

28th October 2021

Hopeless

“Hopeless hope hopes on ...”

John Clare, Child Harold

Today, in case you'd forgotten or never knew, is St Jude's Day. Jude was one of the twelve apostles. Scholars identify him with Thaddeus in the Gospels, but he is also called Jude of James, Jude Thaddeus and Judas Thaddeus of Lebbaeus. But, whatever his name, he's commonly believed to be "Jude, the brother of Jesus". Through the years, Icons of St Jude have depicted him holding a scroll, or an image of Jesus, or a carpenter's rule – or even a club! Little is known about Jude's life after the death and resurrection of Jesus, but the ancient tradition of the Church is that he preached the Gospel in the Middle East – Judea, Samaria, Idumaea, Syria, Mesopotamia, Libya, Beirut and Edessa.

But I'm most intrigued today by the fact that the Roman Catholic Church recognises St Jude as the "patron saint of desperate cases and lost causes". The often-ignored Jude supposedly became keen to assist anyone who sought his help, to the point of being available to petitioners in the most hopeless of circumstances.

His name came up in conversation with a friend recently who informed me that he gives thanks *daily* for St Jude – as this is the name of the US company which manufactured his recently-fitted pacemaker! He was even more delighted when he learned that this is the same Jude who is revered as the "patron saint of desperate cases and lost causes". How he dines out on *that* information – and not just on St Jude's Day either!

Hopeless? Desperate cases? A lost cause? Can there not be a St Jude in all of us, willing to respond to those whose situation is "dire", who are desperate and may feel beyond rescuing? Is anything or anyone totally hopeless or completely lost? If not, might it be you or me who is the one to be turned to when it *feels* that way?

I pray today that we can be the St Jude people need, right now. For, you never know, we might have to turn to St Jude for help ourselves someday, and hope we have someone to respond to *our* cries when we feel hopeless and desperate.

A prayer for today

*I feel hopeless sometimes, desperate and lost. Give me hope when I need it,
peace in my despair and companionship in my loneliness. Amen*