

St. Bartholomew - August 24

Morning Prayer A

First Lesson: Gen 28:10-12, 16-17

Second Lesson: John 1:43-51

Homily

Jesus had just been baptized in the Jordan by John. Andrew saw Him, and came to him with his brother Peter. Jesus then went into Galilee, there he met Philip and called Him. Philip brought his friend or relative Nathanael. This is the man we know as Bartholomew, or the son of Tolomai. As St. John wrote:

"Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see."

This is encouraging.

This man that was being called into Jesus' presence

was a man of very ordinary prejudices, like us. Nazareth was a hick town.

You wouldn't expect much from there.

No one would have argued with Nathanael Bartholomew, but he was wrong.

Even wrong, he was willing to check it out.

Philip said, "Come and see," and he came, and saw.

Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

What you see is what you get.

That could have been Nathanael's motto.

Jesus could have been teasing him for his bluntness, but more likely was paying him a high compliment.

"No guile" - no pretence - no slipperiness.

Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God;

*thou art the King of Israel.
Jesus answered and said unto him,
Because I said unto thee,
I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou?
thou shalt see greater things than these.*

A blunt man like Nathanael was not going to be convinced by an easily faked magic trick. Such demonstrations are the stock in trade of stage magicians doing it for entertainment, and also of charlatans and cult-builders. Obviously there was more to it, and obviously Jesus knew that. However it came about, however, the skeptic suddenly believed, and to the skeptic came a promise:

*And he saith unto him,
Verily, verily, I say unto you,
Hereafter ye shall see heaven open,
and the angels of God
ascending and descending upon the Son of man.*

We heard the story of Jacob's dream, of the ladder to heaven, and of the angels ascending and descending. Did the future Apostle sense some of that now?

Did he already know these words to be true? It seems likely, for his reaction was so much like Jacob's, who awoke from his dream and said,

*"Surely the LORD is in this place;
and I knew it not.
... How dreadful is this place!
this is none other but the house of God,
and this is the gate of heaven."*

Nathanael became the Apostle, St. Bartholomew. He is thought to have preached in India and Armenia, and to have died for his faith at Abanopolis on the shores of the Caspian Sea. He now dwells in the Holy Place, continually worshiping the Most High God, continually (as Tradition tells us) praying for us that labor here below.

Do we know anyone who is skeptical? Have we invited a skeptic to come and see? Philip did.

and the result was an Apostle, a preacher of Good News, a glorious martyr, an intercessor at God's throne.

Let us pray.

Lord, thou hast searched me out and hast known me.
Thou knowest my every thought and deed,
and thou hast called me to be thine own.
Fill me with the certainty of thy presence.
Lead me to follow thy steps.
Use me to proclaim thy Good News
to a lost generation,
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who died and rose for our salvation,
and liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy
Ghost,
one God, world without end. Amen.

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Evening Prayer A

First Lesson: Isa 66:1-2, 18-23

Second Lesson: 1 Pet 5:1-11

Homily to be written