

# The Bible and the Gospels

What do we know?

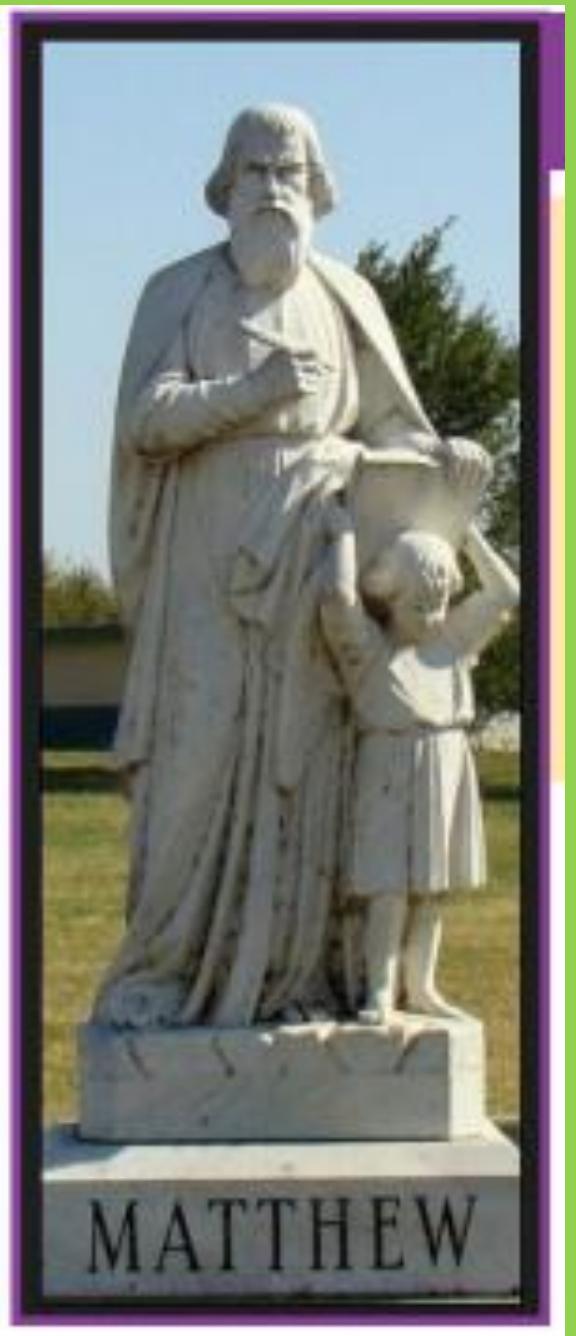
The word **Evangelion** mean '**Good News**'. This is the happy news that God loves us and Jesus saved us.

The word **Evangelion** also means a collection of four holy books, the Gospels.

The **Gospels** were written by the four **Evangelists**: Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. An Evangelist spreads the Good News.

The Gospels describe the life and teachings of Jesus.

In the Church tradition, each Evangelist is symbolised by a man of different ages surrounded by important objects but also by a winged creature. Look carefully at the statues of each of the Evangelists. What can you spot?

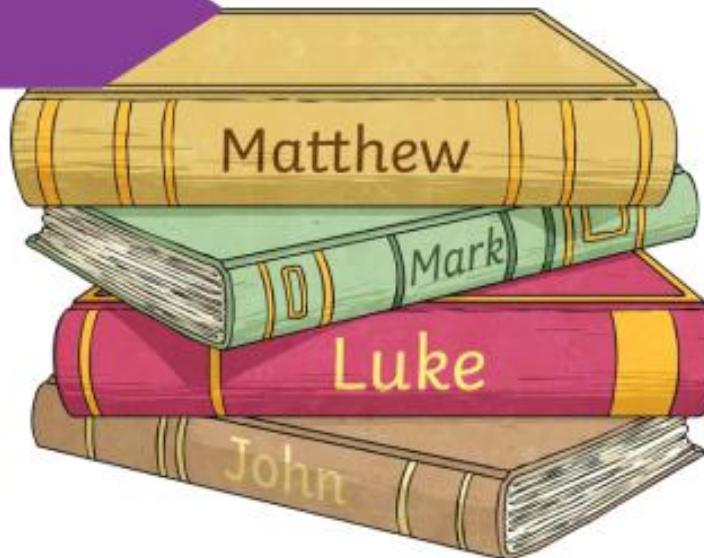


# The Four Gospels

## Who wrote the four Gospels?

They were written by four people: Mark, Matthew, Luke and John. The content of the Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke is very similar. They are therefore known as the '**Synoptic Gospels**' and have been known as this since around the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. They are the first three Gospels of the New Testament.

