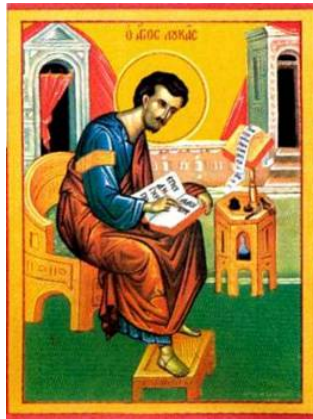
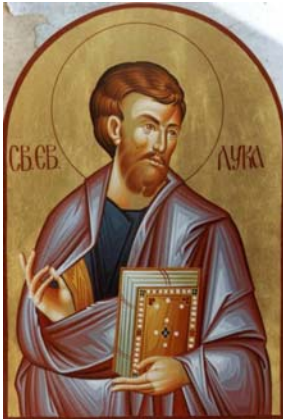


## ST. LUKE OUR PATRON



The little we know about St. Luke indicates that he was a gentle person of many qualities. Most of the evidence about his personality, life and ministry is found in the gospel and the Acts of the Apostles he wrote. The early church's traditions handed down to us speaks little about St. Luke.

Luke has been identified with St. Paul's "Luke, the beloved physician" (Colossians 4:14). We know few other facts about Luke's life from Scripture and from early Church historians.

It is believed that Luke was born a Greek and a Gentile. In Colossians 10-14 St. Paul speaks of those friends who are with him. He first mentions all those "of the circumcision", in other words Jews, and he does not include Luke in this group. Luke's gospel shows special sensitivity to preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles. It is only in his gospel that we hear the parable of the Good Samaritan, that we hear Jesus praising the faith of Gentiles such as that of the widow of Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian (Lk.4:25-27), and that we hear the story of the one grateful leper who is a Samaritan (Lk.17:11-19). According to the early Church historian Eusebius Luke was born at Antioch in Syria.

Luke has the unique distinction of being the only New Testament writer who was not a Jew.

About Luke being a physician, not only do we have Paul's word but, Eusebius, Saint Jerome, Saint Irenaeus and Caius, a second-century writer, all refer to Luke as a physician. In our day, it would be easy to assume that someone who was a doctor was rich, but scholars have argued that Luke might have been born a slave. It was not uncommon for families to educate slaves in medicine so that they would have a resident family physician.

It is in Luke's gospel that we find Mary the Mother of Jesus more than elsewhere. So one may make a learned guess that Luke ministered to Mary in the capacity of a physician. Mary is known for her few words. Perhaps she opened her heart to Luke her physician about herself and her Son.

We know nothing about his conversion but looking at the language of the Acts of the Apostles, we realize that he joined Saint Paul in the ministry. The story of the Acts is written in the third person, as an historian recording facts, up until the sixteenth chapter. In Acts 16:8-9 we hear of Paul's company "So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a

vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' Then suddenly in 16:10 "they" becomes "we": "When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them."

So Luke first joined Paul's company at Troas at about the year 51 and accompanied him into Macedonia where they travelled first to Samothrace, Neapolis, and finally to Philippi. Luke then switches back to the third person which seems to indicate he was not thrown into prison with Paul and that when Paul left Philippi Luke stayed behind to encourage the Church there. Seven years passed before Paul returned to the area on his third missionary journey. In Acts 20:5, the switch to "we" tells us that Luke has left Philippi to rejoin Paul in Troas in the year 58 where they first met up. They travelled together through Miletus, Tyre, Caesarea, to Jerusalem.

Luke is the loyal comrade who stays with Paul when he is imprisoned in Rome about the year 61: "Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers" (Philemon 24). And after everyone else deserts Paul in his final imprisonment and sufferings, it is Luke who remains with Paul to the end: "Only Luke is with me" (2 Timothy 4:11).

Luke's inspiration and information for his Gospel and Acts came from his close association with Paul and his companions as he explains in his introduction to the Gospel: "Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the Word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus" (Luke 1:1-3).

Luke's unique perspective on Jesus can be seen in the six miracles and eighteen parables not found in the other gospels. The Gospel according to Luke is described by many as the gospel of the poor and of social justice. He is the one who tells the story of Lazarus and the Rich Man who ignored him. The Beatitudes found in the gospel according to Matthew says: "Blessed are the poor in spirit", but for Luke it is "Blessed are the poor". Only in Luke's gospel do we hear Mary's "Magnificat" where she proclaims that God "has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty" (Luke 1:52-53).

Luke emphasizes the special love and respect with which Jesus treated women. To a great extent it would not be right to term his gospel as the gospel of women. It is only in Luke's gospel that we hear the story of the Annunciation, Mary's visit to Elizabeth, the Presentation, and the story of Jesus' disappearance in Jerusalem. It is Luke that we have to thank for the Scriptural parts of the Hail Mary: "Hail Mary full of grace" spoken at the Annunciation and "Blessed are you and blessed is the fruit of your womb Jesus" spoken by her cousin Elizabeth.

Forgiveness and God's mercy to sinners is also of paramount importance to Luke. Only in Luke do we hear the story of the Prodigal Son welcomed back by the overjoyed Father. Only in Luke do we hear the story of the forgiven woman disrupting the feast by washing Jesus' feet with her

tears. Throughout Luke's gospel, Jesus takes the side of the sinner who wants to return to God's mercy.

Luke's gospel provides a window into Jesus' character as one who loved the poor, who wanted the door to God's kingdom opened to all, who respected women, and who saw hope in God's mercy for everyone.

Luke must have been a poet. We find the New Testament's best poetry in his Gospel. There is a legend that Luke was a skilled painter; there is even a painting of Mary in a Spanish cathedral to this day, which purports to be by him. However the tradition that Luke was a painter seems to have no valid proof. Several images of Mary appeared in later centuries claiming him as a painter, but there are few takers among experts for that claim. Because of this tradition, however, he is considered a patron of painters of pictures and is often portrayed as painting pictures of Mary.

The reports of Luke's life after Paul's death are conflicting. Some early writers claim he was martyred, others say he lived a long life. Some say he preached in Greece, others in Gaul. The earliest tradition we have says that he died in 84 at Boeotia after settling in Greece to write his Gospel.

Stained glass windows in ancient cathedrals depicted the four gospel writers by symbols: Mark is a man, Matthew a lion and John an eagle. Luke is depicted as a calf, the animal for sacrifice. Luke saw Jesus as the sacrifice for the world. His words about Mary: "She kept all these things in her heart and pondered over them" (Lk 2:19 & 51), is perhaps as well applicable to Luke, a meticulous research writer who used a mellifluous language to describe the loving plan of God for his people.

St. Luke is the patron of physicians and surgeons. That is the reason why Archbishop Angelo Fernandes and Fr. Pascal Rodrigues, the first parish priest of St. Luke's Church, Defence Colony chose St. Luke as the patron of our parish. Defence Colony has the distinction of being the home of AIIMS besides other medical care institutions of repute. Many of our parishioners are doctors surgeons, nurses and paramedics