

FEAST OF ST. JAMES: MONDAY, 25TH JULY, 2022, WEEK 17, YEAR II.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:7-15; PSALM 126; MATTHEW 20:20-28.

Today, the Holy Church celebrates the feast of St. James the Apostle.

This James was the brother of John the Evangelist. The two were called by Jesus as they worked with their father in a fishing boat on the sea of Galilee (Mark 1:19-20).

James was one of the favoured three who had the privilege of witnessing the Transfiguration, the raising to life of the daughter of Jairus, and the agony in the garden of Gethsemane.

James and his brother John were nicknamed 'sons of thunder', a nickname which described their temperament. We see this temperament displayed in Luke 9:54-55, when they lost their temper with the Samaritans and wanted Jesus to give them the go-ahead to call down fire on the Samaritans.

In today's Gospel, St. Matthew tells us that their mother came to Jesus to request seats of honour for them in His kingdom. She made this request with their full consent. Jesus used the opportunity to teach them and the other disciples, that leadership, authority and greatness consist in humble service.

James was the first Apostle to be martyred. Herod Agrippa had him killed by the sword in 44AD, in order to curry favour with the Jews (Acts 12:1-3).

St. James is the patron saint of Spain and there are two traditions connecting him to Spain. A tradition has it that he preached in Spain, whilst the other tradition has it that his bodily remains were transported to Compostela by the other disciples, where he was buried.

The shrine dedicated to St. James at Santiago de Compostela, in Galicia in Spain, is one of the most famous pilgrimage sites in the Christian world.

As we reflect on the life of this holy Apostle, let us keep these lessons:

I. James was one of the three disciples closest to Jesus, yet he was the first to die. The love of God doesn't exclude us from the ills of life, but God will love us through whatever we are facing. Hence, no matter what we are going through, we must remain firm and confident in the love of God for us. Then we shall be able to say, like St. Paul, we were cornered, persecuted, we see no answers, we are in difficulties but we never despair. We are more than conquerors through Him who loves us.

II. Peter was arrested and delivered, James was arrested and beheaded (Acts 12). God allowed one to be beheaded and another to be delivered. He has different plans for each of us.

III. From the Gospel account, we see that these disciples were far from being perfect but that was not an obstacle for Jesus. God does not need us to be perfect; He needs us to be willing to follow Him, obey Him and be formed by Him. When we follow Him with openness, He fills us with grace and power, His grace overtakes our weaknesses and His glory radiates through our humanity. As St. Paul says in the First Reading, we become earthenware jars holding invaluable treasures.

Pardon any grammatical error, eyes are deemed while typing. Lol