John's Gospel is the final Gospel in the New Testament and is not referred to as one of the Synoptic Gospels. It was written a long time after the Synoptic Gospels and has a more poetic style, making it more difficult to decode. Rather than concentrating on Jesus' ministry, John's Gospel explains who Jesus was and there are very few mentions of the miracles that Jesus performed.





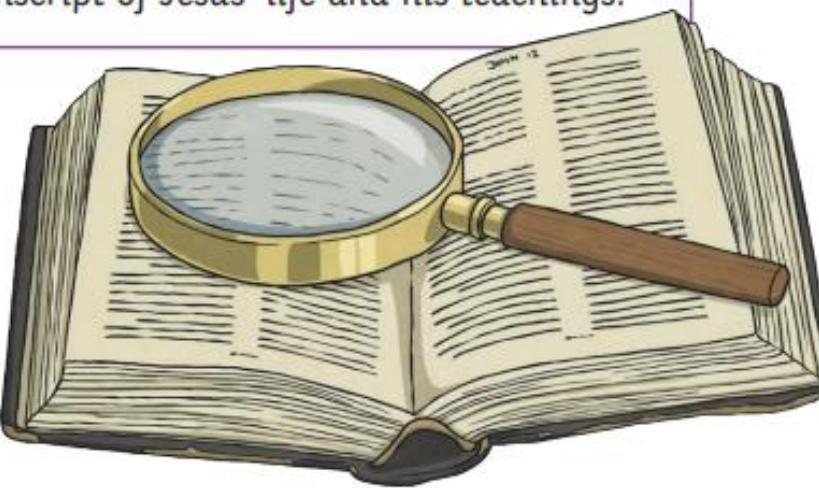
## What are the similarities of the Synoptic Gospels?

It is believed that Matthew's and Luke's Gospels are based on Mark's. His was written first. The three gospels agree with the key events in Jesus' life, the order in which those events took place and words spoken by Jesus on certain occasions.

