



Saint Jude Thaddeus

Saint Jude Thaddeus was closely associated with our Lord by blood relationship through Saints Joachim and Anne, the parents of the Blessed Virgin. A grand-nephew of these two saints, he is at once a nephew of Mary and Joseph, which places him in the relationship of cousin of our Lord.

Jude is the brother of the Apostle James the Less. He had two other brothers, whom the Gospel calls “brethren” of Jesus. When our Lord came back from Judea to Nazareth, he began to teach in the synagogue. The people who heard Him were astonished and said, “Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers? Isn’t this the carpenter’s Son? Isn’t Mary known to be His mother and aren’t James, Joseph, Simon, and [Jude] His brothers?” (Mt 13:54).

The word “brethren” or “brothers” in the Hebrew language usually suggests a near relationship. Jude’s father was Clopas. His mother’s name was Mary. She was a near relative of the Blessed Virgin. She stood beneath the Cross when Jesus died. “Standing near the Cross of Jesus were His Mother, His Mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene” (Jn 19:25).

In his boyhood and youth, Jude must have associated with Jesus. At the beginning of the public life of Jesus, Jude left all to follow the Master. As an Apostle, he labored with great zeal for the conversion of the Gentiles. For ten years he worked as a missionary in the whole of Mesopotamia. He returned to Jerusalem for the Council of the Apostles. Later he joined Simon in Libya, where the two Apostles preached the Gospel to barbarian inhabitants.

Tradition says that he and Simon suffered martyrdom at Suanis, a city of Persia, where they had labored as missionaries. Jude was beaten to death with a club; hence he is represented with a club in his hand. His head was then severed from his body with an ax. His body was brought to Rome and his relics are now venerated in Saint Peter’s Basilica.

Saint Jude is known mainly as the author of the New Testament Epistle of Jude. This letter was probably written before the fall of Jerusalem, between the years 62 and 65. In his letter Jude denounces the heresies of that early time and warns the Christians against the seduction of false teaching. He speaks of the judgement to come upon the heretics who are living evil lives and condemns the worldly-minded, the lustful, and “those who cultivate people for the sake of gain.” He encourages Christians to remain steadfast in the faith and foretells that false teachers, leading wicked lives and ridiculing religion, will arise, but that they will be punished.

To the pride of the wicked he opposes the humble loyalty of the Archangel Michael. He encourages the Christians to build a spiritual edifice by living lives founded upon faith, love of God, hope, and prayer. He encourages the practice of love of neighbor; he urges Christians to endeavor to convert the heretics by the virtues of their lives.

Jude concludes the letter with a prayer praising God for the Incarnation, by means of which the eternal Word of God, Jesus Christ, took upon Himself our human nature and redeemed mankind. The feast of Saint Simon and Jude is celebrated on October 28.