah, the prophet. "You shall hear and never understand." Unless you turn and honestly seek God! Never was there a truer picture of Paul calling to us all!