

NOVENA PRAYERS TO ST. JUDE

Day One: Discipleship

To some you must be compassionate because they are wavering; others you must save by snatching them from the fire; to others again you must be compassionate but wary, hating even the tunic stained by their bodies. (Jude 22, 23)

Though the specific call of St. Jude was not recorded by the Gospel writers, there was a moment in his life when Jesus confronted him with a choice: “Will you follow me, and leave your former life behind? Will you choose to be my disciple and learn from me? Will you trust me, and accept me as Your Lord, placing your life in my hands?” What St. Jude came to know, after accepting that call, is that the choice for discipleship is not a one-time choice. With each new day, the Lord asks for a renewal of the call to discipleship. Discipleship in the Lord is not slavery, but freedom. One cannot have Christ as Lord without also having Christ as friend, as brother. (Jn 15:15)

The call to discipleship means becoming, like St. Jude, a friend of Jesus, and His co-heir. Discipleship also carries with it the responsibility to use our talents, our skills, our gifts not for our own needs, but to further spread the Gospel. Discipleship is not a gift we can keep to ourselves; it must motivate us to bring our friends, our families, and our neighbors to the love of Christ, especially as shown by His Eucharistic Presence. By living and expressing the joy we experience in accepting the call to discipleship, we serve as witnesses to the Gospel. Let our daily “Yes!” to the call of the Lord be the building blocks of the Kingdom of God.

“Let your imaginations soar freely along the limitless expanse of the horizons of Christian discipleship. Sometimes we are looked upon as people who speak only of prohibitions. Nothing could be further from the truth! Authentic Christian discipleship is marked by a sense of wonder. We stand before the God we know and love as a friend, the vastness of his creation, and the beauty of our Christian faith.” (Benedict XVI, Yonkers, NY, April 19, 2008)

St. Jude, you answered Christ’s call to come and follow Him, and laid down your life in service to the Lord. You know both the difficulty of putting aside your own ambitions and the joy that only comes from attending to the needs of God’s people. O saint of the impossible, intercede for us before the throne of God, from Whom all graces flow, that we might obtain the strength and determination to die to self and live for Christ, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Day Two: Obscurity

Judas -- not Judas Iscariot -- said to him, ‘Lord, what has happened, that you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?’ (John 14:22)

Little is mentioned of St. Jude in the Gospels. Little is known of his life before he accepted Christ’s call, and few details are given about his life and ministry after the Resurrection. Yet, despite the little that is known about St. Jude, God has used him to be one of the most popular of the Apostles, a powerful intercessor and friend of those in dire straits. He has millions of devotees among the Christian faithful, and by his intercession, draws countless souls closer to Christ each day.

Most of us live our lives in relative obscurity as well. Few outside our circle of friends and relatives know us, and with the passage of history, less will be known about our lives than that of St. Jude. Yet Christ has called us to importance, just as He called St. Jude. By our baptism we become a part of Him and His saving ministry. By our quiet labor in whatever corner of the vineyard God has entrusted to us, we serve Him well. God may not call us to do great things, but in Him, the hidden, virtuous lives we lead redound to His glory, and build up His Kingdom.

“You lead me, Lord, in silence and in prayer, in work and in joyous service of my brothers, in the example of your hidden life at Nazareth.” (Fr. Bruno Marchand, OSCO, one of the Martyrs of Tibhirine, Algeria)

St. Jude, the similarity of your name to that of the traitor has caused you to be often forgotten or ignored. The details of your Apostolic ministry are hidden to history and clouded by legends, and yet, as one of the noble apostolic band, you built up the foundation of Christ’s Church. You know the value of laboring, not for worldly success, but for love of God. Teach us by your example to tend to the tasks entrusted to us, be they great or small. Intercede for us that, as we strive to live the Gospel in our own corner of the world, we may win the unfailling crown of glory before the throne of God, Father, Son and Spirit, who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

Day Three: Fidelity

But you, my dear friends, must build yourselves up on the foundation of your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit. (Jude 20)