

A NOVENA
IN HONOR OF
ST JAMES THE APOSTLE

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With an Introduction and Biography of St James

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English-language translation of author's original work

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Pilgrim

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ST JAMES: APOSTLE AND FRIEND OF JESUS

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St James "the Greater"

St James and his younger brother, John, were sons of Zebedee and Salome, and like Peter, Andrew and Philip, probably were natives of Bethsaida, a city on the northern coast of the Sea of Galilee – Lake Genesareth – east of the Jordan. James is the English form of the apostle's name; originally it was Jacob (Ya'akov), a name common during that period in history, and later, in Latin translations of the Bible, Jacob became Jacobus.

There are several Jameses mentioned in the New Testament – all leaders of the early Christian Church and all associated with Jerusalem – but it is uncertain if there were four or only three distinct individuals. Two were apostles and are distinguished by their titles. St James, son of Zebedee and Salome, often is called "the Great" or "the Greater" to distinguish him from the other apostle James, who is known as St James "the Less," the son of Alphaeus and Mary. Some have said that St James was referred to as "the Greater" because he was older than the other James; others have explained that he was "Greater" because he was physically larger than the other apostle while still others contend that his vocation preceded that of the other apostle, making him "the Greater." Still others explain that he was called "the Greater" because he was the most important of all the Jameses and one of the three most beloved disciples of Jesus. Another James mentioned in the New Testament is James "the Righteous" or "the Just" (named for his virtue) also referred to as "the brother of the Lord." While he was not one of the apostles, he was elected the first bishop of Jerusalem, or more accurately, head of the elders or "presbyters" (priests). He was martyred in 62 A.D. by a crowd in front of the Temple at the urging of members of the Sanhedrin, the supreme religious council or tribunal of Judea. Yet another "James" is considered to be the author of the Epistle of James, a witness of the resurrected Jesus, and the leader of the Church in Jerusalem.

St James and his Family

St James the Greater and his brother John may have been first cousins of Jesus. The Gospels explain that several women stood with Jesus' mother Mary beside the cross during our Lord's Passion; the Gospel of Mark identifies the women as Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James the Less and Joses, and Salome while the Gospel of John refers to the third woman by Jesus' cross as "his mother's sister" (Jn. 19:25)¹. If so, then Salome would have been Jesus' aunt and the two families would have been blood relatives. With Nazareth only about twenty-five miles away from Bethsaida, James and his family may have visited Mary and Joseph on a regular basis. Her love for her nephew would have easily brought Salome with the other women (Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James the Less) to Jesus' tomb to anoint His body on the morning of the resurrection (Mark 16:1).

James and John probably were educated in Bethsaida and then, as teenagers, went to work with their father, Zebedee, in his fishing business. Tradition suggests that Zebedee was prosperous – the Gospel of Mark mentions that he had "hired men" helping with the fishing (Mark 1:20) – and several apocryphal Gospels explain that he supplied fish to the high

¹ All scripture references are from the *New American Bible*. (1970). Washington, D.C.: Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

priestly family in Jerusalem. The Gospel of Luke also mentions that "James and John, Zebedee's sons... were partners with Simon [Peter]" (Luke 5:10) so it would seem that the Zebedee family was part of a much bigger business – perhaps a "conglomerate" as some companies are described in modern-day terms. If Zebedee was indeed a "man of means," it would explain how his wife, Salome, was able to financially support Jesus as one of the women who "had followed Jesus, when he was in Galilee and attended to his needs" (Mark 16:41; also see Luke 8:3).

A Fisher of Men

The Gospels of Matthew, Luke and Mark explain that Jesus' public ministry began after the arrest of John the Baptist by Herod Antipas. As Jesus "proclaimed the good news of the kingdom [of God]" (Matthew 4:23) in Galilee, he recruited those who would become his apostles. According to the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, it was during a typical day at work for the first of these apostles that Jesus, walking along the shore of Lake Genesareth, invited James and John, who "were in their boat putting their nets in order" (Mark 1:19), to join their friends Peter and Andrew as "fishers of men" (Mark 1:17; also see Matthew 4:19); earlier, Jesus had called "Simon and his brother Andrew," who had been "casting their nets into the sea" (Mark 1:16), to follow Him. Like their friends, who "immediately abandoned their nets and became his followers" (Mark 1:18), James and John "immediately ... abandoned boat and father to follow him" (Matthew 4:22) and, by so doing, became the third and fourth apostles called by Jesus. Some have suggested that, as cousins, James and John had known Jesus all His life, and their "immediate" response was just their answer to a "formal call" by Jesus to finally join Him rather than a spur of the moment decision.

The Gospel of Luke describes the call of these first apostles somewhat differently, explaining that Jesus was preaching by Lake Genesareth and then got into one of two boats – "the one belonging to Simon [Peter]" – moored on the shore "and asked him to pull out a short distance" so He could continue to teach the crowds (Luke 5:3). When Jesus had finished preaching, He asked Simon to "Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch;" Simon at first protested – "we have been hard at it all night long and have caught nothing" – but consented to "lower the nets" (Luke 5:4-5). They immediately "caught such a great number of fish that their nets were at the breaking point" and "signaled to their mates in the other boat to come and help them" (Luke 5:6-7). Simon Peter "and all his shipmates, as well as James and John, Zebedee's sons" were amazed at the catch, and Simon asked Jesus to "Leave me, Lord. I am a sinful man" (Luke 5:8-10). Jesus told Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will be catching men" and, "With that they brought their boats to land, left everything, and became his followers" (Luke 5:10-11).

Jesus' Closest Friends

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke describe how Jesus selected twelve of his disciples to be "his companions" (Mark 3:14). According to the Gospel of Luke, Jesus "went out to the mountain to pray, spending the night in communion with God" and "At daybreak he called his disciples and selected twelve of them to be his apostles" (Luke 6:12-13). The Gospel of Mark mentions that Jesus "went up the mountain and summoned the men he himself had decided on" (Mark 3:13). In the Gospel of Matthew, after touring "all the towns and villages" in Galilee and preaching in the synagogues, Jesus "summoned his twelve disciples" (Matthew 9:35; 11:1). Jesus considered his apostles to be a special group of disciples, and gave them "authority to expel unclean spirits and to cure sickness and disease of every kind" (Matthew 10:1; also see Mark 3:15) and sent them "on mission as the Twelve" (Matthew 10:5) "to preach the good news" (Mark 3:14). Most important, Jesus considered the apostles to be His friends – "I call you friends, since I have made known to you all that I heard from my Father" (John 15:15) – whom He loved deeply – "There is no greater love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13).

Among the apostles, Peter, James and John were considered Jesus' closest "companions" and are the first names listed in the roll call of the twelve (the Gospels of Mark and Luke also include Andrew among the top four). Their special place in Jesus' heart and ministry is underlined by the fact that Peter, James and John were the only apostles who accompanied Jesus on four special occasions – Jesus' cure of Peter's mother-in-law and His raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead, Jesus' transfiguration on Mount Tabor, and Jesus' agony in the Garden of Gethsemani. As His companions during these moments, Peter, James and John witnessed Jesus' power over sickness and death and were reminded on Mount Tabor that He was the Messiah even as they joined Him in prayer (before falling asleep) in the Garden at the beginning of His passion. It was as if Jesus were gradually preparing His special apostles for the sorrows and joys that lie ahead.