### Glossary

**Synoptic** to be similar or comparable.

**Gospel** is a transcript of Jesus' life and his teachings.





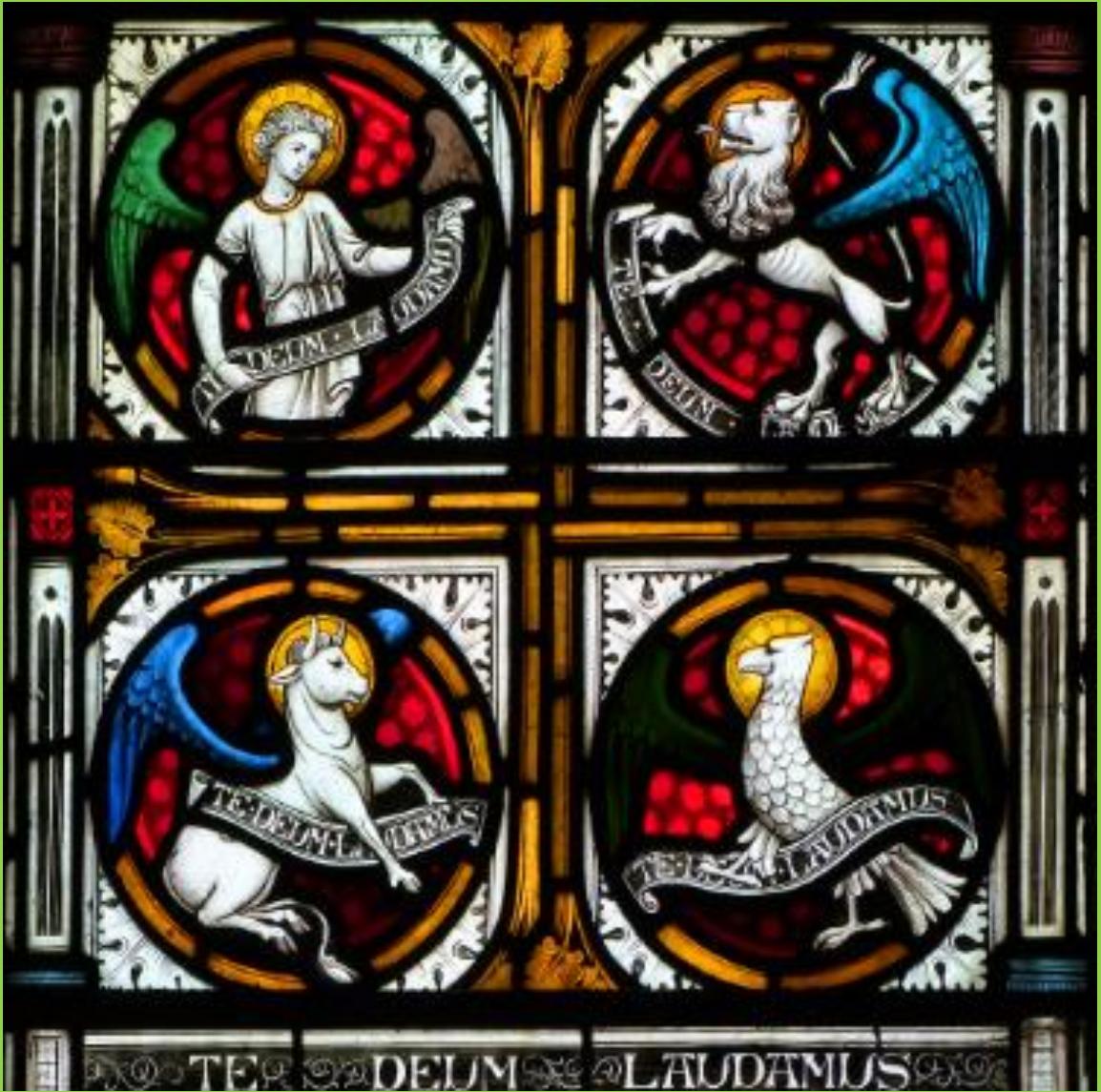
The four Evangelists, who are the authors of the Gospels, have been depicted in many different ways over the centuries. They are popular subjects for art work including stained glass windows.



The ancient Book of Kells is a magnificently illuminated book. This book was created in Ireland by monks in 800 AD. The book gives each Evangelist a symbol:

the Angel for Saint Matthew  
the Lion for Saint Mark  
the Ox for Saint Luke  
the Eagle for Saint John





These winged creatures have been used to represent each of the Evangelists since the Book of Kells was created.



For our Colour Day, we will be focusing on these images and the men who wrote the Gospels. You will learn more about the Evangelist for your House. Later today we will share what we have learned.



When the School Council created the four school houses, we decided that the Houses would be named after the four Evangelists.

For our summer Colour Day, we will be focusing on the images used to represent the Evangelists and the men who wrote the Gospels. You will learn more about the Evangelist for your House and create art work and written work for display. Later today we will share what we have learned as a whole school.

