

The Apostles

St. Peter



While journeying along with His Apostles, Jesus asks them: "Whom do men say that the Son of man is?" The Apostles answered: "Some John the Baptist, and other some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets". Jesus said to them: "But whom do you say that I am?" Simon said: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God". And Jesus answering said to him: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee: That thou art Peter [Kipha, a rock], and upon this rock [Kipha] I will build my church [ekklesian], and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven". Then he commanded his disciples, that they should tell no one that he was Jesus the Christ (Matt., xvi, 13-20; Mark, viii, 27-30; Luke, ix, 18-21).

St. Andrew



As one of the Twelve, Andrew was admitted to the closest familiarity with Our Lord during His public life; he was present at the Last Supper; beheld the risen Lord; witnessed the Ascension; shared in the graces and gifts of the first Pentecost, and helped, amid threats and persecution, to establish the Faith in Palestine.

St. James the Greater



In all four lists the names of Peter and Andrew, James and John form the first group, a prominent and chosen group (cf. Mark, xiii, 3); especially Peter, James, and John. These three Apostles alone were admitted to be present at the miracle of the raising of Jairus's daughter (Mark, v, 37; Luke, viii, 51), at the Transfiguration (Mark, ix, 1; Matt., xvii, 1; Luke, ix, 28), and the Agony in Gethsemani (Matt., xxvi, 37; Mark, xiv, 33).

St. John the Evangelist



After the Resurrection John with Peter was the first of the disciples to hasten to the grave and he was the first to believe that Christ had truly risen (John, xx, 2-10). When later Christ appeared at the Lake of Genesareth John was also the first of the seven disciples present who recognized his Master standing on the shore (John, xxi, 7). The Fourth Evangelist has shown us most clearly how close the relationship was in which he always stood to his Lord and Master by the title with which he is accustomed to indicate himself without giving his name: "the disciple whom Jesus loved".

St. Philip



He may have been a disciple of John the Baptist and is mentioned as one of the Apostles in the lists of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and in Acts. Aside from the lists, he is mentioned only in John in the New Testament. He was called by Jesus Himself and brought Nathanael to Christ. Philip was present at the miracle of the loaves and fishes, when he engaged in a brief dialogue with the Lord, and was the Apostle approached by the Hellenistic Jews from Bethsaida to introduce them to Jesus. Just before the Passion, Jesus answered Philip's query to show them the Father.

St. Bartholomew



Many scholars identify him with Nathaniel (John, i, 45-51; xxi, 2). The manner of his death, said to have occurred at Albanopolis in Armenia, is equally uncertain; according to some, he was beheaded, according to others, flayed alive and crucified, head downward, by order of Astyages, for having converted his brother, Polymius, King of Armenia. On account of this latter legend, he is often represented in art (e.g. in Michelangelo's Last Judgment) as flayed and holding in his hand his own skin.

St. Matthew



When summoned by Jesus, Matthew arose and followed Him and tendered Him a feast in his house, where tax-gatherers and sinners sat at table with Christ and His disciples. This drew forth a protest from the Pharisees whom Jesus rebuked in these consoling words: "I came not to call the just, but sinners".

St. Thomas the Apostle



St. Thomas is remembered for his incredulity when the other Apostles announced Christ's Resurrection to him: "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe" (John 20:25); but eight days later he made his act of faith, drawing down the rebuke of Jesus: "Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed" (John 20:29).



St. James the Lesser

St. Paul tells us he was a witness of the Resurrection of Christ; he is also a "pillar" of the Church, whom St. Paul consulted about the Gospel.



St. Jude

Jude is invoked in desperate situations because his New Testament letter stresses that the faithful should persevere in the environment of harsh, difficult circumstances, just as their forefathers had done before them. Therefore, he is the patron saint of desperate cases.



St. Simon the Apostle

In the New Testament he is sometimes called Simon the Zealot because of the zeal he showed for the Mosaic law which he practised before his call.

Judas Iscariot

The Apostle who betrayed his Divine Master. Very little is told us in the Sacred Text concerning the history of Judas Iscariot beyond the bare facts of his call to the Apostolate, his treachery, and his death. His birthplace, as we have seen, is indicated in his name Iscariot, and it may be remarked that his origin separates him from the other Apostles, who were all Galileans. For Kerioth is a city of Judah.

St. Matthew is the only Evangelist to mention the sum paid by the chief priests as the price of the betrayal, and in accordance with his custom he notices that an Old Testament prophecy has been fulfilled therein (Matt., xxvi, 15; xxvii, 5-10). In this last passage he tells of the repentance and suicide of the traitor, on which the other Gospels are silent, though we have another account of these events in the speech of St. Peter: "Men, brethren, the scripture must needs be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who was the leader of them that apprehended Jesus: who was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. And he indeed hath possessed a field of the reward of iniquity, and being hanged, burst asunder in the midst: and all his bowels gushed out.

All paintings are from El Greco - 1606 - Oil on canvas, Museo del Greco, Toledo

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