

May 1st - The Feast of St Philip and St James

What a lot of Jameses! We know our Santiago - James the Great as we walk the way of his disciples to the great Church in Santiago de Compostela. But this day we celebrate Philip and James the less (Santiago el Menor), or James the son of Alpheus. Both of these were included in the list of apostles who we know as 'The Twelve' - Philip we do know a little about, but James has almost no recorded deeds or words.

What we do know however is that both were witnesses to Christ's earthly ministry. They would have witnessed to the miracles, the sermons the parables, and most probably the events of Holy Week and Easter.



St James the Less - El Greco

Our reading from scripture this morning was from the letter of James - a different, (third) James, and what he says inspired me to write this piece for our sites on social media. He says.-

"My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, ³because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; ⁴and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing". James 1.2

Surely we are all now at a time of trial. Frustrated by isolation, frightened by the risk of Covid 19, unsure of the future. But James exhorts his readers to follow Jewish law and to maintain Godly living. He doesn't seek to comfort, but to energise 'joyful living' as the way to accept endurance under testing so as to obtain maturity in faith.

We are challenged too, to be joyful despite our difficulties. We are to learn and seek wisdom from where we now are, rather than immediate relief. We are to look to the bigger picture so that when we emerge from the present trials we will be wiser and more mature in our faith.

As with most of the biblical exhortations to persevere, James is asking a lot of us, and no doubt Philip and James the less (and James the Great and the others), had

to keep that view in mind as they ministered - but to persevere does not mean to arrive at an impossible target - it means to do our best on the journey.

The Collect for today

Almighty Father, who truly to know is eternal life: teach us too know your Son Jesus Christ as the way the truth and the life; that we may follow the steps of your Holy Apostles Philip and James, and walk steadfastly the way that leads to your glory.

Amen

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