Apostle and Evangelist  
Matthew

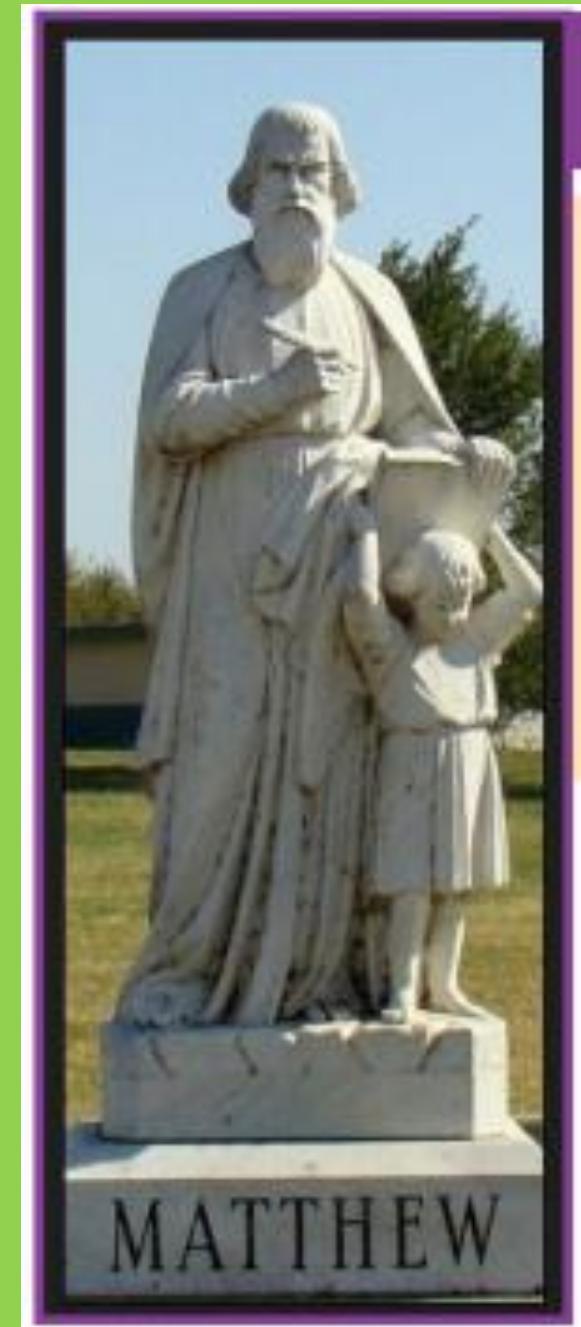
Matthew was the brother of the Apostle James. He lived in Capernaum of Galilee and was a tax-collector. At the time, tax-collectors were disliked because they often took advantage of the Jewish people. When he met Jesus he repented and immediately followed Him.

Matthew preached the Gospel first in Palestine, then in Syria, Media, Persia, and Ethiopia. In Ethiopia he worked many miracles by the Grace of God, baptised thousands including the family of the ruler.

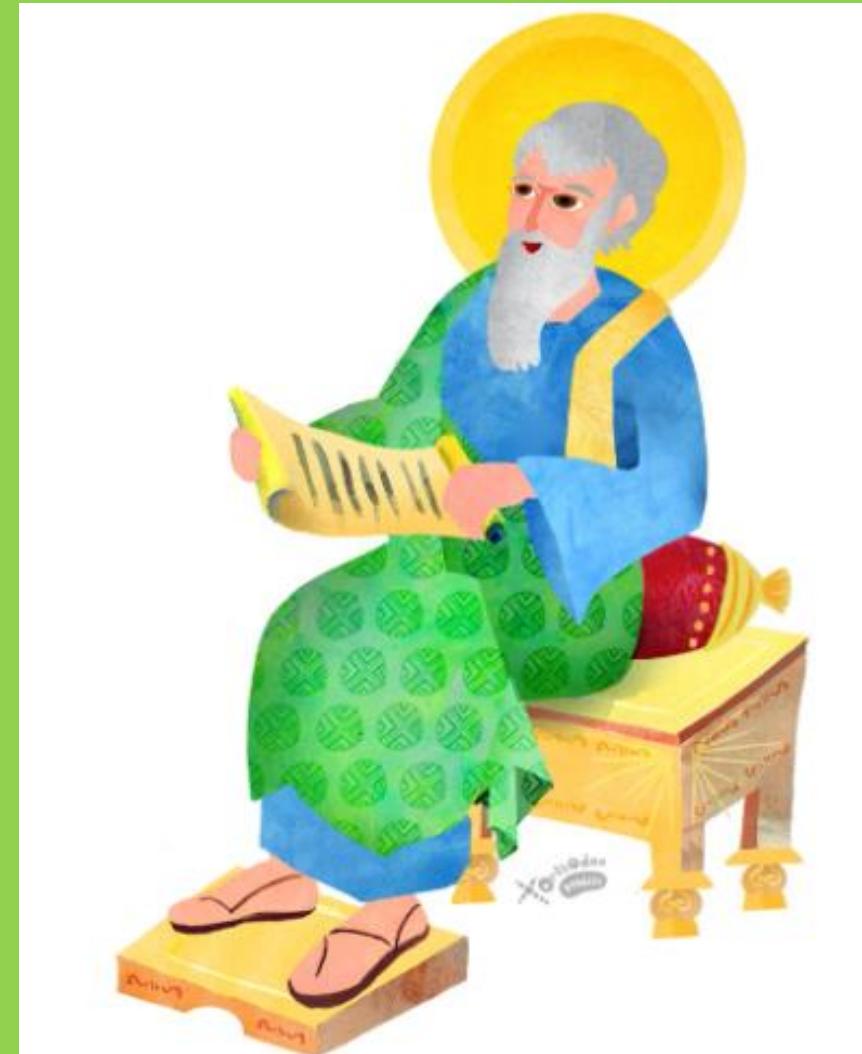
## Matthew

Matthew concentrates on Jesus as the King, the individual that delivers all the promises and prophecies spoken about in the Old Testament. Matthew's Gospel also mentions how Jesus was specifically chosen by God to give salvation to the people on earth.

