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25 Thursday

ST JAMES, APOSTLE

2 Cor 4: 7 - 15

Ps 125: 1- 6

Matt. 20: 20 - 28

When Jesus asked the mother of James and John whether they could drink the cup that He was going to drink (Mt 20:22), they said they could. Did they (or she) know what Jesus really meant, and what it would mean for them? James was beheaded about 12 years after Jesus' death, at the start of an anti-Christian persecution in Jerusalem in which Peter also was arrested. It was the first of many periods in history and in different places that it was dangerous to be a Christian leader, or even just an 'ordinary' Christian. When St Paul came to write his second letter to Corinth, (especially the section of it today's first reading is taken from) he must surely have thought of James. For he was writing about the status and mission of an apostle, any apostle, not just himself. And much of what he wrote applies to all of Christ's people. James' mother sought a special place for her sons, a privileged closeness to Jesus. Her wish was fulfilled rather differently from how she'd expected. For privileged closeness to Jesus means sharing His life through sharing His full acceptance of the human condition not least its suffering, pain and death. The cup we carry is, we know, a very fragile one --- but the power to carry and drink from it is God's, not our own. Whatever happens, a disciple of Jesus does not give up or lose hope, but through dying with Him proclaims and gives witness of His risen life at work in him/herself and in others.

Lord, through your servant St James give us courage and strength to share Your life and Your dying, and so be close to You always.