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28 Thursday

Feastday of Ss Simon and Jude, Apostles

Ephesians 2: 19 - 22

Ps 18: 2 - 5

Luke 6: 12 - 19

Today's gospel gives us, in Luke's words, the list of Jesus' twelve apostles. There are a number of these lists in the New Testament, with some different versions of individual names. With such emphasis on giving the list, and the evident importance of "the Twelve" as a group (even when eventually they became just eleven), it's a bit surprising that we actually know so little about most of them. And probably least of all about the two whose Feastday is today. All we know about Simon is that he was born in Cana and known as the "zealot". Jude gets mentioned in St John's gospel as having asked Jesus at the Last Supper if He was only going to show Himself to His disciples and not to the whole world. Jude also has a family connection with at least one other Apostle (James the Less), and has a short New Testament letter attributed to him.

But more important than information about them is the fact that these two men are not only our brothers in Christ but among His specially chosen close disciples and associates. Together we are fellow-citizens in God's household, "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets". By an old and very symbolic Christian custom, people took a new name at baptism, often the name of an apostle or martyr, for obvious reasons. The custom still exists, and the names of Simon and Jude are still in use. In more modern times, Jude became known as a patron of hopeless cases, a brother whose intercession with Jesus people thought would be specially effective in difficult situations. "Hopeless" or not, let's today celebrate Simon and Jude, links to Jesus and the Father.

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