Cure of Peter's Mother-in-Law

One day, while in Capernaum, "immediately upon leaving the synagogue" Jesus "entered the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John" (Mark 1:29). Both the Gospel of Matthew and Mark explain that "Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever" (see also Matthew 8:14). The apostles told Jesus about her and He "grasped her hand and helped her up, and the fever left her" (Mark 1:31). Healed of her illness, "she immediately began to wait on them" (Mark 1:31; see also Matthew 8:15). Later, toward evening, both Gospels describe how townspeople "brought him all who were ill, and those possessed by demons" to the point where "Before long the whole town was gathered outside the door" (Mark 1:32-33). As He had healed Peter's mother-in-law, Jesus "cured all who were afflicted" (Matthew 8:16). Whether it was healing the relative of one of His closest apostles or a townspeople, Matthew explains that Jesus was "fulfilling" what Isaiah had prophesized about the Messiah – "It was our infirmities he bore, our sufferings he endured" (Matthew 8:17). In a sense, these cures represented the greater "healing" or redemption of mankind that Jesus had come to complete, and Peter, James and John were privileged witnesses to His redemptive power.

Jairus' Daughter

But illness often leads to death, and, during a second special moment, Peter, James and John experienced Jesus' ultimate power over Death itself and a preview of His Resurrection. The Gospels of Mark and Luke describe the anguished plea of a synagogue official (probably from Capernaum) for Jesus to heal his twelve-year-old daughter (according to Matthew, the official says that "my daughter has just died – Matthew 9:18). As Jesus proceeds to the man's home, they are given the news that "Your daughter is dead; do not bother the Teacher further" to which Jesus replies, "Fear is useless; what is needed is trust and her life will be spared" (Luke 8:49-50). Upon arriving at the official's home, Jesus "permitted no one to enter with him except Peter, John, James, and the child's parents" and, "while everyone wept," Jesus "took her by the hand" and told her "Get up, child" (Luke 8:51-52, 54). She "stood up immediately and began to walk around" and Jesus "told them to give her something to eat" (Mark 5:42-43).

The Transfiguration

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke describe the third special moment that Peter, James and John shared exclusively as apostles with Jesus – His Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, traditionally believed to be the "high mountain" described in scripture (a church was built on the site in the fourth century and dedicated on August 6, a date that Pope Callistus III established in 1457 as the feast of the Transfiguration). The three Gospels chronologically place the event just after Peter's profession of faith that Jesus is the Messiah and Jesus' first of three prophecies of His impending passion, death and resurrection and just before His cure of a boy possessed by an "unclean" spirit and His second prediction of His passion.

The Gospel of Mark explains that "Jesus took Peter, James, and John off by themselves with him and led them up a high mountain (Mark 9:2) while the Gospel of Luke adds that they went "to pray" (Luke 9:28). While Jesus was praying, "His face became as dazzling as the sun, his clothes as radiant as light" and "Suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared ... conversing with him" (Matthew 17:2-3); the Gospel of Luke mentions that "They ... spoke of his passage, which he was about to fulfill in Jerusalem" (Luke 9:31). Luke also explains that "Peter and those with him had fallen into a deep sleep; but awakening, they saw his glory and likewise saw the two men who were standing with him" (Luke 9:32). Peter joyfully says "how good that we are here" and asks Jesus for permission to "erect three booths here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" (Matthew 17:4). Just at that moment, "a bright cloud overshadowed them" and "Out of the cloud came a voice which said, 'This is my beloved Son on whom my favor rests. Listen to him'" (Matthew 17:5; see also Mark 9:7 and Luke 9:34-35). Luke mentions that as the cloud came overhead, "the disciples grew fearful as the others entered it" (Luke 9:34), and Matthew says that upon hearing the voice, "the disciples fell forward on the ground, overcome with fear" (Matthew 17:6). When Jesus laid His hand on them and said "Get up! Do not be afraid," the apostles "looked up" and "did not see anyone but Jesus" (Matthew 17:7-8). Leaving the mountain, Jesus commands them "Do not tell anyone of the vision until the Son of Man rises from the dead" (Matthew 17:9; see also Mark 9:9); Luke emphasizes "the disciples kept quiet, telling nothing of what they had seen at that time to anyone" (Luke 9:36).

The "mountain-top experience" gave Peter, James and John a striking confirmation of Jesus' divinity – a revelation much like that of Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist when "the Holy Spirit descended on him" and "a voice from heaven" said "'You are my beloved Son. On you my favor rests'" (Luke 3:22). And, with Moses the Lawgiver, and Elijah, representing the prophets, besides Him, Jesus embodies the fulfillment of both the Law and the prophets as He had explained earlier during the Sermon on the Mount – "'Do not think that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets. I have come, not to abolish them, but to fulfill them'" (Matthew 5:17). But even in the midst of revealing His glory, Jesus, in His conversation with Moses and Elijah, and in warning the apostles not to speak of His Transfiguration, reminds them of His impending passion and resurrection. They are to remember, says Jesus, that His glory and suffering are mysteriously bound together as one, something that they themselves would personally experience all too soon.

Sons of Thunder

James and John may have been "afraid" during Jesus' Transfiguration, but, after some reflection, they also may have been impressed with His show of power and glory. Just a few short passages later, the Gospel of Luke explains that Jesus was now "firmly resolved to proceed toward Jerusalem" where "he was to be taken from this world" and "sent messengers on ahead of him (Luke 9:51). When villagers in a Samaritan town "would not welcome him because he was on his way to Jerusalem," James and John asked Jesus to "have us call down fire from heaven to destroy them" (Luke 9:53-54). Jesus instead reprimanded them, and "they set off for another town" (Luke 9:56). Shortly after, in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan who showed mercy on a man beaten and left by robbers on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, to emphasize the true meaning of "love of neighbor" and its importance for those who would "inherit everlasting life" (Luke 10:25). The story also seemingly is in answer to James and John who would have destroyed the Samaritan town if they had had the opportunity. Such a fiery temper may explain why Jesus gave James and John the surname *Boanerges*, a Greek word from an Aramaic expression meaning "sons of thunder," when He selected His twelve apostles as described in the Gospel of Mark. In a more positive sense, others have suggested that they may have been called *Boanerges* because of their strength of character and passion for God.

True Meaning of Greatness

James and John – not unlike the rest of the apostles – misunderstood Jesus’ mission, believing that He planned to establish His kingdom on earth and put the Twelve in positions of authority. The Gospel of Mark describes the request of James and John to “sit, one at your right and the other at your left, when you come into your glory” (Mark 10:37); in the Gospel of Matthew, the brothers’ mother “accompanied by her sons” asks Jesus for the special “favor” (Matthew 20:20-21). In both gospels Jesus tells them that “You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink of the cup I am to drink of?” (Matthew 20:22) and that such seats of honor are “not mine to give. That is for those for whom it has been reserved by my Father” (Matthew 20:23). They reply that they *can* drink His cup and be “baptized in the same bath of pain” as Jesus (Mark 10:38) to which He ominously explains that they will. The other apostles, hearing their request, “became indignant at the two brothers,” which prompted Jesus to give all of them a lesson on the true meaning of greatness, which requires service to others – “Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest, and whoever wants to rank first among you must serve the needs of all” (Matthew 20:24, 26-27). In the Gospel of Mark, just before James and John approached Jesus, the apostles “had been arguing about who was the most important” (Mark 9:34), to which Jesus replied, “If anyone wishes to rank first, he must remain the last one of all and the servant of all” (Mark 9:35); in the Gospel of Matthew, the apostles had asked Jesus earlier, “Who is of the greatest importance in the kingdom of God?,” giving Him the opportunity to show them a child and tell them that “unless you change and become like little children, you will not enter the kingdom of God. Whoever makes himself lowly ... is of greatest importance in that heavenly reign” (Matthew 18:1, 3-4). Later in Jesus’ public ministry – just before the Last Supper – James, John, Peter, and Andrew – question Him as they overlooked the Temple about His prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem – “Tell us, when will this occur? What will be the sign that all this is coming to an end?” (Mark 13:4). Seemingly, the Zebedee brothers were still interested in the “power and the glory” of Jesus’ kingdom even after all His stories on the true meaning of greatness. The lesson of humility and service was a difficult one for them – and for all the apostles – to learn.

