

January 26

Timothy and Titus apostles

The day after the conversion of St. Paul, the Western churches commemorate Timothy and Titus, bishops of the early Church and Paul's collaborators in the mission to the gentiles.

Timothy, Paul's beloved disciple, was baptized by the Apostle and received from him the imposition of hands. This conferred upon him the spiritual gift that made him a "dispenser of the word of truth" - in other words, an announcer of the Gospel.

He was Paul's tireless companion in the evangelization of Asia Minor, shared Paul's first imprisonment, and became a guide of the community of Ephesus, where tradition claims he died.

Paul encouraged him, like a "dear son," to be a model for believers in his teaching, his life, his faith and his love.

Titus, a native of Antioch, was led to faith by Paul during the Apostle's first missionary journey. Paul called him "my true son in our common faith." Titus served as an intermediary between Paul and the community of Corinth, and was chosen to guide the community in Crete, where tradition again tells us he spent his last days.

BIBLICAL READINGS

Isa 61:1-3a; 2 Tim 2:1-8 (or Titus 1:1-5); Lk 10:1-9

Robert (1028-1111), Alberic (d.1108), and Stephen (1060-1134) the first abbots of Cîteaux, monastics

Today, the Western monastic calendar commemorates the Cistercians Robert, Alberic, and Stephen, who were the first abbots of the monastery of Cîteaux.

During the second half of the eleventh century, Robert, a native of the region of Troyes, became a Benedictine monk. In search of greater simplicity and poverty according to the Gospel, he founded a monastery in the forest of Molesme in the French diocese of Langres. But the new foundation soon became a rich and powerful abbey, and Robert left with about twenty companions to pursue his spiritual quest elsewhere.

Towards the end of the century he settled at Cîteaux, but before long he was forced to return to Molesme, where he died in 1111. The search for poverty and simplicity in the different aspects of monastic life was taken up by his successors at the New Monastery, Alberic and Stephen Harding. They led the small community through great trials towards renewed faithfulness to the Rule of St. Benedict, and under their guidance the community's way of life began to assume its defining features.

This marked the beginning of the Cistercian reform (from Cistercium, the Latin name of Cîteaux). With Bernard of Clairvaux, the order took on a spiritual identity that carried it through centuries of history and further reforms, and that is still vivid today.

BIBLICAL READINGS

Sir 44:1.10-15; Heb 11:1-2.8-16; Mk 10:24-30

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

ANGLICANS:

Timothy and Titus, companions of Paul

WESTERN CATHOLICS:

Timothy and Titus, bishops (Roman and Ambrosian calendars)

Robert, Alberic and Stephen, abati di Cîteaux (Monastic calendar)

Paula (d. 404), hermit (Spanish-Mozarabic calendar)

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (17 tubah/terr):

Maxim and Dometius of Scetis (4th cent.), monks (Coptic Church)

LUTHERANS:

Timothy and Titus, disciples of the Apostle

Johann Matthäus Meyfart (d. 1642), poet in Thuringia

MARONITES:

Agnes (3rd cent.), virgin and martyr (see on January 21)

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:

Xenophon and companions (6th cent.), monks

EAST SYRIAN ORTHODOX:

Polycarp (d. ca. 167), bishop and martyr (Malabar Church; see on February 23)

OLD CATHOLICS:

Timothy and Titus, disciples of the Apostle