

OCTOBER 22, 2021
Feast of St. Simon & St. Jude, Apostles
Luke 6: 12-19

“HE CHOSE US.”

Most of the time, Jesus made decisions after praying to the Father. Our Gospel for today was one of the examples as Jesus went to the mountain to pray before choosing the Twelve. Jesus spent the whole night in communion with His Father. After that Jesus at daybreak called all His disciples and from among them chose the Apostles. Two of them we commemorate today: Simon called the Zealot and Jude son of James.

We ask question who are the disciples and apostles of Jesus? “The word ‘disciple’ comes from the Latin verb *discere*, which means ‘to learn’. A ‘disciple’ then is someone who learns from a master and tries to follow in his footsteps. The word ‘apostle’ comes from the Greek verb *apostello*, of which the noun is *Apostolos*. This signifies someone who is sent out on a mission bringing an important message from someone in authority, an ambassador or an envoy. Jesus had many disciples but just 12 of them were chosen to pass on his teaching after he had left them. They, in turn, would appoint others with the same mandate. Today it is our bishops who have that mandate.”¹

Who is St. Simon and St. Jude? We can not find any evidence of their early life and they were two of the least known apostles but according to tradition, they were among the closest to Jesus by blood, two of His cousins. Between the two “at least, the tradition is quite certain of it as regards Jude Thaddeus, since it is clear from the Scriptures that his father, Alpheus, was the brother of St. Joseph, while his mother, Mary Cleophas, was a cousin of the Virgin. As for Simon, things are shrouded in confusion. When the Eleven dispersed from Jerusalem to proclaim the Kingdom of God in other lands, Jude Thaddeus departed from Galilee and Samaria to go into Syria, Armenia and ancient Persia. In this area, authoritative sources claim, he met Simon, and their missionary partnership won

¹ livingspace.sacredspace.ie

tens of thousands of Babylonians and people from other cities for Christ. As always, the Gospel earned for itself both followers and enemies: for the two Apostles, the hour of supreme witness eventually arrived. Arrested and taken to the Temple of the Sun, the sentence imposed on both was to worship the goddess Diana, and so to deny Christ. In refusing, it is said that Jude Thaddeus declared pagan idols false, and that at the same time two horrible demons came out of the temple, destroying him. Frightened, the people watching the scene are said to have pounced violently on the two Apostles, who are brutally killed. Their relics are kept in the Basilica of Saint Peter.”²

As we celebrate the feast of Sts. Simon and Jude, there is one message that the Lord is telling us: He chooses very ordinary people who are willing to take an assignment and do it extraordinarily. Jesus chose these Apostles not for what they were, that is, do ordinary things, no special education or no social advantages, but their willingness to learn, be open and for what they become under His guidance, direction and power.

My brothers and sisters, like the apostles, we are called to serve and we must not think that we have little or nothing to offer. He takes ordinary people who are open, willing and obedient and uses it for greatness in spreading the Kingdom of God to others. So, let us ask Sts. Simon and Jude to wipe away and remove whatever holding us back to give all to Jesus. Let us do ordinary things in an extraordinary way to spread the gospel to our brothers and sisters. Little it may be, God will be glad if we do it with love and humility. Sts. Simon and Jude, pray for us. Amen.

² www.vaticannews.va