Agony in the Garden

James and John, along with Peter, were Jesus’ closest companions in His greatest hour of agony – in the Garden of Gethsemani after the Last Supper. Following the Passover meal in “an upstairs room” (Mark 14:15), Jesus took His apostles to a garden “across the Kidron Valley” (John 18:1); the Gospel of Luke says it was on the Mount of Olives (Luke 22:39). Telling the apostles to “Sit down here while I pray” ... he took along with him Peter, James and John” (Mark 14:32-33) to a place farther within the garden where He “began to experience sorrow and distress” (Matthew 26:37). Both the Gospel of Matthew and Mark mention that in the midst of praying Jesus returned to the three apostles three different times and “found them asleep” (Matthew 26:40), telling Peter sadly at one point, “So you could not stay awake with me for even an hour? Be on guard, and pray that you may not undergo the test” (Matthew 26:40-41). But the apostles “could not keep their eyes open, nor did they know what to say to him” until Jesus finally told them “Still sleeping? ... It will have to do. The hour is on us ... Rouse yourselves and come along. See! My betrayer is near” (Mark 14:41-42). Once Judas appears in the garden with “the cohort as well as guards supplied by the chief priests and the Pharisees” (John 18:3), Peter springs into action, striking “the high priest’s servant” ear with a sword but is rebuked by Jesus who warns that “Those who use the sword are sooner or later destroyed by it” (Matthew 26:51-52). With that, Jesus is arrested, and “all the disciples deserted him and fled” (Matthew 26:56), including James and John, two of His closest friends, who had once told Jesus that they could drink the same cup as He and who, only a few hours earlier, had testified at the Last Supper along with Peter and the other apostles that “Even though I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the other disciples said the same” (Matthew 26:35).

Resurrection and Pentecost

Following Jesus' death, James and John were among the eleven apostles (Judas had committed suicide) who saw the resurrected Christ. The Acts of the Apostles mentions that James and John were among the apostles who watched as Jesus "was lifted up before their eyes in a cloud which took him from their sight" on "the mount called Olivet near Jerusalem" (Acts 1:9, 12); the apostles later "returned to Jerusalem ... to the upstairs room" where "they devoted themselves to constant prayer" (Acts 1:12, 14). The Gospels also describe their encounter with Jesus following His resurrection – in "the room" behind locked doors where they were hiding (John 20:19), at His Ascension on "the mountain" near Bethany where He commanded them to "make disciples of all the nations" (Mark 28:16, 19), and along the shore of Lake Gennesaret, where, according to the Gospel of John, "Zebedee's sons," Peter, Nathanael, Thomas, and "two other disciples" experienced a miraculous catch of fish once Jesus told them to "'Cast your net off to the starboard side'" and then sat down to a meal of bread and fish with Him on shore (John 21:2, 6). This "third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after being raised from the dead" (John 21:14) was particularly poignant as the apostles seemingly had returned to their old life – an empty existence in which "they caught nothing" (John 21:3) – only to be reminded by Jesus that if they truly loved Him they needed to "'Tend my sheep'" (John 21:16). They were to be "fishers of men" as Jesus had told them when He first invited them along the shore of the lake and had to remind them again following His resurrection.

At Pentecost, James and the other apostles later received the gift of the Holy Spirit that Jesus had promised them earlier, which gave them the courage to preach the word of God and to face the challenges that they encountered. The Acts of the Apostles describes that "When the day of Pentecost came it found them gathered in one place ... Tongues as of fire appeared, which parted and came to rest on each of them. All were filled with the Holy Spirit. They began to ... make bold proclamations as the Spirit prompted them" (Acts 2:1, 3-4). To a crowd of "devout Jews of every nation" who had assembled outside when they had "heard the sound," "Peter stood up with the Eleven" and told the bystanders that they should "reform and be baptized ... in the name of Jesus Christ, that your sins may be forgiven" (Acts 2:5-6, 14, 38). With the gift of the Holy Spirit, the apostles' preaching was effective, and "Three thousand were added that day" (Acts 2:41)

Martyrdom of St James

Persecutions soon followed, however – Peter and John were arrested and stood trial twice before the Sanhedrin, the supreme tribunal of Judea under the presidency of the high priest, and Stephen, one of seven deacons appointed by the apostles to minister to the pastoral needs of the early Christian community, was indicted for blasphemy, brought before the Sanhedrin, and stoned to death by a mob outside the city's walls. His death prompted "a great persecution of the church in Jerusalem," scattering disciples throughout Judea and Samaria even as the faithful were arrested and thrown in jail (Acts 8:1); the apostles, however, chose to remain in Jerusalem.

About ten years later, in 44 A.D., King Herod Agrippa I, who had become king of Judea and Samaria in 41 A.D., "started to harass some of the members of the church" (Acts 12:1). Herod was the grandson of Herod I the Great, who ordered the slaughter of the "holy innocents" – all the male babies under two years' of age in Bethlehem and surrounding villages upon hearing news of the birth of "the king of the Jews" (Matthew 2:2) from the Magi. In this latest persecution of the early Christian community, which occurred just before the Jewish Passover feast, James became the first apostle to be martyred and finally drank of "the cup" that Jesus had promised him; James' brother, John, in contrast, was the only apostle who was not martyred. According to the Acts of the Apostles, Herod Agrippa "beheaded James the brother of John, and when he saw that this pleased certain of the Jews, he took Peter into custody too" (Acts 12:2-3). Two third-century historians, Clement of Alexandria, a theologian and one of the first writers of Alexandria's Church, and, through him, Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, provide some additional details about James' death.

According to Clement, the Sanhedrin tried and condemned James for teaching that Jesus was God and that salvation was in Him alone, a sentence that Herod approved. At the trial, however, Eusebius notes that, according to "an authentic tradition" reported by Clement, James' accuser was so moved by the apostle's testimony that he repented of his treachery and declared himself a Christian. He was condemned to be beheaded with James, and, as the two were led to their execution, he asked James to forgive him. James thought for a moment and then embraced him, saying "Peace be with you," and kissed him.

Soon afterward, Peter escaped from prison with the help of an angel. After conducting an unsuccessful search for him, Herod executed his guards and traveled to Caesarea, the administrative center of Herod's dominions. During a feast with public games in honor of Claudius Caesar, the Roman emperor, an "angel of the Lord struck Herod down" for accepting the praises of the crowd who hailed him as a god – "because he did not ascribe the honor to God ...he died eaten by worms" (Acts 12: 23). Eusebius and Josephus Flavius, a first-century Jewish historian, confirm the manner of Herod's death – a five-day agony of stomach pains – ending a short three-year reign brought to a close by divine justice. His death echoed Jesus' words in the Garden, "Those who use the sword are sooner or later destroyed by it" (Matthew 26:52).

St James and Spain

St James was buried in Jerusalem following his execution, and, according to the tradition of Spain, his disciples later brought his body by boat from Joppa (now Jaffa), a port city near modern-day Tel-Aviv, to Iria Flavia (now Padrón) on the northwest coast of Galicia, Spain, and then inland to Santiago de Compostela. There, St James' disciples laid his relics, along with those of two of his disciples, in a sarcophagus (the site was a Roman cemetery) and over it built an altar and a small chapel.

Spanish tradition maintains that St James had preached in the Iberian Peninsula – specifically in Asturias, Castilla, Aragón, and Galicia – and wanted to be buried there upon his death. One particular tradition explains that, while encamped with several disciples along the Ebro River near Zaragoza in northeast Spain, the Virgin Mary (still alive at this time and living in Jerusalem) appeared in order to encourage him in his evangelization, which had not been very successful. She also asked him to build a chapel to her at the site, and, as a sign of her protection, she left a marble column and a small statue of herself. St James built the first Marian church in the world on the site, which today is a magnificent basilica to Our Lady of the Pillar and center of devotion to Mary.

