

Today we commemorate Saint Simon and Saint Jude, whose names appear in the New Testament on every list of the twelve apostles.

Simon was called "the Zealot," which suggests that he once belonged to a Jewish resistance movement. Animated by religious fervour, the Zealots used any means, even terror, to overthrow Roman rule and revive Jewish independence. Simon originally may have followed Jesus in hopes that he would "restore the kingdom to Israel."

Jude "the son of James" was also called Thaddaeus. One of the Letters included in the New Testament is ascribed to him; and we hear his voice in Saint John's account of the Last Supper, where he is distinguished as "the other Judas, not Iscariot." Judas Iscariot was the disciple who betrayed Jesus, and the fact that Jude shared the traitor's name made Christians reluctant to ask for his prayers. For this reason Jude is considered the patron saint of what is shunned by the world, especially lost causes and those who suffer from incurable diseases.

The western Church remembers Simon and Jude together because, in the seventh or eighth century, the church of Rome acquired some relics of both apostles and placed them in a single shrine. October twenty-eighth is probably the anniversary of the dedication of this shrine.

With so little information to go on, our commemoration of Simon and Jude may be compared to their patronage of lost causes and hopeless cases. It is a little victory against the odds of history. For Christ is often made known by deeds which are recorded nowhere else but in the eternal remembrance of God; and by honouring Simon and Jude today we share in God's own mindfulness of their apostolic zeal.

See Readings, page 698.

Sentence

You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth. *Acts 1.8*

Collect

Almighty God,
we thank you for the glorious company of the apostles,
and especially on this day for Simon and Jude.
As they were faithful and zealous in their mission,
so may we with ardent devotion
make known the love and mercy
of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Deuteronomy 32.1-4 *or* Ephesians 2.13-22 Psalm 119.89-96

Refrain O Lord, your word is everlasting.

Or v. 89 or CR 4

John 15.17-27

Prayer over the Gifts

God of faithfulness,
accept our offering this day,
and give us grace to witness to your truth
and to follow in the path of those
who acknowledge Jesus as Lord for ever and ever.

Preface of Apostles

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God,
we are nourished by the bread of life.
Strengthen us to witness to the gospel,
and bring us to reign with Jesus Christ your Son,
for he is Lord now and for ever.