

individually and in harmony with one another. This course may be the basis of private reading or as part of a group. Being part of a group offers encouragement and the opportunity to share the many thoughts and reflections which would be the fruit of prayerful reading of the Gospels. One can also benefit from one another's perspective. Here is the suggested framework of a weekly meeting.

### Suggested Reading

*This week you may wish to read the following passages from the Bible.*

#### A Recommended Reading

*Matthew 1:1 - 2:23*

#### B Read Carefully

Matthew	1:18:25	The Birth of Jesus
Matthew	2:1-12	The Wise Men
Matthew	2:12-23	The Flight into Egypt

#### C Compare this section with:

*Matthew 1:1-17 = Luke 3:25-34*  
*The Genealogy of Jesus*

#### D Background Reading

*Matthew 2:12-23 = The flight into Egypt*  
Compare the Old Testament quotations  
and Exodus Ch 1.

#### Prayer

O God, who by the pages of both Testaments  
Instruct and prepare us to celebrate the Paschal Mystery,  
Grant that we may comprehend your mercy,  
So that the gifts we receive from you this night  
may confirm our hope of the gifts to come.  
Through Christ our Lord Amen.

PFP v6 2/2020

## Sacred Heart Catholic Church

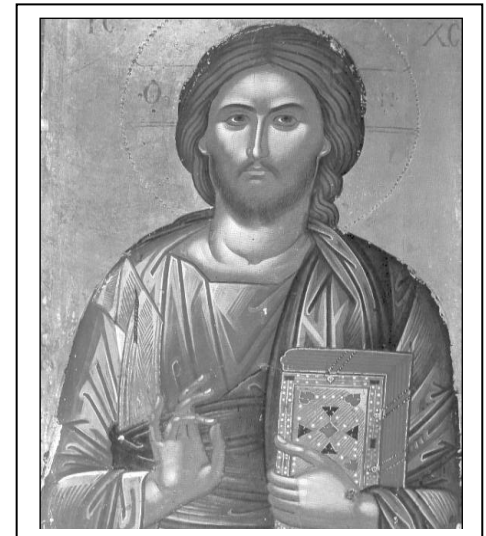
Henley on Thames



## Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew

---

*The aim of this course is to read the Gospel of Matthew in a systematic manner, which will bring to the fore the concerns and character of Matthew, within the larger context of the New Testament and their relationship with the other books of the Bible, particularly the Old Testament.*



### Importance of Reading the Gospel:

The central premise of this course is a prayerful examination of the Scriptures in the light of recent scholarship and research. While each session seeks to highlight the central concepts and concerns, this is secondary to a prayerful reading of the text. A Bible is the only book necessary. The observations provided seek to save the reader the expense of purchasing an expensive commentary.

### Systematic Reading:

Week by week this course will introduce the reader to the concepts and concerns of the Gospels of Matthew. Each section has been carefully chosen to reflect the natural divisions within the text.

Today, we divide the text by chapter and verse, however this relatively recent convention can sometimes obscure the natural divisions within the Gospels. This course seeks to examine the Gospels in a broader context.

### *Suggested Reading*

*This week you may wish to read the following passages from the Bible.*

**A** **Recommended Reading**

Mark 1:16 - 3:6

**B** **Read Carefully**

Mark 1:21 - 39

**A Day in the Life of Jesus**  
Beginnings of Opposition.

Mark 3:1 - 6b

**C** **Background Reading**

- |      |   |                               |
|------|---|-------------------------------|
| i,   | <b>Mark 2:7</b> = Exodus 34:6-7<br>Isaiah 43:25 & 44:22 | Only God can<br>forgive sins. |
| ii,  | <b>Mark 2:19</b> = Hosea 2:19<br>Isaiah 54:4-8          | The Bridegroom<br>is here.    |
| iii, | <b>Mk 2:24-25</b> = Exodus 34:21<br>1 Samuel 21:1-6     | The Sabbath<br>& Fasting.     |

**D** **Compare this section with:**

Matthew 8:14-17  
Luke 4:31-43

**E** **Further Reading**

The New Catechism pages 33-35. 97-100.

**Prayer**

Lord,  
fill our hearts with your light.  
May we always acknowledge Christ as our Saviour  
and be more faithful to his Gospel,  
for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

At the end of each session there is a handout which includes a copy of the talk as well as **Suggested Reading**, which will form the basis of the following session. This reading is graded in priority to allow the reader to examine each section of the Gospel in greater or lesser detail.

If time is a premium, one may read two or three carefully selected passages from the recommended reading, entitled **Read Carefully**. Occasionally for the very busy, one text is suggested (however this is not recommended as the norm for each week.)

**Background Reading** from

the Old Testament is suggested. There are opportunities to **Compare and Contrast** passages, as well as **Further Reading** from the New Catechism. This priority allows each individual the opportunity to read to a greater or lesser degree, and to return to the text in greater detail at a later date if desired. It is hoped that such flexibility will allow the reader to make a commitment to read the Gospels in a systematic fashion, while being realistic about the time they can devote to this project. Lack of time need not deter anyone from undertaking this venture.

**Reading in Context:**

Since the Second Vatican Council there has been a renewal in the importance in Sacred Scripture. As a result, Catholics have never been more exposed to the riches of God's word. This has born fruit in many ways, not least a flowering in interest in Scripture. While many Catholics may not feel confident about their knowledge of scripture, they have listened to a semi-continuous reading of the Gospel for many years. Many passages are instantly familiar. Sometimes it is the context which causes concern, which passage comes before another. This course directly answers this concern.

We shall also consider the Gospels within the context of the Old Testament. Matthew uses the Old Testament much more than any other Evangelist. He is anxious to demonstrate that the Old Testament is fulfilled in the life of Jesus. '*Fulfilled*' is the word which Matthew uses most in his Gospel. This is the opportunity for us to study the connection between the Old Testament and the Gospels.

**The concerns and character of each Evangelist,**

We seek to understand each Gospel better, and the character and concerns of the Evangelist in more detail; while at the same time glimpsing the parallels and divergences of the Gospel.

*Example:* Every Christmas, the well-loved passages from the Gospels are read together. Luke's shepherds are placed together in the same stable scene with Matthew's wise men and the traditional ox and ass. We remember the Annunciation to Mary (Luke) in the same breath as The Massacre of the Innocents or the Flight into Egypt. (Matthew)

The humility of the birth of Jesus amongst the poor shepherds (from Luke) is placed with Matthew's concern for the kingship of Jesus, and the worship of Jesus by the gentile wise men. The flight into Egypt echoing the Moses escape from the massacre of the Hebrew children, can be placed with Luke's concern for the role of Mary to whom the angel appears, which leads to her urgent visitation to Elizabeth. The result is that the concerns of the particular Evangelist may be confused, and neither properly appreciated. Following the natural divisions within the Gospels, and reading each Gospel in its entirety, we shall allow the singular voice of each evangelist to build up the picture we know today.

We focus upon Jesus, the word of God, made flesh, who is at the heart of the fourfold Gospel. On this occasion three of these voices will speak to us