

**Living the Word: Wisdom 12: 13, 16-19**

The wise man recognises in his search for God that the Almighty is always just. It's sometimes hard for us to understand why a certain thing has happened to us or a loved one. There are rarely emphatic answers to these kinds of questions during our own lifetimes, which is why the faith is just that: faith in what is to come. Christians should never lose sight of the fact that we are preparing ourselves for the life to come. Our hardships, our difficulties – all are as nothing compared to the happiness we shall experience on that last day if we are counted among the righteous. And what must we do to be righteous? Showing kindness, as suggested in this reading, is a superb place to start. Loving as God loves, being just in our dealings with the world – this is the beginning of the search for God – and thus the beginning of Wisdom.

**Saints and Heroes:**

**St James, Apostle (?-44)**

**Feast day 25th July**

St James was the brother of St John and, like him, a fisherman. He was one of the witnesses of the Transfiguration and one of those who slept through most of the Agony in the Garden. He was the first of the apostles to be martyred, being beheaded by King Herod Agrippa I to please the Jewish opponents of Christianity. He was buried in Jerusalem, and nothing more is known about him until the ninth century. At this time we learn of a tradition that the relics of St James were brought to Spain some time after his martyrdom, and his shrine at Compostela in Galicia grew in importance until it became a great pilgrimage centre in western Europe. In every country there are churches of St James and known, well-trodden pilgrim routes. In 1987 the pilgrimage routes to Compostela were designated by the Council of Europe as historical cultural routes of international importance. The Confraternity of St James continues to work to restore and upgrade the refuges on a route which is still in active pilgrim use today. St James the Great, pray for us.

23<sup>rd</sup> July 2023

Seventh Sunday after Trinity

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time



In the many passages of teaching about the Kingdom of Heaven, it becomes obvious that Christ uses everyday examples to show how, by ignoring the glorious kingdom God, we create our own hell around us. Christ deliberately uses images that the people could see so as to make the Kingdom of God more accessible; a place we can identify with and participate in its establishment and growth. It is for us to read or listen to God's Word and, like the seed being sown around us, nurture and raise up spiritual crops to reap a harvest of the Christian life. The innocence and simplicity of St Francis' message was that all around us is the beauty of God's Kingdom if we will but see. What frustrated Francis was that we look around us and see ugliness where there is beauty, decay where there is hope, and evil of our own making, when just beyond the darkness there is good and the fruit of Christ's teaching. It is for us, therefore, to let the light of Christ dispel the darkness and establish God's Kingdom which surrounds us. It is for us to listen, and hear his truth.

*Today's Gospel: St. Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43*

**Collect:**

Show favour, O Lord, to your servants and mercifully increase the gifts of your grace, that, made fervent in hope, faith and charity, they may be ever watchful in keeping your commands. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.