

Saints Timothy and Titus

Today the Church celebrates St. Paul's closest collaborators Timothy and Titus. Three letters are traditionally attributed to Paul are written to them, two to Timothy and one to Titus.

First, let's talk about Timothy. He is mentioned at least 17 times in Paul's letters. Evidently, Paul thought very highly of Timothy. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul says, "*I have no one like him who will be genuinely anxious for your welfare.*" (Phil. 2:20)

Apparently, Timothy was quite young when working with Paul because on one occasion, Paul said, "*Let no one have contempt for your youth, but set an example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity*" (1 Tim. 4:12). In addition to being young, some may have looked down upon him because he had a Jewish mother and a Gentile father (Act 6:1).

Thus, worldly speaking, Timothy had a lot working against him. However, God so often uses those who are little in the world's eyes to do great things. Timothy was a wonderful companion of Paul and according to tradition, was the first Bishop of Ephesus.

Regarding Titus, in Paul's letter to Titus, the Apostle described Titus as a "*true child in a common faith.*" (Tit. 1:4) Additionally, Titus was a major player in restoring the peace between the Apostle Paul and the Church at Corinth. Finally, Titus was the first bishop of Crete, which had a reputation of being an unruly bunch.

There are a couple of things worth noting on this feast day. First, Paul, as great an apostle as he was, did not do everything by himself. He needed help. He relied upon trustworthy people who shared in his apostolic work. Like Paul, we cannot do everything by ourselves. We depend upon God and others, who are made in His image and likeness. Do not be afraid to rely upon the help of others.

Second, when reading over Paul's letters, it's striking how willing Timothy and Titus are to help the Apostle. They had to represent Paul in some very difficult circumstances. In this light, I think of a priest who must represent the bishop in difficult circumstances. Like Timothy and Titus, we must represent the Lord, whether it is easy or difficult. May we have hearts open and ready to God's will, no matter what the cost for God's glory and our own good.