Following his burial in Spain, St James' tomb was soon forgotten and covered over by forest until its rediscovery in 813 by a hermit, Pelayo, who was interrupted from his evening prayers by a series of inexplicable lights and sounds from the nearby forest. Pelayo and his brother hermits alerted Theodomir, the bishop of Iria Flavia, and led him, his entourage, and workmen to the site. Here, they cleared away the undergrowth to find a building in ruins with an altar and a lower level crypt with three burials and a piece of parchment in the sarcophagus identifying the remains as St James and his two disciples, Theodore and Athanasius. Bishop Theodomir announced the discovery to Alfonso II, king of Asturias and Galicia, who soon informed Pope Leo III and Charlemagne. Bishop Theodomir ordered the construction of a church on the site, a monastery and cloister for its guardians, and a fortified wall around the area. He also declared St James the patron saint of Spain, a devotional title that is still invoked today.

Three successive basilicas have been built over the burial site, and the relics of St James and his two disciples remain today in a silver urn in a crypt directly beneath the present-day cathedral's main altar. Pope Leo XIII sent a special commission to verify the relics and, with the Archbishop of Compostela, declared their authenticity in an Apostolic Letter, *Deus Omnipotens*, on November 2, 1884.

A Global Testimony of Faith

Over the centuries millions of pilgrims from around the world – kings and queens, religious, and the common people – have visited the cathedral, especially during a Jubilee or Holy Year, when the feast day of St James – July 25 (the day on which his tomb was discovered) – falls on a Sunday. In 1119, Pope Callistus II initiated the "Jubilee or Holy Year Privilege," granting a plenary or full indulgence to travelers who visit the cathedral (and pass through its "holy door" with religious intentions and conclude their visit with confession and communion), and in 1179, Pope Alexander III declared that the observance be celebrated in perpetuity. In recent years, the Holy Year, or *Jacobeo* (Latin for James), has been celebrated in 1971, 1976, 1982, 1993, 1999, and 2004. The next Holy Year will be celebrated in 2010, and again in 2021, 2027, 2032, 2038 and 2049, following the pattern of 6-5-6-11 year intervals when the feast day falls on a Sunday. The Cathedral's Office of the Pilgrim presents travelers who journey in a spirit of faith ("with a religious/Christian motivation," as the Cathedral's *1999 Jubilee Year Compostelan* brochure notes) at least 100 kilometers (about 60 miles) on foot or horseback or at least 200 kilometers (about 120 miles) by bicycle with a *Compostela*, a replica of an eleventh-century document verifying the completion of their pilgrimage. Numerous confraternities (groups devoted to St James and pilgrimage) encourage and organize pilgrimages to Compostela on a regular basis.

Modern-day pilgrims have included Pope John Paul II who visited Compostela in 1982 – the first Pope to do so – and again in 1989, attracting hundreds of thousands of young people to the World Youth Day program. Later, to encourage pilgrims to visit Compostela during the 1999 and 2004 Holy *Jacobeo* Year, Pope John Paul II issued a Vatican document (a letter addressed to the Archbishop of Compostela) on the benefits of pilgrimage at the beginning and at the conclusion of each *Jacobeo*. A prayer card distributed to cathedral visitors included his 1982 message about Compostela:

The Road to Santiago created a vigorous spiritual and cultural current of fertile interchange among the peoples of Europe. But, what pilgrims truly sought with their humble and penitent attitude was that testimony of faith that seems to resound in the Compostellan stones with which the Basilica of the Saint was built [author's translation].

Today, Santiago de Compostela is a UNESCO World Heritage site, recognized as "one of the pillars of the development of Europe's history and cultural identity," and a vast network of roads all over Europe – the pilgrims' path or *Camino* (St James' Road) – has been designated by the Council of Europe as the "First European Cultural Itinerary." The fruit of the Road of St James can be seen not only throughout history in the political, economic, cultural, social, and religious development of Europe, but throughout the world as devotion to St James – and, through him, to Jesus – has spread to the ends of the earth.

In answering Jesus' call to "Come after me," St James abandoned himself to a life of service for God. And in serving "the needs of all," St James gave the last measure of his life, ultimately sharing the cup of Jesus' suffering. More important, however, through his supreme act of humility, St James not only learned the true meaning of greatness but became an eternal friend of Jesus and an inspiration for the world.

Pilgrim's Prayer

*St James, Apostle
chosen among the first,
you were the first to drink
the cup of the Master,
and you are the great protector of pilgrims;
make us strong in the faith
and happy in hope
on our pilgrims' journey
following the path of Christian life
and feed us so that
we may finally reach the glory of God the Father.
Amen.*

(Office of the Pilgrim, Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, author's translation)

For further reading

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Novena to St James the Apostle

Novenas

A novena is a nine-day preparation for a feast day and can be a period of private or public prayer. It is somewhat similar to the octave that extends a solemnity such as Easter Sunday or Christmas. Nevertheless, they differ in that the novena is a preparation for the feast, whereas the octave, which is added to the feast, is made up of the seven days that follow the feast day. The Church's tradition of novenas may reflect the nine days that Jesus' apostles spent in prayer between His Ascension and His gift of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. It also may derive from a popular custom of nine days of prayer that prepare the faithful for Christmas in Spain and France.²

Prayer of Preparation

The preparatory prayer disposes us for an encounter with God. Its motivation is to ask for the intercession of a Saint whom we wish to honor. Our preparatory prayer asks for the intercession of St James the Greater, Jesus' Apostle and friend.

O Lord my God prepare my spirit so that, through the intercession of the Apostle James, it may be open to your word, receive it, and put it into practice. Amen.

² Storey, W. (2003). *Mother of the Americas: A Novena in Honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe*. Chicago, IL.: Archdiocese of Chicago Liturgy Training Publications.

First Day

The Sign of the Cross:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Daily prayer:

My Lord Jesus Christ! Here I am close to You, bringing with me in prayer the joys and sorrows of my brothers and sisters as well as the continual happiness and difficulties of my daily walk. Sometimes I lose my way on the path of life, and I don't know what to do. Frequently I am distracted by material things and am in need of enlightenment. Lord, create in me a longing for You and a firm resolution to never offend You again. Give me your grace to contemplate the path of Your earthly life and to be attracted further by the example of St James the Apostle. May I wholeheartedly follow You in the path of this life and find in You peace and joy without end. Amen.

Reflection for the first day: James, a humble fisherman

St James was young and impetuous, the son of John the Zebedee and Salome, and brother of John "the Evangelist". He lived and worked near Lake Genesaret. In that tideless region he always was aware of changes in the wind and prospects for good fishing. During the time of Jesus almost all activity, except for fishing or relaxation, took place in the plaza or the harbor. As a profession, fishing was considered to be "impure" since the sea was believed to be the habitat of a monstrous dragon that devoured people. Nevertheless, these same fishermen were much closer to God than people in other times in history who felt they had more reliable weather reports. It was not unusual then to listen to those who had a spirit of prophecy. One day, after hearing from some about the coming of the Kingdom of God, St James listened to Jesus and admired Him. Soon afterward the Master invited St James to follow Him.

Prayer of the faithful:

Through the intercession of St James the Apostle, let us direct our petitions to the Lord our God who placed nature at the service of humanity.

– *for the Church:* by proclaiming the word of God in society, may She show us the path of goodness and be a sacrament of salvation for all the world, we pray to the Lord.

– *for the Pope and the Bishops:* with Christ as their horizon, may their word and example be a point of light that illuminates our world, we pray to the Lord.

– *for fishermen, shellfishermen and for all those who spend their lives on the high seas:* by honest dedication to their work may they prepare themselves to reach the final destination of their journey in life, the joyful harbor that gives meaning to their earthly life, we pray to the Lord.

– for the Holy Land to which St James belonged: may its inhabitants make efforts to create a land where peace and justice reign, we pray to the Lord.

