

Reflection

We don't have to be perfect to be a disciple of Jesus. James did not always get things right, yet Jesus shared some of his most precious moments with him.

The scallop shell with its many grooves which move up to a central point can remind us that our journey to God is unique. But we all arrive eventually at the same eternal destination, safe in God's loving arms in communion with all the saints and those whose earthly pilgrimage is completed.

Loving God

you sent your Son to free us from the many things
that prevent us from truly flourishing in your love.

May your spirit awaken in our hearts a spirit of care and compassion.

Let us not look for position, gain or influence over others.

May our endeavours to serve be in a spirit
of quiet humility and open to your grace,
leaving outcomes to your merciful care.

We pray in Jesus name.

Amen.

A Blessing.

May God, who kindled the fire of his love in the hearts of his saints
pour upon you the riches of his grace.

May he give you joy in their fellowship

And strengthen you to walk in the way of goodness and light.

Open Benefice Churches from July 26th, 2020.

Little Paxton.

Sundays: 9.15am Morning Service with readings and prayers.

Open for quiet time/private prayer: Sundays 10.00am to 12 noon.

Wednesdays 2.00pm to 4.00pm.

Great Paxton.

Sundays: Public worship at 10.30am for 30 minutes

Then open for quiet time/private prayer from 11.00am to 4.00pm.

Southoe.

Open for quiet time/private prayer: Sundays 11.00am to 4.00pm

There will be public worship on Sunday July 26^h at 3.00pm

Followed at 4.00pm by Southoe PCC's AGM.

Sunday July 26th, 2020

The Benefice of the Paxtons with Diddington and Southoe "Keeping in Touch" Edition 18: The Seventh Sunday after Trinity. Celebrating St James The Greater The Patron Saint of Little Paxton Church



Annette writes:

Greetings to all of our readers!

July 25th is the date set in the Christian calendar for the feast day of St James the Greater. He is the patron saint of Little Paxton Church and was a very popular saint in medieval times. The site generally believed to be the place of his burial, Santiago de Compostella, has been a place of pilgrimage for centuries and many people make the journey there, by varying routes, every year. You can read about St James and reflect on some of the themes from his life in this edition.

The scallop shell is the emblem of the pilgrim to Santiago and that in itself is rich in symbolism; again, more of that presently.

Life is often likened to a journey with all its twists and turns. We can head in a particular direction and then find our course changes unexpectedly. 2020 has certainly not been what many had planned. Our journey with Covid-19 restrictions continues, as the national church now strongly advises us to wear face coverings in church for any occasion when we are with other people. This might take some getting used to, but anything which prevents a second spike of infection has got to be good.

If anyone really cannot cope with wearing some sort of face covering, we certainly won't be stopping them coming into church. As we gradually have more services in our building, we will continue to take great care in how people are seated and offer every opportunity to sanitize their hands. Thank you in advance to all of you who are being very understanding of the measures we need to have in place.

Keep well and safe.

With love and prayers, Annette.

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The Reading for the Feast of St James Matthew 20 v 20-28

Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favour of him.

"What is it you want?" he asked.

She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom."

"You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?"

"We can," they answered.

Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father."

When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

The Collect for St James The Greater.

Merciful God,

Whose holy apostle Saint James
leaving his family and all that he had
was obedient to the calling of your Son Jesus Christ
and followed him even unto death:

Help us, forsaking the false attractions of this world,
to be ready to answer your call in the simple things of everyday life.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reflections on St James The Greater

So, what do we know about St James? He is often called James the Greater, meaning not necessarily more important, but older or taller than the other disciple called James. His father was Zebedee, who could afford to have hired help. His mother possibly was named Salome and he had a brother John. James is one of the first disciples to follow Jesus. Matthew, Mark and Luke state that James and John were with their father by the seashore when Jesus called them. But the brothers were given a nickname by Jesus which was quite telling: *Sons of Thunder*.

This could mean that they were hot headed and impulsive. Once, when Jesus and the disciples were refused hospitality in a Samaritan village, James and John proposed to call down fire from heaven on the offenders. Jesus reminds them that such a vengeful response was not God's way.

Jesus would often choose James to be one of three disciples to join him on significant occasions such as when he was transfigured on a mountain top. The other two there were his brother John, and Peter. Those three also witnessed the raising of Jairus' daughter and the healing of Peter's mother-in-law. They also were asked to watch with him in the garden of Gethsemane on the night before he died – but fell asleep. There is another very telling story about them when they get their mother to ask Jesus for a favour.

Jesus obviously thought a lot of them; giving them nicknames and often choosing them to join him on special occasions. Maybe that is why they thought that, through their mother, they could ask for top positions in the Kingdom of Heaven when the time came. This is such a human scene! The other disciples are furious at this request. Why them? Why should they be granted superiority over the others? It's interesting that Jesus doesn't rebuke the mother of these Sons of Thunder. Rather, he gets them all together and says that like him, they had to have the mind of being a servant to others, not seeking privilege and power. Like him, they would all have to drink the cup of suffering at some point.

Well, James did indeed drink the cup of suffering shortly after Jesus' resurrection. Acts 12:1 tells us that James was one of the first martyrs of the Christian Church, killed by King Agrippa by the sword. Many traditions sprung up about St James. One is that he made a missionary journey to Spain and that after he died his body was taken to Spain and buried there at Compostella. So it was, from the 9th century, his supposed burial place in Santiago de Compostella became a major site of pilgrimage and by the 12th century it was even more important than Rome. The symbol of the pilgrim journeying to Santiago was the scallop shell. Many churches in Europe were named after the saint in the 12th century and with St James church possibly being built maybe in the early 1100's, it could explain why James is its patron saint.



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