Today we give thanks for St. Luke, a faithful servant of our lord Jesus Christ, whose life and writings have helped generations of Christians to understand the love mercy and compassion of God.

Luke is first mentioned in the epistle to Philemon as a fellow worker of Paul; then in Colossians where again it is Paul who refers to him as My dear friend the Doctor; then again he is mentioned in Paul's message to Timothy where he says "only Luke is with me".

St Luke is traditionally remembered as a physician, an evangelist and a faithful companion of Paul and of course as a writer of the gospel truth.
He was a man who used his gifts, his knowledge and his faith to serve the Lord.
Through his gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, he has left us a precise record of the life of Jesus and the beginnings of the early Christian church.

Luke actually wrote a massive portion of the New Testament. He is the author of his own gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. Together these make up over a quarter of the whole of the New Testament, more than any other single author. It is even said that he had a hand in writing the book of Hebrews.

His medical background shows up in his own gospel which includes more healing miracles than any of the other gospels, and he uses precise medical vocabulary. But he never met Jesus in person; and unlike the original twelve apostles. Luke was a Gentile that is a non-Jew. He was a convert from Antioch in Syria. He learned about the life of Jesus and his ministry through the accounts of the Virgin Mary and the Apostles. He remained a faithful servant to our Lord Jesus.

But what does it mean to be faithful? What can we learn from St Luke about following Jesus in our own lives today?

Firstly, St Luke was faithful in recording the truth. At the beginning of his gospel, Luke carefully explains that he has investigated the events around the life of Jesus so that his readers may know the certainty of what they have been taught. He writes with care and purpose. He wants people to know who Jesus is, what he taught and how he brought salvation into the world.

Luke reminds us that faith is not something we should treat carelessly. The Christian faith is founded upon the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are called to learn the scriptures, to treasure God's word and to share its message faithfully with others.

We may not all be called to write a gospel, but we are all called to bear witness to the truth of Christ. We do this through our words, our prayers, our kindness and the way we live. Sometimes a simple word of encouragement or a quiet act of Christian love can speak more powerfully than a long sermon.
May we like St. Luke be faithful in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

Secondly St Luke showed us the compassion of Jesus. One of the beautiful features of Luke's gospel is the way it reveals the compassion of Christ.
Luke tells us of the good Samaritan who stops to help a wounded stranger when others passed by. He tells of the Prodigal Son whose father welcomes him home with forgiveness and joy. He records the story of Zacchaeus, the tax collector, whom Jesus called down from a tree and invited him to a new life.

These stories remind us that God's love reaches out to those who are forgotten, rejected or burdened by sin. Luke's traditional association with medicine also gives us a helpful picture of Christian service. A physician seeks to bring healing to the sick and Christians are called to bring comfort to those who suffer.

We may not be able to cure every illness or solve every problem, but we can listen to someone who is lonely. We can offer a helping hand to those in need.

In doing these things we follow the example of Jesus whose love knows no boundaries.
Let us ask ourselves – Do people see something of Christ's compassion in us?
Thirdly we remember St Luke remained faithful during difficult times.
St Luke was a faithful companion of St Paul. In his second letter to Timothy, Paul writes these moving words "Only Luke is with me" – 2 Timothy 4:11
Paul was facing difficult circumstances and many of his companions had left him. Yet Luke remained.
These simple words tell us something important about faithfulness. It is easy to stand beside someone when everything is going well. It is much harder to remain loyal when things get difficult.
Luke's example reminds us that Christian faithfulness is not measured only by great achievements. It is also shown in quiet acts of loyalty, in keeping our promises, in standing beside those who suffer and in continuing to trust God when life becomes uncertain.

Many people know what it means to face loneliness, disappointment, illness or bereavement. At such times, the presence of a faithful friend can be a wonderful blessing. We too can become a blessing to others.
And when we are the ones who feel alone, we can remember that God has not abandoned us. The Lord who sustained St. Luke is still present with his people today.

Fourthly, St. Luke teaches us to pray and trust in God. Luke's gospel gives particular attention to prayer. We see Jesus praying at important moments in his ministry, and we hear his teaching about the need to pray persistently and trust in the goodness of our heavenly father. Prayer was central to the life of the early church as Luke records in the Acts of the Apostles. St. Luke reminds us that faithfulness grows through our relationship with God. We cannot serve Christ in our own strength alone. We need His guidance, His forgiveness and His grace.

Sometimes prayer is full of thanksgiving. At other times they are simply cries for help. Sometimes we find the right words and sometimes we can only sit quietly in God's presence.
Whatever our circumstances we can always bring our hearts before him.
We may not always understand God's purpose, but we can trust his love. Like St. Luke we are called to keep going, to keep praying, to keep serving even when the way ahead in unclear.

The fifth point is that we are all called to be faithful. What then can we take from St. Luke?
We may not be evangelists in the same way he was. We may not write books of scripture or travel with apostles to spread the gospel.

Yet every Christian ha a part to play in God's work. We can be faithful in our families, in our church, in our friendships and in our daily responsibilities. We can be faithful by telling the truth, showing compassion, offering forgiveness and helping those who are struggling. We can be faithful by attending to others rather than thinking only o ourselves. Above all we can be faithful by keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the source and centre of our faith.

We should not measure our lives only by how much we achieve, how much we possess, or by how much praise we receive. Instead let us ask whether we have loved God and our neighbour, whether we have served faithfully and whether we have helped others to discover the love of Christ. A life of faithfulness is very precious to God.

As we remember St. Luke the evangelist, let us give thanks for his faithful witness, for his gospel, and for the account he has left us of the early church. Through Luke we are reminded of the tenderness of Jesus towards sinners, the suffering, the poor and the forgotten. We are encouraged by his loyalty to St. Paul and inspired by his dedication to sharing the truth.

This week let us respond to Luke's example in three memorable ways.

First tell one person a simple truth of what Jesus means to you or share a passage from Luke's gospel with someone who needs encouragement.
Secondly speak to one person who is lonely, unwell or burdened and offer a practical act of compassion: make a visit, place a phone call or lend a helping hand.
Thirdly set aside a few quiet minutes each day to pray for someone who is struggling and to ask God for grace to remain faithful.
May St Luke encourage us to become more faithful disciples of Christ.
May we be people who speak the truth with love, serve others with compassion, remain loyal in difficult times and trust God in Prayer.

When our own journey becomes difficult, may we remember that the lord who called St. Luke to serve him, also calls us. He does not ask us to be perfect, but to place our lives in his hands and follow him faithfully.