

Readings and Prayers for 19 July 2020: ST JAMES' PATRONAL FESTIVAL

Acts 11:27–12:2

Persecution of the first Christians includes the martyrdom of James.

^{11.27} At that time prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸ One of them named Agabus stood up and predicted by the Spirit that there would be a severe famine over all the world; and this took place during the reign of Claudius. ²⁹ The disciples determined that according to their ability, each would send relief to the believers living in Judea; ³⁰ this they did, sending it to the elders by Barnabas and Saul. ^{12.1} About that time King Herod laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the church. ² He had James, the brother of John, killed with the sword.

Psalm 126

¹ When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dreamed.
² Our mouths were filled with laughter,
our tongues with songs of joy.
Then it was said among the nations,
"The LORD has done great things for them."
³ The LORD has done great things for us,
and we are filled with joy.
⁴ Restore our fortunes, LORD,
like streams in the Negev.
⁵ Those who sow with tears
will reap with songs of joy.
⁶ Those who go out weeping,
carrying seed to sow,
will return with songs of joy,
carrying sheaves with them.

2 Corinthians 4:7-15

Paul describes what it is like to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ.

⁷ But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. ⁸ We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰ always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. ¹¹ For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. ¹² So death is at work in us, but life in you.

¹³ But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture—"I believed, and so I spoke"—we also believe, and so we speak,

¹⁴ because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence. ¹⁵ Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

Matthew 20:20-28

Jesus has just been explaining to his disciples on the way up to Jerusalem how he must suffer and be killed. James and John's inappropriate request gives Jesus the opportunity to identify the true priorities for his followers.

²⁰ Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favour of him. ²¹ And he said to her, 'What do you want?' She said to him, 'Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.' ²² But Jesus answered, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?' They said to him, 'We are able.' ²³ He said to them, 'You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.'

²⁴ When the ten heard it, they were angry with the two brothers. ²⁵ But Jesus called them to him and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. ²⁶ It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; ²⁸ just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.'

Collect

Merciful God, whose holy apostle Saint James, leaving his father and all that he had, was obedient to the calling of your Son Jesus Christ and followed him even to death: help us, forsaking the false attractions of the world, to be ready at all times to answer your call without delay; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Post Communion

Lord God, the source of truth and love, keep us faithful to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, united in prayer and the breaking of bread, and one in joy and simplicity of heart, in Jesus Christ our Lord.