

## **Donnybrook**

18 October 2021

### **Welcome**

Today we celebrate not so much a saint but a document, in fact two documents. As you know, the author of the Gospel of Luke also wrote the Acts of the Apostles, a unique double volume, making up 27.5% of the New Testament. If we didn't have these two documents, there would be no annunciation to Mary, no shepherds at the crib, no Ascension or Pentecost and no Prodigal Son, to mention just a few things.

### **Topic**

Is this huge "production" relevant today? I think it is immensely relevant for three reasons.

### **Steps**

Firstly of all, the Gospel and Acts are engagingly and beautifully written. There's a note of joy and excitement throughout, exactly what we need today. Many stories in the Gospel underline underline the happiness of the Good News – a good example would be the Prodigal Son or the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

Secondly, the double volume is missionary. Our Gospel today, the sending the seventy-two– is unique to Luke and anticipates the wider mission in the Acts– portrays a picture of fleet-footed evangelisers, who travel lightly and without hindrance. People full of courage and initiative.

Finally, we began yesterday the Synodal Pathway in the diocese. In writing about it, Pope Francis picked a story from the Acts of the Apostles – but not the obvious one. The obvious one would have been the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15. Instead, he chooses the fascinating story of the conversion of Cornelius in chapters 10 and 11. This is interesting because in the story of Cornelius, it is clear that the Spirit is active beyond the boundaries of Christianity and secondly although it is the story of the conversion of Cornelius the biggest conversion in this story is that of Peter. An indirect lesson for today!

### **Conclusion**

The ancient accounts still have power and we can be grateful that the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles have come down to us. Today is a day of gratitude and perhaps also a day when we might think of having another go a reading the two documents – not only thrillingly written but full of joy.