

Saint Thomas' and Saint Thomas' of the Air Church
 Saint Luke
 October 18, 2026
 rmceely+

“The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few.”

Today, the Church points us to the life, work and example of
 St Luke; The Beloved physician.

Can we imagine Luke's interest in Jesus' healing people
 that Luke's medicine could not reach?

The Saints, the martyrs of the Church are remembered on the day
 of their martyrdom

We celebrate in red, the color of the martyr's blood
 Shed for his steadfast belief in Jesus, the Christ.

Let's get to know him and begin with his life; a short biography.

Luke was born in the Greek City of Antioch,
 in what is today Turkey.

A city that would be a Christian city of learning

And where the term Christian was first heard.

It is thought that Luke was a Greek,

A gentile. The only gentile writer of the New Testament.

We know from his writing that Luke was well educated

And trained as a physician.

We first meet Luke in scripture in Saint Paul's account

Of a dream.

A dream in which a man appeared

pleading with Paul

to come to “Macedonia to help us”.

The next day Paul journeyed to Troas, (ancient Troy)

And met Luke,

Who then traveled with Paul to Phillipi, Macedonia

where he established another church.

Luke would remain a loyal friend and companion

For the next 16 years
 until Paul's death in Rome in the year 67 AD.
 While Paul was imprisoned, pending his demise
 at the order of Nero,
 The others deserted him in fear of their own lives
 Only Luke remained at Paul's side.

It was some 13 years later that Luke wrote his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles.

Some think the two books were originally one.
 But in any event they were divided
 by the time the Bible was codified as canonical
 by the Council of Trent beginning in 1545.
 By the time he was through,
 Luke wrote about one quarter of the New Testament

Luke was not among the 12 Apostles
 and never met Jesus face to face.

His Gospel is unique.
 Luke wrote as an historian.
 His accuracy has been corroborated over the centuries.
 He wrote the story of Jesus, the Christ
 As a History of Salvation.
 His work both reflects the History
 and prophecy of the Old Testament
 and brings it forward to an accurate recounting
 of the life of Jesus, our Saviour.

Since he did not witness the events about which he wrote
 He did what any good historian would do
 He consulted the existing writings of Mark
 and perhaps others
 and he interviewed those who lived the story.
 Principally Mary and Peter.
 And so Luke's Gospel is an intimate glimpse through Mary's eyes

Of events like the birth of Jesus
 The immortal words clergy love to read at Christmas
 “And it came to pass in those days”.
 The annunciation of Gabriel and the Hail Mary prayer
 The Evening Prayer Canticle “Magnificat”
 Mary’s explanation to her cousin Elizabeth
 of the wonders of her conception
 the trip to Jerusalem when Jesus was 12 years old.
 Perhaps even Mary’s account of the crucifixion
 From the foot of the Cross
 A tearful witness to her Son’s agonizing death.

Perhaps it is through Mary
 That Luke seems to have great respect and affection
 for the women of the Jesus’ life and times.

It is only from Luke that we get some 6 miracles and 18 parables that Jesus told.

 The Prodigal son, the good Samaritan
 The one Samaritan leper who returned to offer thanks.
 The story of Lazarus and the rich man

From his writing we get a sense of Luke’s concern not just for an accurate historical account

 But for the poor
 And for justice for the oppressed.
 Something the new Christians knew first hand.

Throughout his writings Luke focuses us
 on the sinner who seeks God’s mercy.

It was Luke who wrote the account of the journeys of Paul and his
 travails in the Book he appropriately titled
 “The Acts of the Apostles”.

The book begins with the Ascension and chronicles the first steps of the Apostles in forming what would later be called the Christian Church.

The means by which the Apostles filled the vacant post of Judas

The early organization of the Church in Jerusalem

It describes the first martyrdom,

That of Stephen, deacon.

The martyrdom of James at the hand of Herod Agrippa.

It presents the Pentecost and how the Holy Spirit

was infused into the Apostles.

It has the account of the trial of the Apostles before the Sanhedron and the persuasive argument of Gamaliel to dismiss the charges.