Feast day: November 16



The Evangelist Matthew is shown as an old man with thick white hair and a long, pointy beard. His face is serious and he is concentrates on his writing. He is often seated in a chair with his body leaning towards a small table on which his writing instruments are placed. There may be a scroll with Hebrew characters - this is to signify that Matthew first wrote his Gospel account in Hebrew and later translated it into Greek.



The symbol associated with Matthew's Gospel is an angel or winged man. This can be seen in Iconography and art throughout the centuries. Some people believe that the symbol was used because the first story from the gospel is about an Angel appearing to Joseph in a dream. Others think that the winged man represents the humanity of Christ, because the gospel contains the genealogy of Christ.



Apostle and Evangelist  
Mark

- Saint Mark worked closely with the Apostles Paul and Peter, and with Saint Barnabas, who was his uncle. They preached in Asia Minor, Cyprus, Egypt and other places in North Africa.
- He returned to Alexandria in Egypt, where he lived for a long time, establishing a vibrant and very active Church, also becoming its first bishop.

## Mark

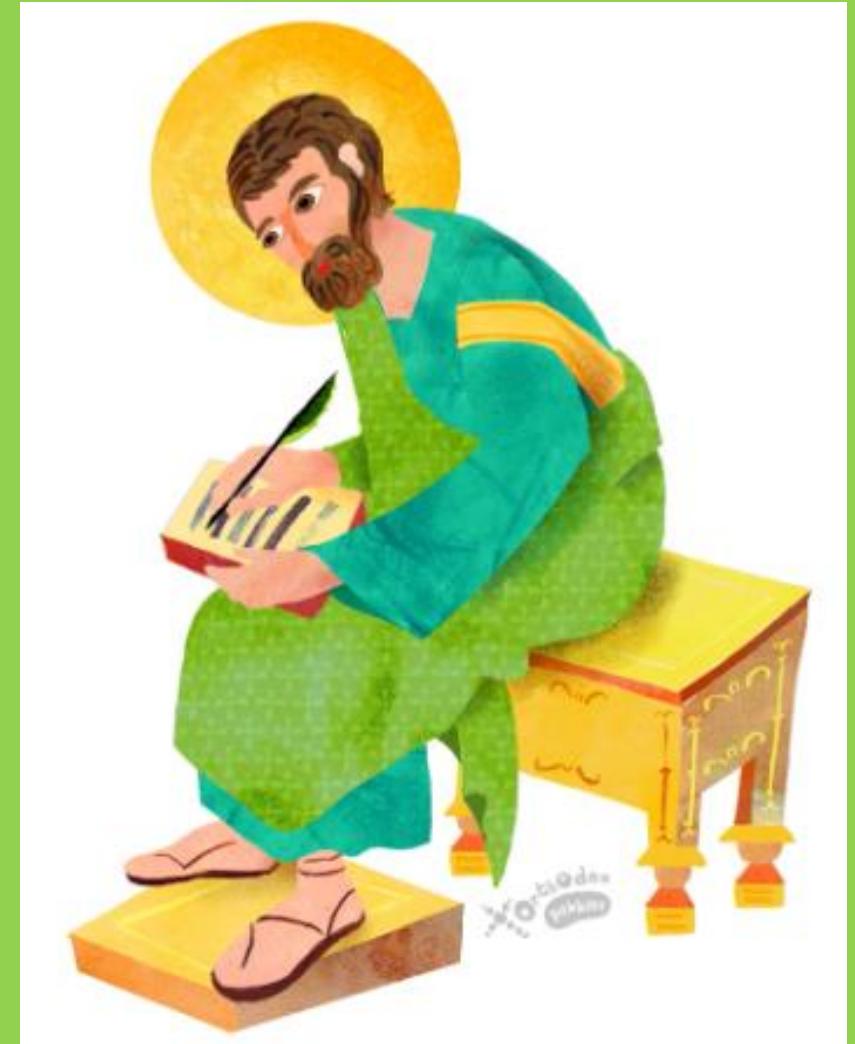
Mark's Gospel examines Jesus as a servant, called to serve others. It is a thrilling narrative of Jesus' sacrifice for his people. The Gospel demonstrates how Jesus was willing to suffer and die for the good of others. It also suggests that his followers are called to be servants too. To become a disciple, you must live the way he wants you to.

