



St Marylebone
Parish Church

The Feast of Ss Simon and Jude 2018 Sunday 11am Choral Eucharist

Eric and Ernie. Bill and Ted. Ike and Tina. Laurel and Hardy.
Simon and Jude.

Today we celebrate a long line in the history of double acts. Well, sort of. Today we celebrate two of The Twelve. Chosen by Jesus to be his inner circle, the first Bishops of the Church as it grew after His Resurrection, those who will sit on the Twelve thrones at the Judgement on the Last Day. Eric and Ernie rest right through our Christmas re-runs of old episodes of Morecambe and Wise, but for today's double act - their work is not done. Ss Simon and Jude are in the court of the Heavenly King praying for us, cheering us on, willing us to run the race of life in their footsteps - footsteps that follow Jesus.

Most of the Apostles get their own feast day.

But today 28th of October (which this year happens to fall on a Sunday) is Saints Simon and Jude. And that's it. That's almost all we know: their names.

Simon may be Simon the Zealot - the Zealots being the radical and armed wing of the Jewish resistance.

Jude, Judas, also called Thaddeus. Not to be confused with Judas Iscariot the betrayer. Although it is probably the similarity of their names that led today's S. Jude to become the patron saint of lost causes. So remember S. Jude, we all need to ask his prayers and help at times.

Jude gets one line in the Gospels (John 14.22) although not a very important one.

Simon is a just a walk on part.

The letter named after Jude may or may not have been written by *this* Jude.

There are good strands of tradition that would indicate that they were martyred together for Christ in Persia.

That's it. That's all we've got. No letters, no more references.

So never mind Laurel and Hardy, Simon and Jude seem to be more like extras from an agency, paid £50 for a day's filming. They certainly aren't the stars of the show. And yet they are two of the twelve human beings in all of human history that the Lord chose to be his first followers, the first missionaries and bishops of the Church, and who will sit with Him on the day of Judgement. It is only because of these twelve that we are here today, that hopefully all of the world's 2.2 billion Christians are at the Eucharist on the Lord's Day with us.

This *obscure* double act invite us to see things as Christians. To see value, purpose and reality in what is done in love according to God's loving will - not to see value, purpose and reality in what is applauded, or thought impressive; what is great or grand.

Look again at the obscure and stinking rubbish heap outside the city where God incarnate dies for us, covered in blood and sweat and faeces.

Look again at the simple bread and wine by which God's life and grace is given to us in the Blessed Sacrament of His Body and Blood.

Hear Jesus say that those who parade their prayers, their generosity, their greatness so that others see and praise them, have received their reward. Instead, we are to do all these things in secret then our heavenly Father who knows all will reward us. Do not let, he says, even your left hand know what your right hand is doing. (Matthew 6.1-5)

Today in our heavenly family we celebrate Ss Simon and Jude, and in so doing we celebrate that as Christians we see greatness differently. Greatness, value, purpose - all these things are grounded and measured simply in the extent to which they reflect God's loving will. Nothing else.

The greatness of today's Saints is in their quiet loving faithful *obscurity*. They loved Christ - that is all we know - and it is all that matters. What if we started to see our lives, families, possessions, time, energy, work, in that way. Simply, as Christians.

S. Teresa of Kolkata, S. Jean Vianney, S. Terese of Lisieux and so many other saints show us that, although we know about them *now*, their great and first love was done in obscurity. Quietly, unnoticed, they poured out their lives, everything they had, for the sake of God's loving purpose for those He called them to love.

Today we celebrate that God is not impressed by people being like us, or people being wealthy, or of high birth, or clever, or attractive, or talented, or funny, or charismatic, or anything really. He simply wants us to participate completely in His all-loving will for us and His world. That is the only purpose and only measure.

More things may have occurred to you, but I see two things straight away that this means for us. I shall finish with them.

First, if we see the world like this, it *will change* the way we relate to our lives, families, strangers, possessions, time, energy, work. Things, people, lots of things maybe that we have a tendency to neglect - God is perhaps asking us to love and be attentive too. To see what's important by His standards rather than those we have learnt and inherited from elsewhere.

Second, today's feast of Ss Simon and Jude show us that we are not too little, nor too important, not too busy, not too lacking in words or lacking in faith to be the missionaries we are called to be in our own time. Because those excuses didn't work for them either. When we were baptized we were made missionaries. St Simon the nobody and St Jude the obscure take away any excuse you and I have. They were not professionals or experts, but they were (it seems) like millions of others small simple but bright and steadfast beacons of God's love, inviting the world into the relationship with God in Christ for which we were created and for which we are destined.