

**The October days are here,
We reflect on two Apostles**

"...he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off..."

Homily

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Church of Our Saviour (Episcopal)

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(North of San Francisco)

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Deuteronomy 32: 1-4

Ephesians 2: 13-22

John 15: 17-27

Psalm 119: 89-96

In the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Words from Deuteronomy, and they well describe the words an Apostle speaks. An introduction to this Homily about Apostles:

*Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak
Let the earth hear the words of my mouth.
May my teaching drop like the rain,
My speech condense like the dew;
Like gentle rain on grass,
Like showers on new growth.
For I will proclaim the name of the LORD;
Ascribe greatness to our God!*

*The Rock, his work is perfect,
And all his ways are just.
A faithful God, without deceit,
Just and upright is he...*

The October days are here, Fall is here, the season of change--for winter is coming and at this time we look to see the light change. Days grow shorter. The weather is cooler here north of San Francisco in Mill Valley, and it is sometimes necessary to turn the heat on in the evening.

Last night was like that, colder, and as I thought of God and reflected on what it meant to be an Apostle, my mind was infected with the change of weather and light, even the darkness that now has gathered at this early yet still into the evening hour of the day.

I thought... and my heart said they are Apostles who spoke of God, spoke to and into the world, and gave us hope, having been commissioned by Christ himself when alive. Almost mythical in dimension, they are separate from the special yet regular disciple. When sent out into the world to speak the Good News Apostles had that wonderful and special spirit upon them: The Holy Spirit. They are the special disciples of Christ, extraordinary and unique in the history of the world.

Today I speak of Saint Simon, the Zealot, and Saint Jude. Lesser known Apostles, but still of that special group so filled with the Spirit of God and willing to bring their holiness and message, as messengers, out to the world itself:

Mankind was waiting to hear, though they knew them not, they knew the Lord Christ not, they knew the Good News not.

Heralds is what they were, and their spirit lives still, renewed through generations and remembered generation by generation.

Let us speak briefly of these two men on their special day when we celebrate them.

Here we are on this day remembering Simon.
Here we are on this day remembering Jude.

Jude is the only Apostle I can remember who has a special place in the world of print, for you can find him in the classified section of newspapers. Albeit a small place, a small advertisement, but the heart that placed the ad offers a public message bringing the word vibrantly if almost unknown in its content to the greater world. It is a message of last hope, a message of Gospel dimension in 6 point type, so is a prayer to Jude.

First, what are these small prayers, these pleas for help in the last moments and days of hope, directed in plea to Jude for aid.

In that 6 point type are even there building blocks of the Church?

As Origen writes in a homily on the Book of Joshua, **“Like living stones, let ourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”**

So his quote from the Bible goes in his message, **“...in this building of the Church there must also be an altar. From this I conclude that those of you who are ready and prepared to give up your time to prayer, to offer petitions and sacrifices of supplication to God day and night, such people I say will be the living stones out of which Jesus will build his altar.”**

Jude is little known, but famous too as last to be noticed, for in history he was confused with Judas, so as overlooked and almost forgotten, he became the Saint for those of lost causes and final hope appealed to in time of (needed) prayer, prayers given in their offering petitions and sacrifices of supplication to God.

It is a quiet and not so directly proactive an Evangelical way of Apostleship for which Jude is best known, but he is in this way of the Lord building the Church.

Jude: known as patron saint of lost causes.

As for Simon the Zealot, the book, "Celebrating the Saints," says:

There is no indication in the Gospels whether Simon moved from the Zealot party to be a follower of Christ or, on the other hand, if after the resurrection he became a supporter of that group seeing it as a response to God's call to proclaim the Kingdom.

Again, Origen urges us to be stones as were the Apostles, stones for God...

...united in belief and purpose, let us hope that God may find us stones fit for his altar.

Simon the Zealot, not to be confused with Simon Peter, was an Apostle who built the Church. As we move towards the end of the Church year and a remembrance of All Souls and All Saints, as we see the light change and remember soon those who have died, the words of Psalm 119 commemorating this day are a reminder of Simon the Zealot's devotion and the will of God:

*The LORD exists forever;
Your word is firmly fixed in heaven.
Your faithfulness endures to all
Generations;
You have established the earth, and
It stands fast.
By your appointment they stand today,
For all things are your servants.*

Is it not a comfort, these words of the Psalm?

The Church lives.

The LORD exists forever.

This is where the power of that word spoken by Simon the Zealot and Jude came from. Their words came from Christ in a commissioning:

Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

That beautiful section of John is worth a look, it is John 1: 17-27. It concludes:

“Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

The Apostles are a glorious group, and they were faithful and zealous in their mission. As the Collect of the day says, let us pray,

...so we may with ardent devotion make known the love and mercy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...

These lovely words from Ephesians make a better ending to this Homily than anything I could write. Do these words not say what the Apostles did for all of us:

So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God...

- **The Lord bless us and keep us. Amen.**
- **The Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious to us. Amen.**
- **The Lord lift up his countenance upon us and give us peace. Amen.**