

This month we shall look at three more Saints, St James, St Peter and St John depicted in St Mary's Church, Dedham. They appear in the central three panel window on the north side of the chancel and again are shown with symbols representing their lives and ministries. Each are labelled in a text ribbon. This triumvirate of Apostles: St Peter and the two brothers St James and St John who were sons of Zebedee, appear to have been especially favoured and trusted by Jesus. They were the only Apostles to accompany Him at three important events: The Raising of Jairus' Daughter (Mark 5:35-43), The transfiguration of Jesus (Matthew 17: 1-5), and, Jesus' Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26: 36-46).



Middle window, North side of the chancel, left panel
St. James.



Middle window, North side of the chancel, centre panel
St. Peter.



Middle window, North side of the chancel, right panel
St. John

In the left hand panel we see "Stus Jacobus major" (Saint James the Greater). The use of "major" is to distinguish him from the other apostle James and, in this case, signifies he is older rather than necessarily more important. St James is the Patron Saint of Spain and though there is no Biblical reference to his travelling to Spain later historians assert that he did.

The legend says that after his martyrdom his remains were taken to and buried in what is now Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in northern Spain, which is named after him. The journey on foot from the northern Pyrenees along the Camino de Santiago to Santiago de Compostela has become the most popular pilgrimage route in Europe.

Thus St James has become the Patron saint of pilgrims and in this depiction holds a pilgrim's staff in his left hand and a Bible in his right hand signifying his evangelism in Spain. In addition his robes are embroidered with scallop shells, a symbol of the Santiago pilgrimage and pilgrimages in general. This probably arose from the fact that those who completed the Camino de Santiago would collect a scallop shell from the shores of Galicia as a sign that they had made the pilgrimage.

In the central panel we see "Stus Petrus princeps apostaloru" (St Peter foremost of the Apostles). He was also known as Simon Peter. The foremost because the Bible tells us that Jesus singled him out and said "*you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church*" (Matthew 16: 18). St Peter also holds a Bible not only signifying his evangelism across the Roman Empire and into Rome, but also that the New testament includes two of his epistles.

In his right hand he holds two overlapping keys: one gold and one silver, and these represent Jesus' promise to give Peter "*the keys of the kingdom of Heaven*" (Matthew 16: 19). This suggest that through his faithful teaching of the Gospel Peter will open the door to the kingdom of heaven to those who respond in faith. Peter is regarded as the first Pope and the Papal seal of the Holy See has had the symbol of the crossed keys on it since the 14th century, and the Vatican has had them on its flag since the early 19th century.

In the right hand panel we see "Stus Johannes discipulus dilectus" (St John the beloved disciple). St John the brother of St James wrote one of the New Testament Gospels. In it are several references to "the disciple Jesus loved" (John 13: 23; 19: 26; 20: 2; 21: 7; 21: 20) and it seems likely that this is John describing himself as such. St. John also holds a Bible, but in this case it is open, and one can read "In principio erat verbu" the opening line of his gospel, "*In the beginning was the Word*" (John 1: 1.) In his right hand he holds a quill signifying his authorship of the Gospel. At his feet stands an eagle carrying a text ribbon "*Verbu caro facti es*" (The Word became flesh) (John 1: 14) another line from St John's Gospel.

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The Camino de Santiago, or in English, the Way of St. James, is a network of pilgrims' ways or pilgrimages leading to the shrine of the apostle James in the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in northwestern Spain, where tradition holds that the remains of the apostle are buried.

Created and established after the discovery of the relics of Saint James the Great at the beginning of the 9th century, the Way of St. James became a major pilgrimage route of medieval Christianity from the 10th century onwards. But it was only after the end of the Granada War in 1492, under the reign of the Catholic Monarchs Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile, that Pope Alexander VI officially declared the Camino de Santiago to be one of the "three great pilgrimages of Christendom," along with Jerusalem and the Via Francigena to Rome.

Editor