

Thaddaeus

Thaddaeus was one of the disciples. He was not one of those we hear of very often like Peter, John, or Thomas (the doubter) or Judas. He became better known as Jude, the patron Saint of lost causes and in recent years memorialized in St. Jude's the children's hospital founded by Danny Thomas. He was also known as Lebbaeus, Jude and sometimes Judas. He is mentioned once in the Gospel of John as Judas and followed quickly with "Not Iscariot." There is a story about Thaddaeus that when he was a young boy he worked with the shepherds near Bethlehem. He was too young to watch the sheep, but he ran errands for the older shepherds. The night the angels came and told the shepherds that the Christ child had been born, little Jude was there and followed the shepherds to see the newborn baby. According to the ancient story, the boy stayed on because he was captivated by the child. Seeing the love and adoration in the boy's eyes, Mary laid the baby in his arms for a moment. Thirty years later Jesus chose Thaddaeus, now almost 40 years old, as one of the disciples. This is a legend and although no one knows if it is true, it is a lovely story. Thaddaeus was not a well-known disciple. Growing up as a shepherd it is unlikely that he had Luke's gift for writing, or John or Matthew's gift for recalling events. If we had to name the disciples not many of us would remember Thaddaeus. We would come up with John, Peter, Matthew, Judas, the ones that are well known but it is unlikely that we would remember Thaddaeus. If we were Catholic, we would remember him as St. Jude because he is the Saint of Last Resort, the one Catholics turn to when they have exhausted all other help.

How many people have we known in our lives that have touched our faith journey. For me there have been many but I needed many. For a lot it has been their mother or Grandmother, or a Sunday school teacher. God sent people into our lives that led us down a path that led to our faith. My journey didn't begin early but began with the loss of a brother. His death left me with more questions than answers and a lot of anger at a God that could be so cruel. It took three years for me to begin to explore those questions and face my depression. God put a lot of angels in my path, and they showed me Christian love and were an example and kept me on the path to a believer. It is a journey that I continue every day and although I know some of the answers, I still have questions and my view of God has changed and I know that he is not spiteful, cruel, vindictive and to be feared, as I once thought but is loving, caring, and forgiving. If he can forgive even me, he can forgive the lost and the hopeless. God continues to put his "saints" in my path and for that I am eternally grateful.

Matthew 10:3-4 These are the names of the twelve apostles, first Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew. James Son of Zebedee and his brother Zebedee, and his brother John. Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew, the tax collector. James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the zealot, and Judas Iscariot who betrayed him.

Thank you, Lord, for this day. May we use it to your honor. Be with those who are suffering whether from grief or illness. Be with those who yearn for a shelter from the storms of life may they find your peace. Help us Lord to do your bidding, to feed the hungry, bind up the wounds of those who are suffering and homeless. Lord, we ask this day for you to be with more families who are suffering the loss of loved ones in the school shooting in Tennessee. It seems this is our constant request. Lord, help us to find a way to end these senseless tragedies. School children are dying in a place where they should be safe, and families are torn apart with their grief.

Be with our Pastor, guide and protect him and be with his family, bless his ministry and all the things he does that no one sees. Be with our staff and leaders, guide them in their work and grant them wisdom and inspiration. Be with them from the handling of the food pantry to the preparation of the bulletins and the Messenger and the care of the church. Be with our volunteers who go about their work, not seeking recognition but doing what they can for the church. The people who cut the grass and those who pull the weeds and those that pick-up trash and those that mend the chairs and those that do repairs and those that give of themselves for the church. Thank you, Lord, for them. They bless all of us with their service.

Grace Epperson