

Festivals and Saints' Days (w/c 21st July)

22nd July

Saint Mary Magdalene - *saint*



Little is known about Saint Mary Magdalene's life. It is fair to infer that she was from Magdala on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Saint Luke lists her amongst the people who travelled around with Jesus and supporting Him from their personal resources (8: 2f). All four Gospels mention that she witnessed the Crucifixion; and with others the first to witness the Empty Tomb. She is mentioned much more often in the Gospels than most of the Apostles. Later traditions, which through identification with other New Testament figures, portrayed her as a reformed woman of ill-repute are now considered erroneous. She does not appear in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles; but subsequent literature sometimes focused on her quite intensely. A lot of nonsense has been written on the basis of her having given birth to Jesus' children.

25th July

Saint James the Great - *Apostle, martyr*



James is styled, "the Great" to distinguish him from the other Apostle called James. He was the son of Zebedee and Salome and the brother of John the Apostle. He seems to have been part of the core of the Apostolic college, because he was one of three Apostles present at the Transfiguration (Matthew 17: 1–9; Mark 9: 2–8; Luke 9:28–36). On the other hand, he and his brother rather inappropriately requested seats at Jesus' side (Luke 9: 51ff). James appears to have had something of a temper (Mark 3: 17). He was martyred on the orders of Herod in AD44 (Acts 12: 1f). There is an improbable tradition that he had travelled to Spain prior to returning to Jerusalem. Other, though not uncontested, tradition places his relics in Santiago di Compostela. Today, the city is a great centre of pilgrimage.

26th July

Saints Anne and Joachim - *parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

The title of this entry more-or-less tells us everything we know of Anne and Joachim. Indeed, even their names come to us not from Holy Scripture, but the apocryphal Gospel of James (which was not written by Saint James - any of them) and other Church tradition. Equally, of course, it is indisputable that our Lady had parents and that they had brought her up in faith and the fear of God; and for this we honour them.