Let us place our trust in God Our Father, and ask, through the intercession of St James the Apostle, for God to hear and grant our special intentions and the intentions of all those who make this novena (a moment of silence)...we pray to the Lord.

Let us pray together the Our Father which Jesus taught St James and all the Apostles. (***Our Father...***)

Final prayer:

Our Lord and God, who placed nature in the hands of all people so that with their work they may order earthly things towards the end which You showed us, we ask You, through the intercession of St James the Apostle, to hear our prayers. May we rightly use the things of this earth so that we may be made worthy of reaching eternal life. We ask this through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Scripture readings for reflection:

John 1:3-16; Matthew 17:24-27; Luke 8:22-25; Luke 5:1-11

Ideas for reflection or the homily:

Those who fish for a living are always alert to the winds, tides and fishing prospects. Being of a generous and open nature, they often share long hours each day with their neighbors at the harbor or in the plaza. Some devote themselves to fishing while others dedicate themselves to catching shellfish. The latter profession was impure” in Israel because shellfish were considered to be the kinds of animals one could not eat.

St James was dedicated to the sea. He caught fish that were considered to be “clean” because they had fins and scales. St James and his brother John are usually considered to have been audacious and impetuous. That is why Jesus gave them the nickname “Sons of Thunder.”

The mariner’s profession, like all honest work, lends itself to the exercise of virtue. Those who make their living from the sea always must first keep in mind that God is the Lord of life and that He is the one who makes the sun shine and fish abundant for the good of all. Mariners also always should consider themselves “family” to others; for all of us are sons and daughters of God who not only have the right to earthly life but to the eternal life that the Father gives us at the end of this one.

Second Day

The Sign of the Cross:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Daily prayer:

My Lord Jesus Christ! Here I am close to You, bringing with me in prayer the joys and sorrows of my brothers and sisters as well as the continual happiness and difficulties of my daily walk. Sometimes I lose my way on the path of life, and I don't know what to do. Frequently I am distracted by material things and am in need of enlightenment. Lord, create in me a longing for You and a firm resolution to never offend You again. Give me your grace to contemplate the path of Your earthly life and to be attracted further by the example of St James the Apostle. May I wholeheartedly follow You in the path of this life and find in You peace and joy without end. Amen.

Reflection for day two: James leaves his nets and follows Jesus

The words of Jesus of Nazareth had captivated St James. Jesus had an effect on him, and all those who lived along the lakeshore were paying attention to Him also. Then, too, He was announcing that the Kingdom of God was "at hand." Like his brother John, St James was attracted to being part of the group of leaders. That's exactly why Jesus noticed him.

And so it was. One day, He called the two brothers who were Zebedee's sons. Like the other ten that He would select, He chose them to be with Him and to be sent out to preach. The "being with Him" implied sharing His life and the "to be sent out to preach" implied knowing the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. Jesus considered St James to be one of His friends who would share in what He had heard from His Father. St James later would learn the Beatitudes and the parables of the Kingdom, putting them into practice in order to teach them to those who longed for such knowledge. During those times of apprenticeship when they were close to the Master, Jesus began sending out His disciples who returned happy and satisfied with the success of their mission. Jesus emphasized, however, that rather than rejoicing at their overcoming of evil spirits, they should be happy to know that their names were written in Heaven.

Prayer of the faithful:

Let us direct our petitions through the intercession of St James the Apostle to God Our Father whose Son Jesus calls us to share His life and to announce His message.

– *for the Church:* being in the world and concerned about humanity, may She offer the salvation that comes from God, we pray to the Lord.

– *for the preachers of the Gospel, especially missionaries:* may they receive divine strength and offer, along with the words of the Gospel, the testimony of a devout and faithful life, we pray to the Lord.

– *for seminarians and those in the novitiate:* may they suitably value the giving of their own lives to serve humanity, we pray to the Lord.

– *for ourselves:* may we listen to the voice of God and look at life as a vocation so we may grow in the way that Our Lord shows us, we pray to the Lord.

Let us place our trust in God Our Father, and ask, through the intercession of St James the Apostle, for God to hear and grant our special intentions and the intentions of all those who make this novena (a moment of silence)...we pray to the Lord.

Let us pray together the Our Father which Jesus taught St James and all the Apostles. **(Our Father...)**

Final prayer:

Our Lord and our God, who sent Your Son into the world in order to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom of God and to attract all to the faith, through the intercession of St James the Apostle, hear our petitions, and grant that, welcoming the call of Your Son, we may announce His word to a world in need so that we may be admitted to the banquet of the Kingdom of Heaven. We ask for this through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Scripture readings for reflection:

Exodus 3:1-15; Jeremiah 1:1-10; Matthew 19:27-30; Mark 1:16-20; John 15:9-17

Ideas for reflection or the homily:

Those who go to a town square to discuss the conditions of the sea, the wind and the weather are inclined to hear what mariners have to say because of their open manner. That approach to others made it easier for St James to hear Jesus. He presented Himself as a Teacher who announced a new doctrine. He gave the impression of being a prophet and was from a place near where St James lived since Nazareth was not far from Bethsaida. So, St James listened to Him for all these reasons.

Given that St James had the attributes of a leader, he began to see the possibilities in changing his profession. The preacher announced the Kingdom of God – so he and his brother could become deputies. Perhaps Jesus would like the idea. The Master begins by calling them to accompany Him and to be sent out to preach.

Little by little Jesus considers St James as one of His closest friends, along with his brother John and Simon Peter. Jesus wants all of them to share His life and learn His message so that He can send them to announce the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom that "is neither food nor drink, but justice and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

Third Day

The Sign of the Cross:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Daily prayer:

My Lord Jesus Christ! Here I am close to You, bringing with me in prayer the joys and sorrows of my brothers and sisters as well as the continual happiness and difficulties of my daily walk. Sometimes I lose my way on the path of life, and I don't know what to do. Frequently I am distracted by material things and am in need of enlightenment. Lord, create in me a longing for You and a firm resolution to never offend You again. Give me your grace to contemplate the path of Your earthly life and to be attracted further by the example of St James the Apostle. May I wholeheartedly follow You in the path of this life and find in You peace and joy without end. Amen.

Reflection for day three: The sons of thunder and the will of Jesus

Jesus wanted to shape His disciples according to His spirit. One day, when a Samaritan town refused to welcome Jesus, James and John wanted to bring down fire from Heaven to destroy it. Jesus then showed His disciples what their demeanor should be by explaining that the Son of Man had come to save men, not to lose them. On another occasion, when the sons of Zebedee asked Jesus to reserve the first places in the Kingdom of God for themselves, Jesus told them that the Father already had plans to give those seats to those who serve others from their hearts. And so, little by little, the Master molded them to make them worthy of Him. In the school of Jesus one learns to live without displacing or putting anyone down. It is the choice of a path of gentleness and humility that leads to eternal life.

Prayer of the faithful:

Let us direct our petitions, through the intercession of St James the Apostle, to God Our Father, whose Son Jesus became humble and obedient unto death.

– *for the Church:* may She humbly present to the world the offering of light and salvation that Christ has entrusted to it, we pray to the Lord.

– *for the pastors of the Church:* by imitating the Master may they offer to the world an example of a simple and humble life and a dedication to goodness in a spirit of gentleness, we pray to the Lord.

– *for those who govern:* may they be conscious of their role as servants of God's people and put the good of society before group interests, we pray to the Lord.

– *for all Christians:* by contemplating the works of Christ may we realize that God's ways are different from our own and live as Christ would live, we pray to the Lord.

Let us place our trust in God Our Father, and ask, through the intercession of St James the Apostle, for God to hear and grant our special intentions and the intentions of all those who make this novena (a moment of silence)...we pray to the Lord.

