

**FROM THE PASTOR**  
**JULY 23, 2023**  
**SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**  
**EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

**ST. JAMES THE APOSTLE:** *Praised be Jesus Christ and His Most Holy Mother!* The *Apostles' Creed* has twelve articles of faith. From the most ancient times it has been the tradition of the Catholic Church that each one of the Twelve Apostles contributed one of the twelve articles of faith. During the Church's Liturgical Year of Grace, we celebrate the Feasts of each of the Apostles. In every month of the year we keep the Feast of one of the twelve Apostles. Their Feasts are usually kept toward the latter part of each month.

Thus, in June (June 29<sup>th</sup>) we kept our own patronal Feast, the Solemnity of the Holy Apostles Saints Peter and Paul. (and is it not wonderful to see the exceptionally beautiful and artistic wood cut statues of Sts. Peter and Paul on either side of the sanctuary. Next month (August 24<sup>th</sup>) we will keep the Feast of St. Bartholomew, in September (the 21<sup>st</sup>) we will keep that of St. Matthew, in October (the 28<sup>th</sup>) we will keep Saints Simon and Jude, and then in November (the 30<sup>th</sup>) we will keep the Feast of St. Andrew, the First-Called of the Twelve. Since the end of November is the beginning of the Liturgical Year, which starts on the First Sunday in Advent, we keep the Feast of the First-Called Apostle St. Andrew at the very beginning of the Liturgical Year. And each month we keep the Feast of an Apostle. But for this week's meditation I would like to draw your attention to St. James. His Feast is kept each year on July 25<sup>th</sup> next Saturday.

Like his brother St. John the Apostle and author of the fourth Gospel, St. James was a fisherman. Their father was Zebedee and their mother was Salome who was one of the holy women who stood with Our Blessed Mother at the foot of the Cross.

After Our Lord's Ascension into Heaven, St. James preached the Gospel at what was then considered the very end of the earth, the *Finis Terrae*, Spain. St. James labored arduously and yet was unable to make even one convert in the vast Iberian Peninsula. One day he was so discouraged that he sat at the bank of the River Ebro weeping copiously. Suddenly he heard beautiful signing and saw a bright light. Our Lady appeared to him standing on top of a pillar. She is the Joy of All that Sorrow, the Consolation of the Afflicted, and the Comfort of those who mourn. Just her appearance gave him the courage to continue his great work of the evangelization of the Spanish people. Today on that very spot where Our Lady appeared in the city of Zaragoza there is a great Shrine of Our Lady of the Pillar. Many Spanish women bear the name *Maria Pilar* in her honor. They are often endearingly called, *Pili*. The Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, the founder of the Marianist Congregation, received his inspiration to found the Marianist Congregation while praying at that very shrine.

After his great work of evangelization in Spain, St. James returned to Jerusalem and there became the first of the Apostles to be martyred. But the Spanish people would not be deprived of the presence of their beloved Apostle. The body of St. James was brought from Jerusalem to Spain in the fourth century. However, in the seventh century the Moslems crossed the Straits of Gibraltar

and conquered Spain, putting many Christians to death and enslaving many others. The body of the Apostle was hidden so that it would not be desecrated.

Many had forgotten where the body had been hidden but in the tenth century a great miracle occurred. Above a field in the extreme northwest of Spain (the province of Galicia) the stars began to shine brilliantly leading the faithful to discover the body of their beloved father and teacher St. James. This Field of Stars (in Latin *Campus Stellarum*) is today the great City of Compostela. There so many Christians throughout the centuries have come to pray before the tomb of that Apostle who witnessed the glory of the transfiguration and witnessed the bloody sweat of Our Lord in the Agony in the Garden. Many people even to our own day walk the Way of St. James or *El Camino de Santiago*. It is on that journey that many promises have been made to God and where many graces have been given. Father Brandon O'Brien, a good friend to St. Paul's, made the *Camino* in the summer of 2019. Let us pray that St. James will ever lead us along the way of salvation and protect us from all dangers of body and soul. Let us make the following prayer our own.

**“We have walked out of our lives  
To come to where the walls of heaven  
Are this as a curtain, transparent as glass?  
Where the Apostle spoke the Holy Words  
Where in death he returned, where God is close  
Where saints and martyrs mark the road...  
Holy Saint James, great St. James,  
God help us now and evermore”**

In Jesus and Mary,  
*Monsignor James F. Pereda*