

## October 18 - St. Luke

Luke wrote one of the major portions of the New Testament, a two-volume work comprising the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. In the two books he shows the parallel between the life of Christ and that of the Church. He is the only Gentile Christian among the Gospel writers. Tradition holds him to be a native of Antioch, and Paul calls him "our beloved physician" (Colossians 4:14). His Gospel was probably written between A.D. 70 and 85.

Luke appears in Acts during Paul's second journey, remains at Philippi for several years until Paul returns from his third journey, accompanies Paul to Jerusalem and remains near him when he is imprisoned in Caesarea. During these two years, Luke had time to seek information and interview persons who had known Jesus. He accompanied Paul on the dangerous journey to Rome where he was a faithful companion. "Only Luke is with me," Paul writes (2 Timothy 4:11).

Luke wrote as a Gentile for Gentile Christians. This Gospel reveals Luke's expertise in classic Greek style as well as his knowledge of Jewish sources.

The character of Luke may best be seen by the emphases of his Gospel, which has been given certain subtitles:

(1) **The Gospel of Mercy:** Luke emphasizes Jesus' compassion and patience with the sinners and the suffering. He has a broadminded openness to all, showing concern for Samaritans, lepers, publicans, soldiers, public sinners, unlettered shepherds, the poor. Luke alone records the stories of the sinful woman, the lost sheep and coin, the prodigal son, the good thief.

(2) **The Gospel of the Poor:** "Little people" are prominent—Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph, shepherds, Simeon and the elderly widow, Anna. He is also concerned with what we now call "evangelical poverty."

(3) **The Gospel of Joy:** Luke succeeds in portraying the joy of salvation that permeated the primitive Church.

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## A prayer from Taizé

Jesus, Love of all loving, you were always in me and I was forgetting you. You were in my heart of hearts and I was looking for you elsewhere. When I kept myself far from you, you were waiting for me. And now I dare to tell you: Risen Christ, you are my life.

## Prayers of Intercession for our parish

- We pray for our priests: Lord, fill them with wisdom to know Your way, compassion to show Your face to others, and love for all Your people.
- We pray that our priests will imitate Christ, the Good Shepherd, and that as they share God's word and the sacraments with us, we may be brought closer to Jesus.
- We pray for all who are have taken responsibility to lead others in ministry in our parish: may they be given wisdom and perseverance by the Holy Spirit.

## Some tweets by Pope Francis

- If prayer is real, it necessarily bears fruit in charity. And charity sets us free from the worst form of enslavement, which is slavery to self. Charity brings us back to what is essential, to the deep joy to be found in giving.
- The tender love of mothers, who give life to the world, and the presence of women are the true alternative to the baneful logic of power that leads to war. We need compassion and care, not ideologies fueled by words of hatred.
- We have been saved by the same blood, we are one family, so let us welcome each other, love each another, heal each other's wounds. Let us be a "synod", in other words, "journey together". For God is present wherever love reigns!

## October 4: St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226)

Francis of Assisi was a man who astounded and inspired the Church by taking the gospel literally—not in a narrow fundamentalist sense, but by actually following all that Jesus said and did, joyfully, without limit and without a sense of self-importance.

Serious illness brought the young Francis to see the emptiness of his frolicking life as leader of Assisi's youth. Prayer—lengthy and difficult—led him to a self-emptying like that of Christ, climaxed by embracing a leper he met on the road. It symbolized his complete obedience to what he had heard in prayer: "Francis! Everything you have loved and desired in the flesh it is your duty to despise and hate, if you wish to know my will."

Francis gave up all his possessions, piling even his clothes before his earthly father (who was demanding restitution for Francis' "gifts" to the poor) so that he would be totally free to say, "Our Father in heaven." He was, for a time, considered to be a religious fanatic, begging from door to door when he could not get money for his work, evoking sadness or disgust to the hearts of his former friends, ridicule from the unthinking.

But genuineness will tell. A few people began to realize that this man was actually trying to be Christian. Francis' first rule for his followers was a collection of texts from the Gospels. He had no idea of founding an order, but once it began he protected it and accepted all the legal structures needed to support it.

On his deathbed (aged 44), he said over and over again the last addition to his Canticle of the Sun, "Be praised, O Lord, for our Sister Death."

It is no surprise that our present Pope chose to take the name Francis - he shows by his lifestyle that simplicity is a Christian virtue, not often adopted by those in high places.

## Prayer to St. Francis of Assisi

O blessed Saint Francis, lover of Lady Poverty, teach us to love her, too. In these our days when so many of our brothers and sisters suffer so much from the lack of the basic necessities of life, help us who are better off to learn how to share what we have, even to the point of depriving ourselves.

Raise up in the world leaders who will know how to reshape our economies so that no one will want at the abundant table of the Lord, each content with the wonderful portion that the Lord has allotted, just as you found great joy in the common heritage of the human family. O Holy Poor man of Assisi, pray for us, now and at the hour of our death, Amen

## SEPARATION FROM THOSE WE LOVE –*Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

Nothing can fill the gap when we are away  
from those we love, and it would be wrong  
to try and find anything. We must simply  
hold out and win through. That sounds  
very hard at first, but at the same time  
it is a great consolation, since leaving  
the gap unfilled preserves the bonds between us.  
It is nonsense to say that God fills the gap;  
He does not fill it, but keeps it empty  
so that our communion with another  
may be kept alive, even at the cost of pain.

Holy Spirit, Comforter, come and breathe on the anxieties that can keep us far from you. And enable us to discover the wellsprings of trust set in the deepest part of us. (Taizé)

This is my command: be resolute;  
do not be fearful or dismayed,  
for the Lord your God is with you  
wherever you go." (*Joshua, 1:9*)