Let us pray together the Our Father which Jesus taught St James and all the Apostles. **(Our Father...)**

Final prayer:

O God, your Son Jesus taught His disciples to live according to the spirit of the Beatitudes, grant us, through the intercession of St James the Apostle, that by imitating your Son's meekness and humility of heart, we also may serve our brothers and sisters with humility and that, from our heart, we may forgive those who offend us. We ask you this through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Scripture readings for reflection:

Mark 10:35-45; Luke 9:51-56; John 13:1-15; 1Corinthians 1:17-31;
1Corinthians 2:18-23

Ideas for reflection or the homily:

If Jesus chose His closest disciples so that they could be with Him, it was because He wanted to give them His demeanor and His sensitivity. By listening to and living with the Master they would come to know His spirit of discipleship since He would be forming them to make them worthy of Himself.

Because of this, when James and John wanted to attack those who refused to offer Jesus the hospitality He deserved, He reproached them immediately – “You don't know what spirit you are from.” If the Son of Man had come to save the world, they could not wipe off the face of the earth those who had broken the law. God does not want the death of the sinner, but desires instead that the person converts and lives.

When the two Zebedee brothers ask for the first places in the Kingdom of God, Jesus reminds them that the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life in ransom for the many. Therefore, His disciples cannot expect to receive anything different than what Jesus received.

Fourth Day

The Sign of the Cross:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Daily prayer:

My Lord Jesus Christ! Here I am close to You, bringing with me in prayer the joys and sorrows of my brothers and sisters as well as the continual happiness and difficulties of my daily walk. Sometimes I lose my way on the path of life, and I don't know what to do. Frequently I am distracted by material things and am in need of enlightenment. Lord, create in me a longing for You and a firm resolution to never offend You again. Give me your grace to contemplate the path of Your earthly life and to be attracted further by the example of St James the Apostle. May I wholeheartedly follow You in the path of this life and find in You peace and joy without end. Amen.

Reflection for day four: St James and Jesus in moments of glory

On Mount Tabor, St James, the son of Zebedee, together with Sts. Peter and John, contemplated the glorious face of Jesus and also participated in that same glory. In that way Jesus strengthened St James and the other Apostles to endure the Passion of Our Lord and the insanity of the Cross. The scene on top of the mountain and the proclamation of Jesus' divinity by the voice that came out of the cloud gave the Apostles a foretaste of the joys of Paradise. There, St James also was able to perceive the relationship that exists between the Gospels and the books of the Law and the Prophets.

In the resurrection of Jairus' daughter, St James contemplated Jesus as the giver of life who raised a young girl from the dead and then asked that food be brought to her so she wouldn't faint. Through Jesus' manifestation of Himself as the Way to the Father, St James would come to know the truth through Him and find in Him the source of life.

Prayer of the faithful:

Let us direct our petitions through the intercession of St James the Apostle to God Our Father, who manifested the divinity of His Son on Mount Tabor through the reflection of the glory that He had with the Father.

– *for the Church:* may She testify to the world about the resurrection of Christ and show to all that Jesus of the New Testament is the Messiah who was announced in the Old Testament, we pray to the Lord.

– *for those who do not know Jesus well:* by the light of the sacred books and through Christian witness may they see in Him the Son of God made man, we pray to the Lord.

– *for religious contemplatives and all those on their way up “the mountain of life,” who search for the essence of faith and love that give meaning to their existence:* may God enlighten them and fill their lives with His strength, we pray to the Lord.

– *for all of us:* may our Christian existence be a continual hymn to life as we move throughout all areas of society, we pray to the Lord.

Let us place our trust in God Our Father, and ask, through the intercession of St James the Apostle, for God to hear and grant our special intentions and the intentions of all those who make this novena (a moment of silence)...we pray to the Lord.

Let us pray together the Our Father which Jesus taught St James and all the Apostles. **(Our Father...)**

Final prayer:

O God, through the manifestation of the glory of Your Son, You prepared Sts. Peter, James, and John to face the Passion with a spirit of hope and enabled them to see that the Law and writings of the Prophets are illuminated by the light of the Gospels. We ask that, through the sacred books we may see in Jesus of Nazareth your own Son who lives and reigns with You forever and ever. Amen.

Scripture readings for reflection:

Daniel 12:1-3; Luke 8:40-56; Luke 9:28-36; John 1:1-14; 1Corinthians 10:1-13

Ideas for reflection or the homily:

St James shared moments of glory and pain with Jesus. Just as the Israelites gazed upon the radiant face of Moses, so too St James saw the glorious face of Jesus on Mount Tabor. In this way the Lord prepared some of his disciples to face His Passion.

St James, his brother John, and Simon Peter not only saw the transfigured face of Jesus but also shared in His glory. In so doing, they had a preview of what they would enjoy in Paradise once their earthly walk was completed. And, through this “mountain-top experience,” they also fulfilled the biblical promise that “the just will glow like sparks that are enkindled in a field.”

Like Sts. Simon Peter and John, St James was fortunate to accompany Jesus to Jairus’ house and recognize Jesus as the one who is “the resurrection and the life.” As the source of life itself, Jesus was able to give life back to one who lost it. Also, He was concerned that Jairus’ little girl be given something to eat.

Fifth Day

The Sign of the Cross:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Daily prayer:

My Lord Jesus Christ! Here I am close to You, bringing with me in prayer the joys and sorrows of my brothers and sisters as well as the continual happiness and difficulties of my daily walk. Sometimes I lose my way on the path of life, and I don't know what to do. Frequently I am distracted by material things and am in need of enlightenment. Lord, create in me a longing for You and a firm resolution to never offend You again. Give me your grace to contemplate the path of Your earthly life and to be attracted further by the example of St James the Apostle. May I wholeheartedly follow You in the path of this life and find in You peace and joy without end. Amen.

Reflection for day five: St James and Jesus in moments of suffering

When Jesus was ready to give up His life, He crossed the Cedron stream as David did and headed toward the Mount of Olives. He left eight of His disciples a certain distance away and continued onward with Peter, James and John. Then, He left them and went on a little farther into the Garden. There, close to this small group of disciples, He reflected on what was about to happen to Him. Like the other eight, this group of three was overtaken by sleep. Since the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak, they saved their lives but, in so doing, they abandoned their Master. It would be necessary later for the Resurrected One to send the Holy Spirit to awaken them from darkness so that, as children of the light, they could testify to Christ

Prayer of the faithful:

Through the intercession of St James the Apostle we direct our petitions to God who is near to us and, who, through the anguish of His Son Jesus, shares the pain of all who suffer for any reason.

– *for the Church:* may She announce and exercise the ministry of understanding and forgiveness so as to offer a word of relief to whomever needs it on the path of life, we pray to the Lord.

– *for the sick and those who undergo physical and moral suffering:* we pray to the Lord.

– *for young people and those who are healthy:* that they may encourage visits to those who are sick or experiencing sadness, we pray to the Lord.

- *for families:* that they may be a school of understanding, true love and service in life, we pray to the Lord.

Let us place our trust in God Our Father, and ask, through the intercession of St James the Apostle, for God to hear and grant our special intentions and the intentions of all those who make this novena (a moment of silence)...we pray to the Lord.

Let us pray together the Our Father which Jesus taught St James and all the Apostles. **(Our Father...)**

Final prayer:

Our Lord and Our God. Your Son gave up His life for the salvation of mankind. He suffered the Passion at the hands of those He had come to save and endured the abandonment of His friends in the moments of His agony. We ask You to grant, through the intercession of St James the Apostle, that we may always imitate Jesus in the handing over of His own life and be always ready to die rather than abandon Him. We ask You this through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Scripture readings for reflection:

2Samuel 15:19-24.30; Matthew 10:16-33; Matthew 26:36-46; 1Corinthians 1:17-25

Ideas for reflection or the homily:

At the end of His life, Jesus suffered mortal pain. He knew what the cup was that His Father had given Him to drink and the difficult situation He had to face. His disciples seem to have been unaware of what was going to happen to Him. However, knowing that He should not flee from such a bitter cup, He accepted the way things were. He told his disciples only to pray so that they would not enter into temptation since the flesh is weak.

