

## Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist

6 May

(or 27 December) — Holy Day

Today we honour Saint John the Apostle, a Galilean fisherman who was called with his brother James and followed Jesus to become “a fisher for people.”

John and his brother were so impetuous in their behaviour that Jesus nicknamed them “Bo-ane’ges” or “Sons of thunder.” Nevertheless, with Peter and James, he was one of the three disciples that Jesus chose to have with him on those occasions when he wanted people he could trust. This side of John’s character is heightened if he was “the beloved disciple” mentioned in the Fourth Gospel — the disciple who lay closest to Jesus at the Last Supper and into whose care the crucified Lord entrusted his mother. According to the Book of Acts, John later became a pillar of the church at Jerusalem and shared the leadership with Peter.

A reliable tradition says that John eventually settled at Ephesus, a city on the Mediterranean coast of Asia Minor. There he superintended the Church and gathered a lively circle of students, who had great influence on Christian life and thought throughout the region. Out of this “community of the beloved disciple” came the Gospel and the three Letters which are attributed to John in the New Testament. These writings display a side of John which we would not expect from the other accounts of him. Instead of the impulsive “Son of a thunder,” the Gospel and Letters of John reflect the mind of a fine theologian who meditated deeply on the mystery of Christ and expressed his understanding in a poetical manner.

Many scholars have argued that John the fisherman-apostle and John the theologian-evangelist were really two different people. It has even been shown that the text of John’s Gospel passed through the hands of several editors before it reached the form in which we now know it. But scholars have also recognized that “the Johannine tradition” gives independent information about events in Jesus’ life which may be more accurate than some of the information available in the other three gospels. This suggests that the recollections and teachings of John, the fisherman turned apostle, did indeed provide the basis for the New Testament writings which bear his name.

See Readings, page 543.

### Sentence

The word of the cross is the power of God to us who are being saved. See 1 Corinthians 1.18

### Collect

Shed upon your Church, O Lord,  
the brightness of your light,  
that we being illumined by the teaching  
of your apostle and evangelist John,  
may walk in the light of your truth,  
and come at last to the fullness of eternal life;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

### Readings

Genesis 1.1-5, 12-19 or 1 John 1.1-9 Psalm 92.1-2, 11-14

*Refrain* The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree.

*Or v.* 11 or CR 1

John 20.1-8

### Prayer over the Gifts

Eternal Light,  
receive all we offer you this day,  
that we may share in the wisdom of your eternal Word  
revealed at this eucharistic table.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word.

### *Preface of Apostles*

### Prayer after Communion

Eternal God,  
your apostle and evangelist John proclaimed the Christ,  
your Word made flesh among us.  
May we who have shared the bread of life  
remain for ever your children,  
born according to your will;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.