

**Readings:** *Romans 10: 9 – 18; Psalm 18 (19): 1 – 4; Matthew 4: 18 – 22.*

Andrew, like his brother Simon, came from Bethsaida in the Greek speaking area of Galilee, and, as today's Gospel shows, they were fishermen. Among Eastern Christians Andrew is known as 'The First-Called', because the Gospel of John tells that he had become a disciple of John the Baptist, whose witness, *Behold the Lamb of God*, led Andrew to follow Jesus and recognize him as the Messiah. He then brought his brother to Jesus. We must presume that it was at a later time that Jesus called them both to be full-time disciples, and later included them among the Twelve Apostles. The first three gospels tell us little more about Andrew, but in the fourth gospel he figures in two incidents. At the feeding of the five thousand it is Andrew who finds the lad with *five barley loaves and two fish* and brings him to Jesus. And during Holy Week, when some Greek speaking pilgrims wish to see Jesus, it is Philip, another native of Bethsaida, and Andrew who tell Jesus.

From these incidents we gain the impression of a Greek-speaking man, with a Greek name, who was approachable and went out of his way to draw people to Jesus

Traditions tell that Andrew preached in the area round the Black Sea. The Ecumenical Patriarchate honours Saint Andrew as the founding apostle of the See of Byzantium (renamed Constantinople), and so as its Patron Saint. Tradition also tells that in about AD 60 Andrew was martyred by crucifixion at Patras in Greece, where his shrine is venerated. Early accounts describe Andrew as bound to a cross like that of Jesus, but a tradition developed that the cross was **X** shaped, and it is with a saltire cross that he is usually shown in art.

As with other apostles, the relics of Saint Andrew were divided and sent to many different places. It was from the monastery of Saint Andrew in Rome that Augustine came to preach to the English, which may explain the saint's popularity in England (*733 medieval churches*). It is also possible that relics of the saint were brought from Rome, and that, via Hexham, some were taken in the eighth century to their shrine in the city of Saint Andrews – thus leading to the patronage of Saint Andrew over Scotland, and the adoption of his saltire cross as the Scottish national banner

In 1964, as a gesture of reconciliation between Rome and Constantinople, Pope Saint Paul VI ordered that the relics of Saint Andrew in the Vatican be returned to Patras.