**Feast day: April 25**

In the occasion that this date falls within Lent, then the Saint's memory is celebrated on **Bright Tuesday**.



Saint Mark is depicted as a middle-aged man with wavy, dark hair and a short, thick beard. His facial expression is thoughtful and concentrated in his writing. He is seated on a stool or chair and he holds his open Gospel book in which the first line is written: "Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ". On his desk there are the tools of writing and a lectern. He wears classical ancient Greek clothes, with a golden ribbon on his shoulder - the symbol of an Apostle.



The winged lion symbol is associated with St. Mark because according to ancient legend, while taking refuge from a storm in the city of Venice, Mark was visited in a dream by an angel in the form of a winged lion.

It is also said that this symbol comes from St. Mark's description of John the Baptist's voice "crying out in the wilderness" upon hearing the Word of God (Mark 1:3).

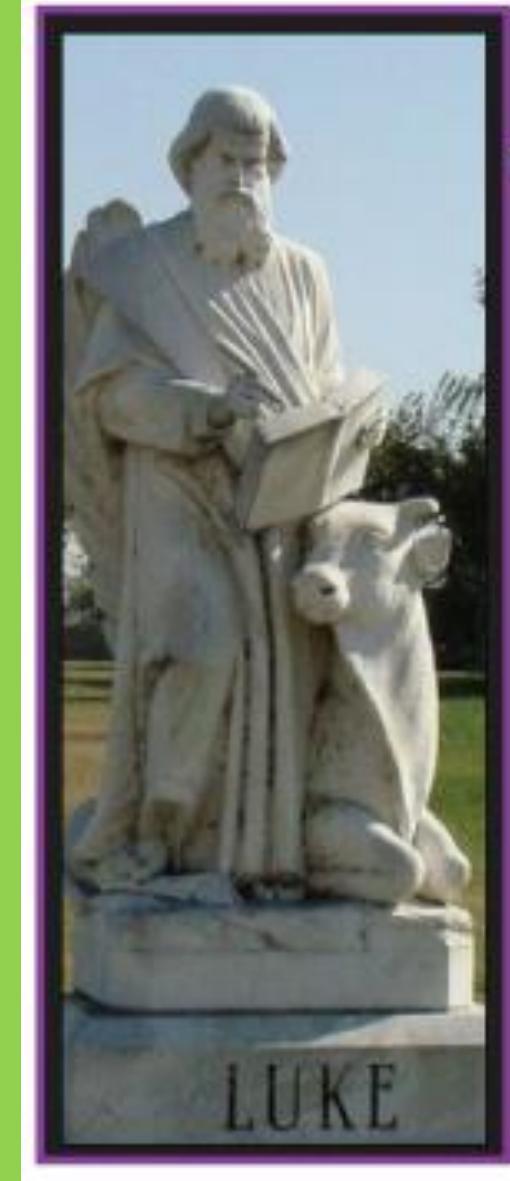


Apostle and Evangelist  
Luke

- Luke was born in Antioch, Syria and was of Greek origin. He received an excellent education: he studied philosophy and medical arts, eventually becoming a physician.
- He was working in mainland Greece when he met the Apostle Paul; he immediately became Paul's faithful disciple and companion.
- According to Church Tradition, Luke was the first-ever iconographer (someone who creates images in art).

## Luke

Luke places a greater emphasis on the 'human side' of Jesus. He shows Jesus as he was when he was alive: a caring person with a keen interest in others. Jesus understood that life was not easy. He did not care for stereotypes and often chose to befriend and help the outcasts of society. Luke's Gospel suggests that Jesus was here to bring hope and salvation to those who chose to believe in him.