It contains the miracles and wonders of the Apostles,

The conversion of St Paul on the road to Damascus

And the three journeys of St Paul.

Those early days established the structure of the clergy

The secular governance and

The early doctrine of the Church.

It is hard to imagine how any of that could have been done

Without the record of Luke's Acts of the Apostles.

The ending of Luke's life is not well documented.

But the predominant understanding is that he was martyred in Greece

Not far from Thebes, by the Romans

where it is said he wrote his Gospel and the Acts of the

Apostles.

He was interred near Thebes but later his remains were moved by the Ottomans to Constantinople.

They were later purchased by the Serbian despot, George

And interred in Prague.

They were later sold by George's granddaughter and moved to Padua in Italy.

And later returned to his tomb in Thebes.

So Luke now rests in three places

The Abbey of Santa Giustina in Padua
In Prague at the St Vitus Cathedral, and
At his tomb in Thebes.

The relics were established as genuine in a rigorous battery of scientific and archeological tests in 1992.

You will see Luke symbolized as an Ox or calf in iconography and paintings.

The Ox or calf is seen as a sacrificial animal
And Luke as a man who sacrificed his life
for Christ and His people.

We owe much to St Luke and recall his works, writings and sacrifice each year on this day.

However, in these times, Luke's life leads us in a meaningful way.
Jesus noted in His day

That "the harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few."

It is no less true today.

There is much work to be done in our fallen world
If we are to fulfill our calling
To spread the Gospel.

Luke gave his life.

Few are called to sacrifice in the same manner.

But before he was killed

Luke observed and researched.
And with his God-given talent for writing
Luke filled the pages of our Bible
And devoted himself to God.

He is known as an evangelist:

"one who works to show people Christianity".

Luke did it with his pen, his mind and his work.

Today's Gospel fittingly written by Luke
Is the story of the time Jesus
sent 70 people ahead of Him to Galilee
to meet people and to open the door for Christ.
Jesus gave them instruction
They were to take almost nothing with them
No money
No shoes
They were to avoid using the time
with other travelers on the road
They were to stay a short time
in the homes of people who invited them in.
They were to proclaim peace upon the household
And if it was not returned
To go elsewhere.

They were to accept the hospitality of their hosts
Such as it was.
For their work was worthy
and they should accept the gifts offered.

That was how the evangelist/ambassadors that Jesus sent to Galilee
Were to carry out their task.

Is that not the way we must do so?
Is that not the way Luke did so?

In humility
Without pretense
Without pressuring people
Passing over those who were not open to the Gospel.
Using the various talents and God given gifts
That each of us has received.

Within those parameters

There is no one correct way to introduce people to God
No right way and no wrong way

There is the way that follows the gifts God has given each of us.

Maybe it is writing

Maybe it is painting or art

Maybe it is music

Maybe it is in speech

Maybe it is in social media

Maybe it is in work in one of the Church's guilds

Altar guild

Acolyte guild

Lay reading

Caring for the altar linens and vestments

Maybe it is in caring for God's people

The aged

The infirm

The poor

Maybe it is a vocation to explore ordination.

At every opportunity

We must be prepared to express the truth

Of the Faith

In kindness and without offense.

We may be treated harshly in this time of tolerance.

Tolerance, it seems, only exists

for those who fall in line with popular thought.

Jesus warned His people of this 2,000 years ago.

There was a time before electronic screens

Before Hollywood

Before our culture turned to false celebrity

Before the exaggeration of the media

and entertainment industry,

A time when the role models we had and emulated
 Were real flesh and blood,
 Were people who actually lived their lives.
People went to church in great numbers then
And among their role models were the Saints.
 They knew their stories,
 Their sufferings and their glorious successes
 Their failings and their triumphs.

They were held in such high regard that
 Cities and Counties,
 rivers and beaches were named after them.
You can't travel 10 miles in the Bay Area without encountering
 A place or thing that was named for a Saint.

We have lost them to posterity.
But they are alive and well here
 In this little miracle church
 This oasis of God's love in our fallen world.

We consider Saint Luke today.
Let his life, work and example light our lives.

The laborers are few.
 And the rewards are not of this earth
But the harvest is plenteous.

