

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Cleanse us, Lord, by the saving baptism of your
 Son's Passion,
 so that on the Feast of Saint James,
 whom you willed to be the first among the Apostles
 to drink of Christ's chalice of suffering,
 we may offer a sacrifice pleasing to you.
 Through Christ our Lord.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

They drank the chalice of the Lord, / and became the
 friends of God.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Help us, O Lord, we pray,
 through the intercession of the blessed Apostle James,
 on whose feast day we have received with joy your
 holy gifts.
 Through Christ our Lord.

Reflection**Thunderous Faith**

James and John, the "sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17), were not the most retiring of Jesus' disciples. Before their brazen request for places of honor in the kingdom, they took it upon themselves to forbid unauthorized exorcisms (Mark 9:38-40), and they hoped to call down heavenly fire on inhospitable Samaritans (Luke 9:51-56). Today's Gospel always made me think of these brothers as selfish climbers. But they had a special closeness to Jesus that tells a different story (see, for

example, Mark 5:37 and 14:33). When they agreed they could drink from the same chalice as Jesus, they weren't just boasting. Indeed, James, whose feast we celebrate today, was the first of the Twelve to suffer martyrdom (Acts 12:2).

I've always wondered why the Gospel writer would include this unflattering portrait of these two apostles who had been part of Jesus' inner circle. Surely, the early Church would have held these brothers in high esteem as models of faith to emulate and revere.

And that is exactly the evangelist's point. If we are to be disciples of Jesus, we cannot be timid. We all drink from the cup of salvation at every Eucharist—the same cup of trial and suffering from which Jesus drank. The same cup from which James and John drank. The same cup from which the first communities of faith drank.

Our call to service is not a call to submissiveness. It is a call to thunderous faith, born of deep passion that compels us to offer our entire selves for the sake of the world.

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