

**St. James the Greater**  
July 25



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# St. James the Greater

Biblical figure

Sts. James and John were fishermen, just like their father, Zebedee. One day, James and John were fishing in the Sea of Galilee when Jesus called the brothers to leave their nets to become fishers of men. They left their boat to follow Him.

James and his brother had fiery tempers. One time, they asked Jesus to rain fire on a Samaritan town that had rejected Him! The brothers were called the "Sons of Thunder" because of their temper and zeal.

After they had followed Jesus for a while, the mother of James and John asked Jesus for a special favor—to have one brother sit at Jesus' right hand and the other at His left when He came into His Kingdom. Jesus asked the two brothers if they could drink the cup that He was to drink. "Yes!" they both said. What they did not understand was that Jesus meant His cup of suffering. Jesus said they would drink His cup, but His Father in heaven would choose who would sit on His right and left in glory.

James was one of the three Apostles whom Jesus chose to be with Him at special moments (the other two were his brother John and Peter). These three were with Him during His Transfiguration—when His face changed and His clothes became dazzling white. And they were with Jesus during His Agony in the Garden, though they all fell asleep, too tired to keep watch with Jesus in prayer.

When Jesus was arrested, James ran away in fear with all of the other Apostles except John, who followed Jesus. But James also rejoiced with the other Apostles when Jesus appeared to them after His Resurrection. He followed Jesus' command to baptize all the peoples of the world. It is said that James went to Spain to preach the Good News about Jesus, and that Mary appeared to him on a pillar and there commanded him to build a small church.

Later, James returned to Jerusalem and led the Church in Jerusalem in his mighty, thunderous way. Herod Agrippa, the king in Jerusalem, persecuted the Christians and ordered James be put to death with a sword. James was the first Apostle to be martyred for Jesus. There is a tradition that James's body was miraculously carried back to Spain by angels, and that his body is buried in Compostela. Pilgrims to this day make the long walk to Compostela, carrying shells, to visit St. James's tomb. St. James the Greater, help me to follow Jesus, even when it means drinking His cup of suffering!