

Today we celebrate the memorial of two of the lesser known apostles: “Simon who was called a Zealot, and Judas the son of James” (Luke 6:15-16). Simon the Zealot was part of a Jewish sect that resisted Roman domination. There is little solid information on him, he may have worked together with Saint Jude in Persia as well as preaching on his own in Egypt.

Judas the son of James is only slightly more well known. He is also known as Jude, other times as Thaddeus, and other times as Jude Thaddeus. His brother, James the Lesser, was also an apostle. Jude and James were related to Jesus perhaps as cousins. “Ancient writers tell us that he preached the Gospel in Judea, Samaria, Idumaea, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Lybia. According to Eusebius, he returned to Jerusalem in the year 62 and assisted at the election of his brother, St. Simeon, as Bishop of Jerusalem.”ⁱ

St. Jude is invoked as the patron of desperate situations and impossible causes. Some say that because his name is so similar to Judas Iscariot, he was rarely called upon, thus when all else failed, people would pray to Saint Jude. “St. Bridget of Sweden and St. Bernard had visions from God asking each to accept St. Jude as ‘The Patron Saint of the Impossible’.”ⁱⁱ

Most holy Apostle, St. Jude, faithful servant and friend of Jesus, I place myself into your hands at this difficult time. Help me to know that I am not alone. Please pray for me, asking God to send me comfort for my sorrows, bravery for my fears, and healing for my suffering. Ask our loving God to strengthen my faith and give me the courage to accept His Will for my life. Thank you, St. Jude, for the hope you offer to all who believe in you. Amen.ⁱⁱⁱ

When we think of the courage to accept God’s will for our life, we also think of Mary at the Annunciation. She was troubled by the message the Archangel Gabriel brought, but Mary was reassured by his words “nothing will be impossible for God” (Luke 1:37). Yes, with God all things are possible whether we invoke the assistance of Saint Jude or pray more directly to God.

Two thousand years ago, Saint Jude “is said to have cured the King of Edessa’s leprosy ... with an image of Jesus’s face that our Lord had pressed on a cloth. The king was so impressed he converted to Christianity, along with much of his family and kingdom.”^{iv} Saint Jude is also the patron saint of hospitals and hospital workers. The late actor and comedian Danny Thomas made Saint Jude Hospital in Memphis famous by asking people to support the then little-known children’s hospital. The now famous research hospital is so well funded that families never receive a bill from St. Jude so their main focus can be on helping their children.

The Apostles Simon and Jude were martyred. They were willing to die for their faith that others might believe. Just as Jesus called the 12 apostles to come and follow him, we too are called. In a world troubled with division and distrust, the Lord is calling us to sew seeds of peace. Where there is injustice, hostility, and mistrust, we might consider it humanly impossible. But for God, nothing is impossible. So, we work with our Lord, we listen to him in Scripture and in Liturgy. He can help the seeds of peace and understanding to take deep root in our hearts. By cultivating virtues which foster reconciliation, solidarity and peace, God help us to nourish his goodness in our hearts, his peace in our minds, and his joy in our being.

ⁱ catholicnewsagency.com/saint/st-jude-thaddeus-and-st-simon-the-zealot-apostles-541

ⁱⁱ stjude shrine.org/sj/patron-saint-of-the-impossible/

ⁱⁱⁱ stjude shrine.org/sj/prayers_to_st_jude/

^{iv} ourcatholicprayers.com/prayer-to-st-jude.html