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by Pat Marrin

[View Author Profile](#)

patrickjmarrin@gmail.com.

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October 17, 2019

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“Luke is the only one with me” (2 Tim 4:11).

St. Paul’s letters to Timothy give us a glimpse into the rigors of the apostolic life in the first generation of Christians in the church. The mention of Luke by Paul, whether historical or a later affirmation of his importance as the presumed author of one of the Gospels and its sequel Acts of the Apostles, is a way to honor his steadfastness. When Paul had been abandoned and betrayed by others, Luke remained with him.

Tradition links Luke with Paul, whose story takes up most of Acts, while Mark is linked to Peter. The thematic interplay this hypothesis allows enriches the New Testament. The early church was a network of relationships bound by the common purpose of spreading the story of Jesus. People knew each other’s strengths and weaknesses, and the process of building the church was a very human one. We hear Paul reminding Timothy to bring the “papyrus rolls, especially the parchments,” the ancient technology by which the Word of God was shared.

For us today, so accustomed to instantaneous communication and effortless travel, the fact that a handwritten letter on animal skins was sent by human courier over rough roads and by sea in wooden sailing vessels, is a reminder of that God can accomplish the divine will by whatever means are available. Luke is revealed in his writings as a brilliant writer, editor and storyteller. His words vividly convey the mind

of Jesus through the many parables he told. Luke's emphasis on healing and on the importance of women have made his Gospel a source of inspiration for us 20 centuries later.

Today's Gospel describes the mission of the 72 disciples, sent in pairs to the places Jesus intended to visit. In just eight verses, Luke captures the spirit of evangelization: travel light, pray as you go, don't be afraid, trust the people who receive you, give the gift of peace and healing, be the Good News you bring, announcing, "The Kingdom of God is at hand." By manner and message, this summarizes what real evangelization should look like today, with whatever advances in travel and technology can do to make it effective. We celebrate Luke the Evangelist by imitating his steadfast spirit in our own way of sharing the Good News with others.

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