

Saint Barnabas the Apostle 11 June Holy Day

There were twelve apostles, and then some — some others who never belonged to the original companions of Jesus, but who were also called apostles because they were "sent forth" to proclaim the gospel. Saint Paul was one of these others; so was the man we honour today, the apostle named Barnabas.

The Book of Acts says that he was a Jew born in Cyprus, but that he was living in Jerusalem when he joined "the company of those who believed in Jesus." His real name was Joseph; the apostles called him Barnabas, or "Son of encouragement," because "he sold a field which belonged to him and laid the proceeds at the apostles' feet." By this act Barnabas encouraged the rest of the disciples to provide for the good of the whole community.

According to the Book of Acts, Barnabas was the one who introduced Paul to the twelve apostles. Later on he moved to Antioch and sent for Paul to help him lead the Church in that city. From there Paul and Barnabas set out on a great missionary journey through the cities of Asia Minor and Greece. The two men had a falling-out over Mark, who wanted to abandon the mission. Barnabas returned to Cyprus with Mark, and Paul went his separate way.

Paul himself mentioned Barnabas several times in his Letters, which suggest that he, not Barnabas, was the senior colleague. Paul also gave a more serious reason for their parting company. It happened at Antioch, when Peter went back on his promise to treat pagan converts as equal with Jewish converts. In the acrimonious debate which followed Barnabas separated from Paul and sided with Peter.

We do not know whether Paul and Barnabas were ever reconciled; an ancient tradition testifies only that Barnabas spent the rest of his days preaching in Cyprus.

See Readings, page 581.

Sentence

This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.
Acts 2.32

Collect

Merciful God,
help us to follow the example
of your faithful servant Barnabas,
who, seeking not his own renown
but the well-being of your Church,
gave generously of his life and substance
for the relief of the poor and the spread of the gospel;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Isaiah 42.5-12 *or* Acts 11.19-30; 13.1-3 Psalm 112

Refrain Happy are they who have given to the poor. *Or v. 9 or*

Alléluia!

Matthew 10.7-16

Prayer over the Gifts

Faithful God,

accept all we offer you this day.

Kindle in us the flame of love

by which your apostle Barnabas

bore witness to the gospel.

This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of Apostles

Prayer after Communion

God of justice,

may we who have heard your word

and received new life at your table,

bear witness to your truth in the world,

so that all may come to share in your kingdom.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.