

Father Philip's Address to St Paul's Assembly

Monday 28th October, 2013

Theme for the week: Saints

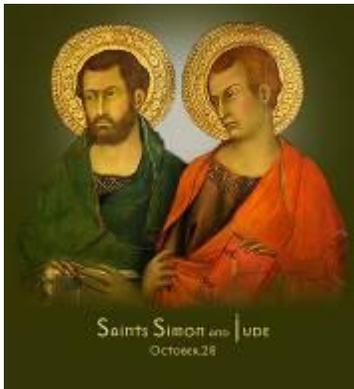
HALLOWED NAMES

Luke 6:12-16

Often our reading at assembly may be about a miracle of Jesus, or one of his teachings. It might be a psalm praising God or a reading from one of the letters to the early Church.

But this morning, our short reading was really just a list of names. Twelve names to be precise, the twelve men whom Jesus called to be his apostles, which of course includes the name of Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus.

Today in the Church we celebrate two of those names. Simon who was called the Zealot and Judas Son of James. Remember there were two who were called Judas, the one who betrayed Jesus and the other Judas who the Gospels of Matthew and Mark call Thaddeus.



He has also been known as Jude, so that he is not confused with Judas the traitor.

Today is the Feast day of Saint Simon and Saint Jude. Really that is about as much as I can say. Perhaps that is where my talk should end! Because very little is said about them in the Bible. Their names are listed in the Gospel as apostles of Jesus.

Tradition says that they went on to preach the Gospel in Mesopotamia (what is now the area of Iraq, Syria and part of Turkey) and Persia (what is now Iran). Jude possibly wrote the letter of Jude in the Bible and it is believed that both Simon and Jude were crucified in Persia because of their faith.

For all this week our readings at Assembly will be about the Saints and the holiness which God calls us to. It is appropriate because on Friday the Church celebrates a major festival – All Saints Day.

The Church recognises many people as Saints, as holy men and women who have followed the call of God and lived a holy life. If you were ever to pick up a dictionary of Saints you would find thousands there.

Some examples are:

Our own Saint, Saint Paul.

Saint Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

Saint Joseph her husband.

Saint Patrick who took the Good News to Ireland.

Saint Peter, the first among the Apostles.

Saint Andrew Kim-Taegon from Korea and

Saint Mary MacKillop, an Australian nun.

But the Church only ‘recognises’ those who are Saints. It doesn’t make saints, only God does that.

There are also many, many people through history, who have shown extraordinary holiness but who may have been forgotten about. Holy men and women whose witness to Jesus has not been recorded and the Church does not know about.

So Friday, which is All Saints Day, is an opportunity to celebrate all of the saints, especially those whom we may never heard of or who have long been forgotten in history.

The word ‘Saint’ comes from the Latin ‘Sanctus’ – which means to set apart or to make holy. To make holy – another old word for that is:

Hallow. To hallow, to make holy, to set apart.

Just as we have Churches dedicated to Saints: Saint John's Cathedral, Saint Stephen's Church next door, there are also Churches dedicated to All the Saints. All Saints Cathedral in Mongkok – or All Saints Church in Margaret Street London. Then there are Churches like this old one in London called All Hallows by the Tower. It simply is an older way of saying All Saints.



Shortly in the Lord's Prayer we will say the words:
Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.

Reminding us that the name of God is Holy, it is set apart. It is not to be used lightly or irreverently.

That word appears again this week on Thursday night, with 'Halloween'. Quite simply the 'een' the 'eve' the 'night before' All Hallows Day, All Saints Day. Just as we have Christmas Eve, we have the Eve of All Saints Day, All Hallows Eve.

Many people who celebrate Halloween will have no idea of the history of that word, but in the Church it marks the start of the Festival which honours not the dead, but those who live in Jesus, the Saints.

Let us give thanks for all the holy men and women who have shown the love of God in their lives. Many were killed for their faith. Many were quiet voices which have been forgotten through time.

And today, Saint Simon and Saint Jude remind us of those many unknown names. At least we know their names, but we know little of what they did.

But what we do know is that Jesus called them and they responded to that call.

May we do the same. Listen to the call of Jesus in our lives and respond to it faithfully.