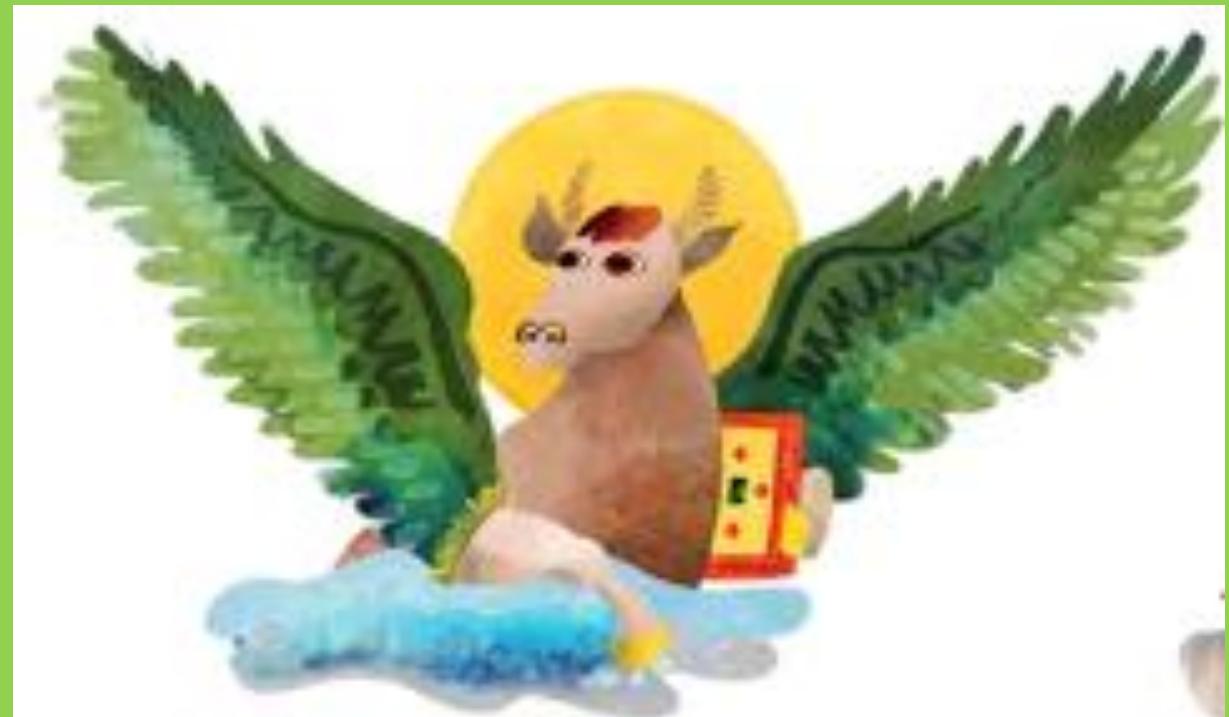
Feast day: October 18



Saint Luke is depicted as a mature man, with dark curly hair and a thin beard. Sometimes the top of his head is shaved as if he is newly ordained. He wears ancient Greek clothes with a golden ribbon on his shoulder, a symbol of his apostleship. He is holding his Gospel book, onto which the first verse is written: "Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order". On the table there are several writing instruments and a lectern with a scroll or a book.

In art, Luke is represented by a winged ox. This is especially appropriate because in the Gospel of St. Luke, the priestly and sacrificial work of Jesus is emphasized. The ox represents the sacrificial aspect of Jesus' ministry and the wings remind us that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is to travel throughout the world.

The ox is a figure of sacrifice, service and strength.



# Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian

# John

John's Gospel is unique and concentrates on particular events or details which are not revealed in Matthew, Mark or Luke's Gospels. His account was written to offer you a sure basis for your trust in Jesus.

- One of the 12 Disciples and Apostles of our Lord, along with his older brother, James the son of Zebedee. Born in Bethsaida in Galilee, James and John were children of Christ's step-sister, Salome. The two brothers and Peter were the three disciples closest to the Lord.
- John was the youngest of the Twelve, and the only one among them to follow the Lord through His Passion and Death on the Cross. It was John and Peter who ran to see Christ's tomb - yet only John went inside.  
John lived to be over 100 years old.