In the Agony in the Garden, Jesus must have gone through all the events of His life in His mind. Certainly, the tragic deaths that were to occur later were not absent from His heart. St James was one of the disciples closest to Him, but, like the others in the Garden, he was of no help to Jesus because his eyes were too heavy with sleep.

St James would not forget those suffering moments of Jesus. Although he was near the Master he allowed himself to be conquered by sleep rather than to be moved by the agony of Jesus. It is through the Passion of Christ that he would later learn to drink the cup and, in that way, testify to his faith in Jesus.

Sixth Day

The Sign of the Cross:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Daily prayer:

My Lord Jesus Christ! Here I am close to You, bringing with me in prayer the joys and sorrows of my brothers and sisters as well as the continual happiness and difficulties of my daily walk. Sometimes I lose my way on the path of life, and I don't know what to do. Frequently I am distracted by material things and am in need of enlightenment. Lord, create in me a longing for You and a firm resolution to never offend You again. Give me your grace to contemplate the path of Your earthly life and to be attracted further by the example of St James the Apostle. May I wholeheartedly follow You in the path of this life and find in You peace and joy without end. Amen.

Reflection for day six: St James, Apostle of the Resurrected Jesus

After the death of the Master, St James returned to the Cenacle to be reunited with Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the other disciples. There, they contemplated the resurrected Jesus and renewed their friendship with Our Lord. After the ascension of Jesus into Heaven, St James obeyed Christ's commission to remain in Jerusalem until receiving the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would establish the disciples as witnesses to His life, death, and resurrection – in Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. The "ends of the earth" were in Spain, in Galicia. When St James reached Zaragoza along the Ebro River, he was perplexed and disheartened. He contemplated the Virgin Mary in an apparition. She encouraged him and showed him that his work had not been in vain because the evangelical seed that he was preaching would germinate one day to produce abundant fruit.

Prayer of the faithful:

Let us direct our prayers, through the intercession of St James the Apostle, to the Lord of life who resurrected Jesus from among the dead and, in so doing, filled those in sadness with joy.

– *for the Church:* may She always offer divine consolation to the afflicted, announcing the Good News brought by Jesus and proclaimed by the Apostles, let us pray to the Lord.

– *for the preachers of the Gospel, especially missionaries:* may they feel comforted by Christ and communicate the Gospel message to sustain faith and promote the Christian life, we pray to the Lord.

– *for all of us:* may our love for the Virgin Mary lead us to be like her – "humble servants" of the Lord and true brothers and sisters of all people – let us pray to the Lord.

– *for the eternal rest of our dead:* may God Our Father receive them into His kingdom and may He fill them with happiness and peace, we pray to the Lord.

Let us place our trust in God Our Father, and ask, through the intercession of St James the Apostle, for God to hear and grant our special intentions and the intentions of all those who make this novena (a moment of silence)...we pray to the Lord.

Let us pray together the Our Father that Jesus taught to St James and all the Apostles. **(Our Father...)**

Final prayer:

Our Lord and God, Your Son Our Lord Jesus Christ commanded the Apostles to stay in Jerusalem until divine strength would be sent to them from on high. Through the intercession of the Virgin Mary and St James the Apostle, grant us the strength of the Holy Spirit that we may be witnesses to Your Son in the world and help with the salvation of our brothers and sisters. We ask You this through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Scripture readings for reflection:

Mt 28:16-20; Acts 1:4-8; 1Cor9:16-23; Col 1: 24-29; Jas 1:5-12.

Ideas for reflection or the homily:

Dispersed for fear of the Jews, St James and the other disciples reunited in the Cenacle and shared the joy of seeing the resurrected Lord. In renewing their friendship, they asked pardon for having left Him alone in His moment of agony. At Mary's side, they renewed their hope and confidence in Jesus.

Following the advice of the resurrected Christ, the Apostles remained in Jerusalem to receive the Holy Spirit promised by the Father. With the gift of the Holy Spirit, they were inspired by strength from above and were converted into witnesses of the Lord to all nations, even to the ends of the earth.

Despite the presence of the Holy Spirit who resides in the hearts of believers, St James suffered many trials and tribulations. He was disheartened that his mission had won so few hearts for Christ. So it was that the Virgin Mary appeared to him in Zaragoza to comfort and inspire him. The seed that he had planted would bear abundant fruit.

Seventh Day

The Sign of the Cross:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Daily prayer:

My Lord Jesus Christ! Here I am close to You, bringing with me in prayer the joys and sorrows of my brothers and sisters as well as the continual happiness and difficulties of my daily walk. Sometimes I lose my way on the path of life, and I don't know what to do. Frequently I am distracted by material things and am in need of enlightenment. Lord, create in me a longing for You and a firm resolution to never offend You again. Give me your grace to contemplate the path of Your earthly life and to be attracted further by the example of St James the Apostle. May I wholeheartedly follow You in the path of this life and find in You peace and joy without end. Amen.

Reflection for day seven: St James, martyr for Christ

Not only was St James the son of Zebedee and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, but he also was a witness to Him with his own blood. He was the first of the Apostles to merit drinking the cup of the Lord. When Jesus asked St James and St John if they could drink His cup, the two brothers said that they could. "Drinking the cup" means to go through hard times or to endure a bitter experience such as anguish or pain. During the time of the Roman Emperor Domitian, it seems that John experienced the torture of being boiled in oil. As for St James, he was a victim of King Herod Agrippa I, who ordered him beheaded in 44 A.D.. In this way St James, son of Zebedee, sealed the faith he professed with his blood. This is how the king placated the Jews. Being a man of shallow religious convictions, he improved his image at the cost of the life of his neighbor. By so doing, he appeased men but he displeased God.

Prayer of the faithful:

Brothers and sisters, let us direct our petitions, through the intercession of St James the Apostle, to the Lord our God whose Son Jesus handed over His life to save ours.

– *for the Church:* supported by the testimony of the Apostles, may She be a witness to Christ even in the face of persecution, we pray to the Lord.

– *for those who suffer persecution for their faith and for the cause of justice:* may the example of Christ, St James, and the other Apostles inspire and strengthen them, we pray to the Lord.

– *for the persecutors of the Church:* may the blood of the martyrs, spilled like that of Abel, move them to conversion, and may they dedicate themselves to the news of the Kingdom of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.

– *for all of us*: may we be ready to give testimony to Christ despite the criticism of the society in which we live, let us pray to the Lord.

Let us place our trust in God Our Father, and ask, through the intercession of St James the Apostle, for God to hear and grant our special intentions and the intentions of all those who make this novena (a moment of silence)...we pray to the Lord.

Let us pray together the Our Father that Jesus taught to St James and all the Apostles. **(Our Father...)**

Final prayer:

Our Lord and Our God, your Son Jesus Christ proclaimed that happy are those who are persecuted and who persevere to the end. Through the intercession of St James the Apostle, we ask that You make us living witnesses of our faith in Jesus. In this way may we thank Him for the gift of faith by sharing it with others, through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Scripture readings for reflection:

Mt 10:16-22; Mk 10:35-45; Acts 12:1-4; 2Cor 4:7-15; Gal 6:11-17.

Ideas for reflection or the homily:

Jesus had told St James and St John that they had to “drink His cup.” The disciple could not be greater than his master. Consequently, although they had succeeded in fleeing the first persecution when Jesus was captured, they would not be able to escape in the future. St James was the first of the Twelve Apostles to suffer martyrdom when King Agrippa I ended his life by means of the sword.

By giving his blood for Christ, St James is an example of the love that Jesus meant when he said, “no one loves more than he who gives his life for his friends.” A profound change had taken place in the Apostle as he turned from being the presumptive “Son of Thunder” to one who patiently suffered death.

