

October 18

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Luke evangelist

Luke, the author of the third Gospel and of the Acts of the Apostles, was probably a native of Antioch, Syria. He was of pagan ancestry and seems to have been a doctor. The apostle Paul mentions Luke in his letters, calling him a close companion who remained at his side during Paul's two periods of imprisonment in Rome. Luke may well have been Paul's companion during the second and third missionary journeys.

Despite Luke's pagan origin, he did not forget that salvation was to come from Jerusalem and that the holy city was the place where this salvation had to be fulfilled. It was there the Gospel began, there that Jesus' life on earth ended, and there that the apostles began their universal mission, which took them from Judea to Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

True to his calling as a scribe of Christ's mercy, Luke insists on Jesus' love for sinners and on the breadth and depth of his forgiveness. In Jesus, God's "tender mercy" towards the poor and humble is made visible, while the rich and the proud receive a stern warning. Everyone without exception receives an invitation to conversion, which implies choosing poverty and abandoning oneself to God. For Luke, the Holy Spirit is the protagonist in this return to the Father, and invocation of the Spirit is the prayer that we should never tire of addressing to God, as Jesus shows us with his own example.

The last years of Luke's life are the subject of different and often irreconcilable traditions. He received the title of martyr, but more likely died a natural death of old age in Beothia, after having evangelized Achaia.

PRAYER

God of mercy,
you chose Luke to reveal
the mystery of your special love for the poor
in his preaching and writings:
unite all Christians in one heart and mind,
and fill them with your joy
so that all nations may see your salvation
in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

BIBLICAL READINGS

2 Tim 4:9-17; Lk 1:1-4

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

ANGLICANS:

Luke, evangelist

WESTERN CATHOLICS:

Luke, evangelist

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (8 bàbah/teqermt):

Matrà of Alexandria (d. ca. 250), martyr (Coptic Church)

LUTHERANS:

Luke, evangelist

MARONITES:

Luke, evangelist

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:

Luke, apostle and evangelist

Peter (d. 1326), *Alexis* (d. 1378), *Jonah* (d. 1461), *Philipp* (d. 1569) and *Hermogenes* (d. 1612), thaumaturges of Moscow (Russian Church)

EAST SYRIAN ORTHODOX:

Luke, evangelist (Malabar Church)

OLD CATHOLICS:

Luke, evangelist