

Reflection Friday 5th Week Easter St Philip and James 2024

Philip was born at Bethsaida and started as a disciple of John the Baptist. After the Baptist's death he followed Christ. James the son of Alphaeus is called "James the Less", to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee. James "the brother of the Lord" ruled the Church at Jerusalem; wrote an epistle; led an austere life; and converted many Jews to the Faith. He was crowned with martyrdom in 62. Saint James the Less was also known as James the Just. Saint James played a prominent role in the early Christian community in Jerusalem and is traditionally believed to have been the author of the Epistle of James in the New Testament, which emphasises the importance of living one's faith through good works.

Jerome held these two James's to be the same person, and this was certainly the prevailing opinion when the feast of Philip and James was instituted in 560. Nowadays scholars prefer to divide them, in which case we might think of today as being the feast of Philip and James and James.

Saint Philip is mentioned several times in the New Testament and plays a significant role in bringing others to Jesus. He is known for his straightforward and practical nature, often asking direct questions or making straightforward statements. He brought Nathanael to Jesus, declaring, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law" (John 1:45). Jesus later called Philip to be one of his apostles, and Philip faithfully followed him throughout his ministry.

They are celebrated together on May 3rd because tradition stated that both saints were martyred on the same day in the same year, although the exact details of their deaths are not known.