In giving his life for Christ, St James also showed himself to be an authentic witness of the resurrection of the Master. At the hour of his death, the son of Zebedee must have presented hands that were clean and full from his apostolic work in foreign lands. This was not recognized by those who took his life.

Eighth Day

The Sign of the Cross:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Daily prayer:

My Lord Jesus Christ! Here I am close to You, bringing with me in prayer the joys and sorrows of my brothers and sisters as well as the continual happiness and difficulties of my daily walk. Sometimes I lose my way on the path of life, and I don't know what to do. Frequently I am distracted by material things and am in need of enlightenment. Lord, create in me a longing for You and a firm resolution to never offend You again. Give me your grace to contemplate the path of Your earthly life and to be attracted further by the example of St James the Apostle. May I wholeheartedly follow You in the path of this life and find in You peace and joy without end. Amen.

Reflection for day eight: St James, guide and support of our faith

The disciples were scattered as a result of the persecution of the Christians in Jerusalem, which began with the death of St Stephen and occurred repeatedly at other times in the early Church. The Roman highways and other roads of the Empire were full of preachers who took advantage of the opportunity to evangelize those whom they met along the way. Athanasius and Theodore left Joppa (now Jaffa) with the sarcophagus of St James. They arrived at the Galician estuaries which at that time were considered to be the "ends of the earth" (Finisterre). Near Iria Flavia (now Padrón), they buried the body of the first of the Twelve Apostles to shed his blood for Christ.

Soon afterward, the Christians of Finisterre would come to know what persecution meant. Faced with a barbarian invasion, it was necessary to hide the body of the Apostle. But confidence in the son of Zebedee had not been lost. The hermit Pelayo saw a star shining above the valley. Bishop Theodomir went at once to the "field of stars." A hole was dug in the earth, and the sacred relics of St James were uncovered. Alfonso II the Chaste visited the site with his family. Later, countless kings, bishops and ordinary people came to visit. This is how the Way of St James began. Afterward, people from different countries and walks of life made pilgrimages with the hope of finding the peace and happiness of the Holy Spirit in front of the tomb of the Apostle. The roots of Europe are in the Way of St James. The son of Zebedee united many diverse peoples through the love of Christ.

Prayer of the faithful:

Let us direct our prayers, brothers and sisters, to the Lord our God whose Son Jesus chose disciples who, like St James, were witnesses to the Gospel.

– *for the Church:* may She announce to all people that we are pilgrims on our way

toward the promised land that will be given to us by Our Father, let us pray to the Lord.

– for the nations, dioceses, and parishes that are under the patronage of St James: may they imitate the virtues that the Apostle developed in contemplating his Master, let us pray to the Lord.

– for all of us: may we be able to perceive on earth the heavenly signs that God offers us, let us pray to the Lord.

– for the sick, for those who do not find any meaning in their lives and for all who suffer in some way: we pray to the Lord.

Let us place our trust in God Our Father, and ask, through the intercession of St James the Apostle, for God to hear and grant our special intentions and the intentions of all those who make this novena (a moment of silence)...we pray to the Lord.

Let us pray together the Our Father that Jesus taught to St James and all the Apostles. **(Our Father...)**

Final prayer:

Our Lord and our God, you desire all people to be saved and to know the truth. Hear our prayers and, through the intercession of St James the Apostle, grant us the grace to see the world with the eyes of faith and to regard life as a continual pilgrimage toward eternal happiness with You. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Scripture readings for reflection:

Mt 2:1-12; Mt 28:16-20; Acts 8:1-8; Acts 11:19-26; 2Cor: 5, 1-10.

Ideas for reflection or the homily:

St James was inspired by Jesus and Mary to announce the Word without fear of reprisal from others. St James also had disciples who brought to Spain he who had proclaimed the Christian faith. Athanasius and Theodore were encouraged by the spirit of St James to continue their preaching as they brought his body to Compostela.

Ever since the hermit Pelayo saw the celestial lights in the valley and discovered the tomb of St James, many have gone to Compostela over the centuries to strengthen their faith at the tomb of the Apostle. And, more than anyone could have imagined, Europe was formed as a Christian land thanks to the Way of St James.

Today, a multitude of people from East and West approach the tomb of the son of Zebedee in search of peace of spirit. While only the Lord knows the motivations of those who travel to Santiago, there is no doubt that He pours out his grace generously on many. There are tourists who return as pilgrims, and many pilgrims who receive abundant heavenly blessings.

Ninth Day

The Sign of the Cross:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Daily prayer:

My Lord Jesus Christ! Here I am close to You, bringing with me in prayer the joys and sorrows of my brothers and sisters as well as the continual happiness and difficulties of my daily walk. Sometimes I lose my way on the path of life, and I don't know what to do. Frequently I am distracted by material things and am in need of enlightenment. Lord, create in me a longing for You and a firm resolution to never offend You again. Give me your grace to contemplate the path of Your earthly life and to be attracted further by the example of St James the Apostle. May I wholeheartedly follow You in the path of this life and find in You peace and joy without end. Amen.

Reflection for day nine: St James our patron

As patron of Spain, St James has inspired many in that country devoted to him as well as missionaries who have proclaimed the Christian faith in the Americas. Today, the presence of St James is felt in a special way in the city of Compostela, in parishes under his patronage, in Galicia, and throughout Spain, and in her sister cities in spirit around the world as this friend of Our Lord continues to bring people closer to Jesus. The Road or "Way of Saint James," where Europe was born, is a point of reference for all those who desire to rediscover the ties that unite nations. St James, Open up Europe! St James, bring all humanity to Christ!

Prayer of the faithful:

Let us pray to the Lord our God who at all times enlightens our path and directs our steps in the way of peace. We direct our petitions to You through the intercession of St James.

– *for the Church:* may She offer the good news of salvation and lifegiving sacraments to all people, we pray to the Lord.

– *for us:* may we be witnesses of Christ to the ends of the earth, and, by knowing the Gospel, may all benefit from the Good News, we pray to the Lord.

– *for the parishes of the New World that are under the patronage of St James:* may they imitate the virtues that the Apostle acquired while contemplating Jesus' demeanor, we pray to the Lord.

– *for our beloved dead:* may the Lord grant them peace and joy without end, we pray to the Lord.

Let us place our trust in God Our Father, and ask, through the intercession of St James the Apostle, for God to hear and grant our special intentions and the intentions of all those who make this novena (a moment of silence)...we pray to the Lord.

Let us pray together the Our Father that Jesus taught to St James and all the Apostles. **(Our Father...)**

Final prayer:

Lord, hear our prayers. We who have made this novena in honor of St James the Apostle ask that through his intercession we may be witnesses to Jesus in the world. Grant that we may be your partners in announcing the Kingdom of God in the hope of attaining the life that you give to those who love You. We ask You this through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Sacred scripture for reflection:

Luke 13:22-30; Luke 14:15-24; Rom 15:14-19; Gal 1:11-24.

Ideas for reflection or the homily:

Today, there are many parishes dedicated to St James not only in Galicia but throughout Spain, Europe, and other continents, especially Latin America. He is the patron of Spain and her sister cities in spirit. He can guide us to the Lord if we ask him for his help.

St James also is the patron saint of all who are named after him and those who travel fervently to venerate his relics. He shelters all of us under his patronage. May Europe be renewed by the "Way of Saint James." May Spain, her sister nations in spirit, and all those who make a pilgrimage to the tomb of the Apostle remain faithful to Christ until the end of time.

Final Prayer

My dearest St James, help me to be a special friend of Jesus as you were. May I always remember – as He taught you – that, in loving Him, I must love and serve others. Lead me in my pilgrim's journey on earth to the heavenly Kingdom that Jesus has prepared for all those like you who love Him. I ask this in your name. Amen