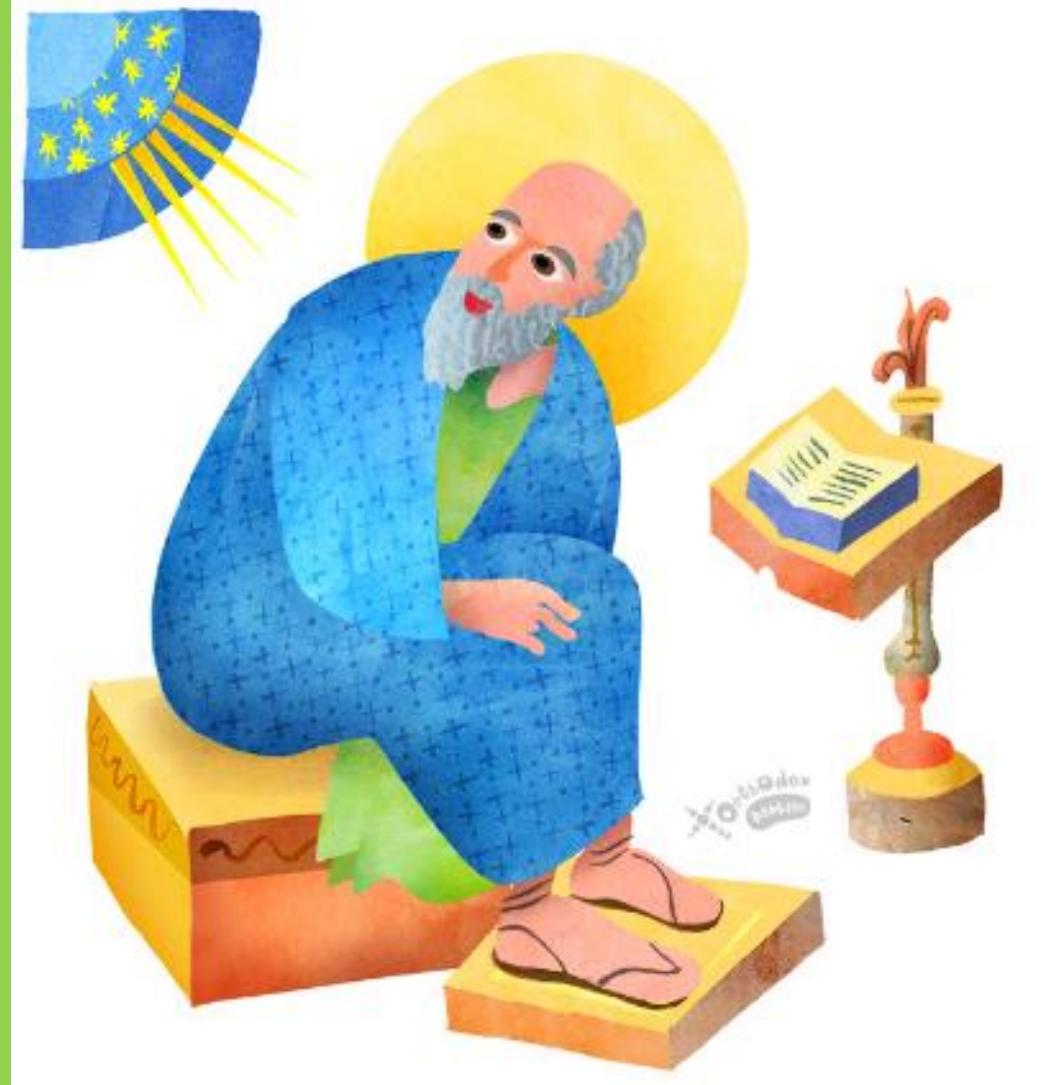
Feast day: September 26

On May 8 the Church also commemorates the pilgrimage to St John's tomb.



Saint John is usually depicted seated in front of a cave. He is an old man with white hair around a bald head and a long white beard. His body is tightly enveloped in a large cloak and has a particular posture: while the body is turned to the right, the head is turned to the left, with the eyes staring sideways, as being in a trance and listening to a mystical voice, coming from a divine ray that has come down to rest upon the Saint's head.

Sometimes, St John is depicted as a young man, even a teenager.



What is the symbolic creature of John the Evangelist?

John is shown as a winged eagle, the creature that dwells closest to heaven because of John's visions and the heavenly opening of his Gospel.

