

**2018-10-28 ... 10am Service ... Revd Canon Judy Hunt**

**Ephesians 2: 19 – 22**

**'St Simon and St Jude'**

Today is the day dedicated to St Simon and St Jude.

What, you may wonder, links them?

The most obvious link is that – in all the first 3 gospels – they are named as being among the first 12 disciples – those who became the apostles.

That's why it's appropriate to have the reading from Ephesians 2 which reminds us that the church ... we ourselves ... can trace our links right back to those 12 ... and to Jesus himself.

But still – we might wonder – why link these particular 2 apostles?

Apparently the reason lies more in their death than in their life ... back in the 7<sup>th</sup> century in Rome on this day of the year: 28<sup>th</sup> October – a church that had recently acquired their relics was dedicated to their – joint – memory. I'm not sure that either of them would have particularly chosen this kind of link!

Nor – I'd assume – would Jude necessarily have chosen to become known as **the Patron Saint of Lost Causes ...** which is what has happened to him!

This apparently stems from the similarity of his name ... the possible confusion of his name with that of **Judas Iscariot**.

If you were wanting to ask for the prayers of one of the apostles ... Jude would not be the first ... but likely to be the last just in case there was confusion with Judas Iscariot. So interceding through him was seen as a last resort ... a small step then to become the **Patron Saint of Lost Causes**.

But it is significant that the Christian Faith can have such a saint ... a recognition that – as in the words of Gabriel to Mary ... **with God, nothing is impossible!**

**Our own lives:**

As you look back at your own life, perhaps you can recall a time when you'd almost given up hope ... when there really seemed no realistic possibility of a positive outcome ... you'd prayed and prayed ... but nothing shifted for weeks, months or even years ... and then all of a sudden – things changed.

I can remember a time when I was – for a few years – the leader of an annual Scripture Union Camp for teenagers. With between 40 and 50 youngsters, we clearly needed enough leaders. The months were going by ... on-one to lead the kitchen team and not enough others either. We prayed, we carried on praying ... we acted – putting out lots of requests ... and nothing for months ... running the camp was starting to look like a lost cause ... then within just 5 days ... we were fully staffed ...

Maybe St Jude had been praying for us, too!

**With God, nothing is impossible**

**National/International:**

And the same can be true when we consider national or international affairs. Think of how long we've been praying for a solution to the tension and warfare between Israelis and **PTO**

Palestinians. Not just years – but decades. Is it a lost cause? Should we give up? Not at all ...  
And perhaps we can be encouraged to persist when we remember how long we were praying for,  
longing for change in South Africa ... or to the tension and terrorism in and from Northern Ireland  
or the Berlin Wall issues.

Again, **with God, nothing is impossible!** We need to persist in prayer, in action, working with God  
until enough people are in the necessary places of power with attitudes, with willingness to bring  
about positive change.

**Conclusion:**

And alongside persistent prayer and action – one of the really important parts of being Christian, in  
believing that **with God – nothing is impossible** – is for us to be people of **hope**. To be those who  
don't give up ... who don't give in to hopelessness.

To help us remember this point ... to reflect on this point I'm going to finish with a poem ... some of  
you may know it ... it's about frogs in cream:

*Two frogs fell into a can of cream,  
Or so I've heard it told;  
The sides of the can were shiny and steep,  
The cream was deep and cold.*

*'Oh, what's the use?' croaked Number 1,  
'Tis fate; no help's around.  
Goodbye, my friends! Goodbye, sad world!  
And, weeping still, he drowned.*

*But Number 2, of sterner stuff,  
Dog-paddled in surprise;  
The while he wiped his creamy face  
And dried his creamy eyes.*

*'I'll swim awhile, at least,' he said  
Or so I've heard he said;  
'It really wouldn't help the world  
If one more frog were dead.'*

*An hour or two he kicked and swam,  
Not once he stopped to mutter;  
But kicked and kicked and swam and kicked,  
Then hopped out, via butter!*

*(T.C. Hamlet)*