

## Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Oct 28th 2017

Feast of Saints Simon and Jude, Apostles

Today's feast honors saints Simon and Jude, called by Jesus to be his disciples. In the USA we are very familiar with Jude because of the Memphis St. Jude clinic for children's diseases, especially for kids with cancer. St. Jude is regarded the Patron Saint of desperate cases and lost causes. This makes Jude a popular figure for the troubled times of our lives particularly when we feel lost and alone.

Saints Simon (the Zealot) and Jude Thaddeus were directly called to be disciples and part of the twelve by Jesus himself. St. Luke's gospel version of that calling is today's gospel reading. Simon and Jude responded generously to Jesus' invitation to join him in his holy and healing work.

The two words that strike me in the readings today are "capstone" and "community". The letter to the Ephesians refers to Jesus as the capstone of the arch made up of the disciples of Jesus. Architecturally, the capstone is the topmost piece of the arch that keeps the whole structure together. Spiritually, Jesus is that piece of the arch; we look to him to be the source of our oneness with and in Jesus.

Jesus is what keeps the community of disciples firmly together; or, without him we (the arch) ultimately fall apart and crumble. He tells the Ephesian Christians that they are members of the household of God firmly founded on those called into disciple-service with Jesus. What a wonderful invitation each of us has received in our baptism.

We call ourselves the "Body of Christ" meaning that each of us has the invitation to be with Jesus as he calls us into his service. Do you and me get the call-to-be-disciples? Without doubt we do even if we don't feel up to the job; ultimately it is God's work done in and through us.

Does it mean we have to be "perfect?" By no means does it! Just like the 12 and the other disciples of Jesus we are simply ordinary flawed folks, made different by our "yes" to Jesus' invitation. We never lose the distinction of being loved sinners. Both sides of that phrase (loved sinners) accompany us through each of our hours, days and years of living – we are sinners who are lavishly loved by God and invited to share that love with others.

That's right: each one of us is a disciple among the community of disciples, our faith community, called to be the church. It is probably way too easy to assume, like many of us, do that priests, religious, hierarchy and the truly holy among us are disciples and we are simply led by their lives and example. Our faith is much more demanding than that. We are called not just once in our lives at baptism, but Jesus' calls us daily into our unique discipleship. He really IS the capstone of the arch we call church.

Like St. Simon and St. Jude we join an apostolic church, called into life for faith-filled service of our brother, Jesus.

Help us, loving God to grow in faith and to bring our unique, life-giving call to be Jesus' disciples. Give us a generous and joyful spirit like the apostles' who are, as St. Paul reminds the Ephesian faith community, growing "into a temple sacred in the Lord in whom we are being built together into a

dwelling place of God in the Spirit" Thank you, Brother Jesus, for that opportunity.

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