

Clearly, the Rule of Life and Service sees in Luke a profound attentiveness to the evangel seen through the eyes of a community rooted in common life, liturgy, and hope. Luke's description of the nascent community in **Acts 2: 42-47** could well be the pattern for our life together:

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers....

[They] had all things in common...distributing as any had need...spent much time together in the temple, broke bread...with glad and generous hearts, praising God...."

I can't help but note that they left the results to God! (See Acts 2:47b.)

They were a non-anxious bunch! (Yes, Luke may have painted an idealized picture, but like any summary, it highlights the key points.)

So, what is the spirituality we seek to embody in our worship and life together?

First, Lukan spirituality is liturgical.

It is grounded in worship and prayer, the sacraments, and the hallowing of time.

The daily office canticles are found in Luke—the songs of Zechariah, Mary, Simeon, and the angels (the Gloria in Excelsis).

Luke lays out the **"Word and Table"** pattern of worship with his resurrection story of the two walking to Emmaus (Luke 24).

He portrays Jesus' teaching on prayer and attentiveness to the poor.

Our rule is a commitment in common to life-long spiritual formation. However, this formation is not an end in itself.

What if we understood apostolic witness as itinerant ministry not only in geographical terms but in terms of *attentive presence*?

What if we understood our vocation as a *journey* into the depths of the very place(s) in which we find ourselves?

Jesus' instructions to seventy merit continuing contemplation: *"Remain in the same house...do not move about from house to house"* in our transient world (Luke 10:7ff).

We cannot generalize about the meaning of location and stability for each other. We can support each sister and brother in the call of God and the meaning of being winsome listeners and catalysts of conversion in the places to which the Spirit sends us.

The traditional monastic virtue of "stability" for us may be in sustained attentiveness in the context where God plants us for the life of the world.

Our Lukan spirituality continues to emerge. Let us be a liturgical and apostolic community under the guidance of the Spirit, especially for the sake of the poor and those living on the margins of life, seeking Christ's reconciliation and healing in the diverse places where the Spirit plants us.

This article was adapted from the "Introduction to the Fourth Edition" of The Book of Offices and Service of the Order of Saint Luke, published in 2012. Copyright © 2012 The Order of Saint Luke and was published separately for the use of those seeking to understand the Order's Lukan Spirituality. Br. Daniel was abbot of the Order at the time of its writing.

Finally, Lukan spirituality is apostolic.

We are a community sent (Greek *apostolos*) by Christ to many places.

Luke portrays Jesus and the disciple-apostles as itinerant for the sake of the gospel. While we may experience our dispersion around the world as a disadvantage, perhaps it is a gospel advantage.

With Jesus, we intentionally embrace our dispersion.

Of course, many of us would like to live in residence, as many monastic communities do. When we are together in retreat, we know how rich such communal life can be, and we are deeply renewed and sustained in such settings.

Yet, we give ourselves to an itinerant proclamation in deeds and words for conversion and forming disciples.

You may think I am alluding to the distinctive itinerancy of Methodist clergy. I am not. Rather, I am proposing that Luke gives us a picture of missionary people, over against our human tendency to settle or see ourselves choosing where to reside.

As with that earliest apostolic community, Christ *sends us* as witnesses from *our* Jerusalem to *our* Judea and Samaria, and the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

As a community in diaspora, we have many Jerusalems.

Christ, by the Spirit, places us where we are to live the sacramental life and proclaim the apostolic hope.

In Acts we see a community together for praise, sharing of meals (meals are always sacramental!), and always “gathering” and “being sent”—two profoundly liturgical acts.

Lukan spirituality practices and rejoices in these liturgical actions.

Far from being perfunctory or sidebars, they are central to forming and sustaining evangelical and catholic prayer and service.

The resources in *The Book of Offices and Services* invite us as a community to rest on this solid liturgical and sacramental foundation.

Here and there, you will see deliberate references to Luke’s casting of gospel and ecclesial life.

Second, Lukan spirituality is charismatic.

We acknowledge, without apology, our dependence on the Holy Spirit, breathing life into dry bones.

In Luke, the Holy Spirit is central. We cannot imagine life apart from the Holy Spirit’s promptings. From the annunciation in Luke 1 to Jesus’ “*you will be baptized by the Spirit*” to the Day of Pentecost to the apostles’ reliance upon the Holy Spirit in their actions, Luke-Acts portrays the centrality of the Spirit.

Other than John 15 and 16, there is no more sustained emphasis and narrative of the Spirit’s working in ordinary people to do extraordinary things.

The Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus, leads him into the wilderness, sustains him in the face of temptation, births the church, and empowers its proclaiming and embodying of the reign of God.

The apostolic community is a sent and directed community, a charismatic community. In this sense, we understand that our

baptismal *charis* (gift, grace) is the Holy Spirit sent from the Father and the Son to indwell us and direct our life and work.

We seek to be self-consciously aware of grace as the immediate and ongoing work of the Spirit and to rely upon the Spirit. That is why we commend the resources in *The Book of Offices and Services* to one another but do not require their use. We trust the Spirit to make good use of them in the varied settings and occasions in which we gather.

This spirited freedom and practicality are consistent with much of Christian history, including that of the Wesley's and the early Methodists.

Third, Lukan spirituality is oriented to the poor and those who live and suffer on the margins of daily life.

The *character* of the Spirit who baptizes us is the character of Jesus, who associates and suffers with the poor, the hungry, and those who weep (Luke 6:20-23).

We seek to grow in his character and to trust that the Spirit who animates us proclaims and embodies good news to those most in need.

Lukan piety will always impel us to commit to the poor and marginalized because Jesus is to be found with them. By way of confession, this may be the most challenging aspect of Lukan spirituality for us.

In general, we have much work to do in orienting ourselves to the most those with whom Jesus identified and spent time.

Fourth, Lukan spirituality is communal.

With the early apostolic community that Luke describes, we seek to continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers, even to share a common life in diaspora!

That is why praying the daily office, continuing formation in the baptismal covenant, and celebration of the Holy Eucharist gives us such hope—hope that in sharing these disciplines faithfully, we share a common life though separated by regions, even continents. Though we are dispersed, we yearn for and commit to live in community, sharing joys, bearing burdens, and holding ourselves accountable to the Rule of Life and Service.

The one specific practice the Rule specifies is praying the daily office. This volume gives us the full structure for daily prayer and the hallowing to time through the day.

At the center of this communal life is the Holy Eucharist.

Let us celebrate the sacrament whenever we gather, graciously and fully aware of the risen Christ who gives us his body that we may be for each other and the world the body of Christ, redeem by his blood.

The Book of Offices and Service (4th edition) offers well-considered new settings (textual and musical) for eucharistic celebration. As an order, we seek to live the good news of God's new humanity as Christ's new community of love and justice.