

St Luke 18th October

Luke, Apostle and Evangelist was named by early Church Fathers as the author of the Gospel, and Acts, where he is described as accompanying Paul on his missionary journeys. In 2 Timothy 4:11 we read "Only Luke is with me" (Paul, in Rome).

Images of each of the four Evangelists often show them accompanied by a symbol based on Ezekiel's vision (Chapter 1). That of Luke is the ox – it is suggested that this is because Luke begins with Zechariah in the Temple, the scene of animal sacrifice, anticipating the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. Also in Chapter 2 the evangelist stresses the baby Jesus being laid in a manger, the feeding trough of domestic animals.



Detail of apse mosaic from Sant' Apollinare in Classe, Ravenna. C 570

In 1484 Hermen Rode painted this charming scene with St Luke, the ox, and Mary with the baby Jesus, for the Guild of St Luke in Lubeck, Germany



In Colossians 4:14 we read

14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you.

Historically both physicians and painters worked with preparations derived from plants and minerals, and accordingly were regarded as part of the same professional grouping or Guild. From the 8th c Luke is represented as an artist, and especially as having made a portrait of Mary with the infant Jesus, linking this with the Gospel's full account of the Nativity. This idea has produced many lovely images over many centuries. An icon known as the *Salus Populus Romani* (Health of the Roman People) kept in Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome was for a long time believed to have actually been painted by Luke.



In Jean Bourdichon's illumination for the Great Hours of Anne of Brittany (1503-8) below, Luke proudly displays an image of Mary – a painting within a painting within a book.

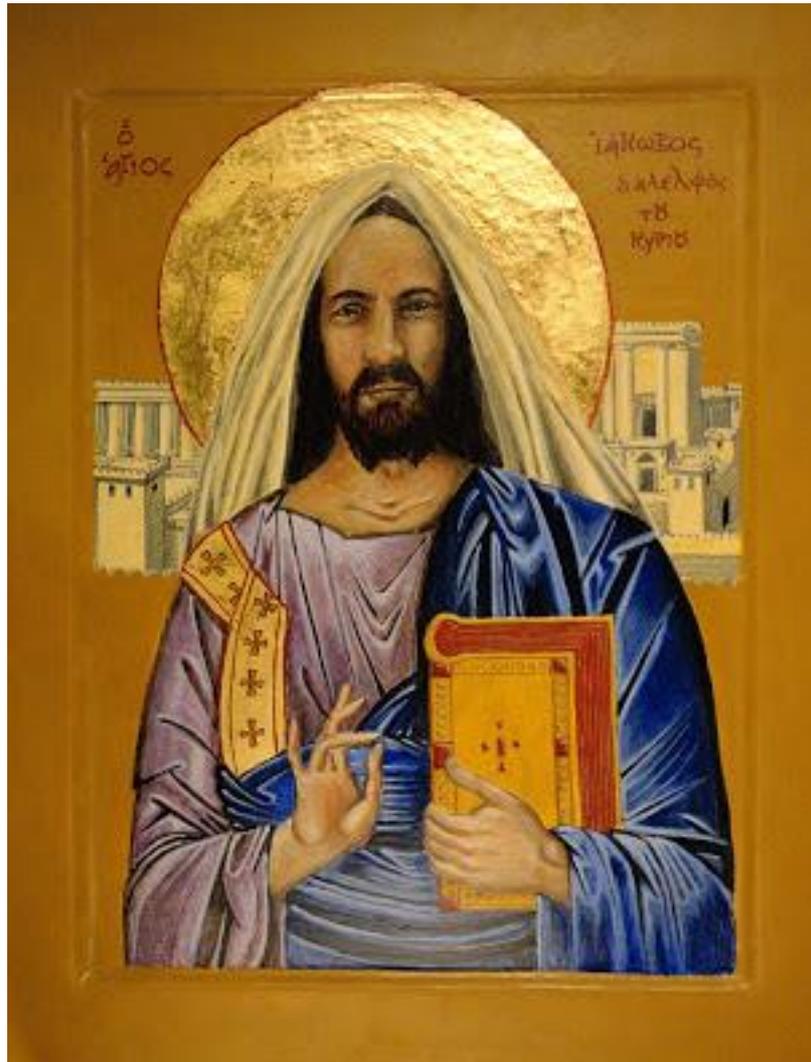


Perhaps the most famous image of Luke as a painter – although here he is actually making a preliminary drawing- is Rogier van der Weyden's painting, (1478) with a serene Flemish landscape in the background.



St James of Jerusalem 23rd October

Fr Tobias Stanislas Haller, an Episcopal priest, poet and painter placed this icon and commentary on his blog "In a Godward Direction" on October 2008.



I painted this icon of Saint James of Jerusalem this past year, for Saint James Church, Parkton Maryland, which is observing this patronal feast on Sunday. The icon will be blessed at that liturgy, and I will have the honor to preach.

James is an interesting character -- called "the Brother of the Lord" in the tradition, and I followed that cue in giving him features that suggest a family resemblance, though not to the blond, blue-eyed variety of Jesus. This is a Jewish James, but also the first Christian bishop of Jerusalem -- a Jew who became a follower of his brother in more ways than one. It was his audacious conclusion to the Jerusalem Council that made it possible for us Gentiles to join in that ever-expanding family, as Jesus' kin, too.

James also followed his brother in death in Jerusalem, being thrown from the pinnacle of the Temple when he was brought there to call out to the crowds to forsake the new Way. The Temple is dimly visible in the background of the icon.

James of Jerusalem was and is an unlikely hero of the faith. He was among the relatives who came with Mary to restrain Jesus from his crazy ministry; yet he ended his life in testimony to what he later came to understand Jesus to be. May we all, whatever our wrong turns, early or late, find in Jesus our brother and our Lord.