

The great Apostle Paul needed coworkers in the vineyard to fulfill his mission of bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles. Today we remember Timothy and Titus, two bishops that he trained and relied on heavily in that ministry.

Timothy was born at Lystra, roughly 125 miles northwest of Paul's hometown of Tarsus. His name translates from Greek to mean 'one who honors God.' Timothy was Paul's coworker in the vineyard on both the second and the third missionary journeys. Paul often sent him on special missions. He went to Thessalonica to strengthen the community in their faith. He helped Paul to evangelize Corinth. Paul's letters to Philemon and the Philippians are sent jointly with Timothy. "We encounter him again as the joint sender of the Second Letter to the Corinthians, and when Paul wrote the Letter to the Romans from Corinth, he added Timothy's greetings." Around the year 64, Timothy became the first Bishop of Ephesus. He is mentioned by Paul 17 times and was a trusted and valuable priest and bishop.<sup>i ii</sup>

The record of Titus is a little more obscure. Tradition tells us that Titus witnessed the preaching of Christ during the Lord's ministry in Jerusalem. Later in life, after the conversion of Paul, Timothy, a pagan by birth, converted to Christianity. Paul baptized him and considered him a "true child in our common faith" (Ti 1:4). "Paul was not only Titus' spiritual father, but also depended on this convert as an assistant and interpreter. Titus accompanied Paul to the Apostolic Council of Jerusalem during the year 51 and was later sent to the Corinthian Church on two occasions. After the end of Paul's first imprisonment in Rome, the apostle ordained Titus as the Bishop of Crete."<sup>iii</sup> Titus also evangelized the region of Dalmatia in modern day Croatia.

Paul wrote two letters to Timothy and one to Titus. They are very different from his other letters. These are pastoral letters addressed to the shepherds of congregations. "Attention is given especially to correct doctrine and church organization... They all are concerned with the work of a pastor in caring for the ... communities under his charge" (Intro to Timothy).

Just as Paul found himself in difficult circumstances time and again. These coworkers found the call to ministry far from easy, and yet they were ready and willing to pick up their crosses and follow in the way of Christ.

- Timothy was a martyr for the faith. In the year 93, he protested the worship of idols during a pagan festival in Ephesus. An angry mob killed him on January 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- "Titus is credited with leading the Church of Crete well into his 90s, overturning paganism and promoting the faith through his prayers and preaching."<sup>iv</sup>

Paul recognized the gifts of Timothy and Titus and helped develop them so they could in turn help others in their faith.

Jesus strikes a similar tone in today's gospel. While he relied on family like his mother Mary and his cousin James to help him in his own ministry, he also encouraged others beyond his inner circle. "For whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother" (Mk 3: 35). The commission of Jesus to share the good news to the ends of the earth requires collaborative ministry in every day and age.

As Saint Paul explains at the close of the letter to Titus, see to it that your collaborators have everything they need to succeed. And teach everyone to devote themselves to good works (Ti 3:13-14).

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<sup>i</sup> [vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2006/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_aud\\_20061213.html](http://vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2006/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20061213.html)

<sup>ii</sup> [catholicnewsagency.com/saint/sts-timothy-and-titus-128](http://catholicnewsagency.com/saint/sts-timothy-and-titus-128)

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid