

# SAINT WHO?

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## Saints Who Were Artists

### Saint Luke

Evangelist, Painter, and Iconographer († 1<sup>st</sup> century)

Luke, the presumed author of both the Gospel that bears his name and the Acts of the Apostles, was from Antioch in Syria. A tradition that goes back at least to the sixth century holds that Luke painted portraits of the Blessed Mother and of Peter and Paul. Several well-known icons in the Eastern Church have been attributed to Luke. The late medieval Guilds of Saint Luke in Italy and the Low Countries provided protection and encouragement for artists and sculptors by maintaining consistent artistic standards and by regulating competition.

In his writings, Luke draws on a rich Greek vocabulary to “paint with words.” The Mother of the Lord is frequently the object of his deft strokes. In Luke’s Gospel alone we have the full portrait of Mary at the Annunciation, the Visitation, and the Nativity. Through Luke’s writings we are drawn as well into the heart of the theological drama of sin and forgiveness. Think of the parable of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11-32), with its psychologically shrewd depictions of father and son. Luke’s Gospel is frequently called the “Gospel of Mercy.”

Tradition holds that Luke died at age eighty-four in Boeotia in Greece. He is the patron of painters.

*Loving Father, through the intercession of Saint Luke the Evangelist, may I meditate more devoutly on the role of Mary, chosen Mother of your Son!*

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