

## **Homily For Saturday of the 20th Week of Ordinary Time- Year 1**

**St Peter's 8:30 AM Mass - August 24, 2019**

### **Feast of St. Bartholomew**

**Revelation 21:9-14** "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

**Psalms 145:10-18** "The Lord is near to all who call on him in truth."

**John 1:45-51** "You will see heaven opened and angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

### **In Him There Is No Deceit**

#### **Introduction**

Today a miracle will take place. We will only see it if we have eyes for miracles. Occasionally, I get the chance to sit in the congregation at mass. What I like here at St. Peter's is that, when the priest holds up the cup and the host and says "This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world", at that moment, you can look up just a little from the elevated host and you will see the cross. And, from the cross, you can look down and see the body and blood of Christ.

Vision: Looking up and looking down. That is the very moment when the earthly realities of sin and suffering and death being overpowered by the heavenly mystery of the God who lives and reigns in heaven. Earth and heaven meet. If we had the eyes for it, we would literally see angels ascending and descending right in front of us. And, right at that point of meeting is Jesus Christ himself.

#### **Saint Bartholomew**

To celebrate this feast day of St. Bartholomew, today the Church turns to John the Apostle for insight into the calling of Nathanael, which is likely Bartholomew's first name. We look at John's account of the Good News of Jesus Christ and we look at the Revelation John received while he was suffering a great distress on the prison island of Patmos. In both cases there is an emphasis on seeing things beyond what the eye is capable of. One of John's themes is that you just have to be able to see. If you can't, then you will miss everything. You will miss what is really

going on right in front of your own physical eyes. You will miss what it means. And, you will miss where everything is going in God's plan of salvation.

## **John**

We should look closely at this interaction. Jesus had called Philip to join him. Philip went out and found Nathaniel, saying: "We have found him about whom Moses and the prophets wrote, Jesus from Nazareth." Nathanael wasn't that impressed: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth? Nazareth is a small and secluded Galilean village, not mentioned anywhere. Later, the Pharisees will say, "Check out the scriptures. No prophet ever comes out of Nazareth."

Phillip just answers, "Come and see for yourself." Which he does. Now, when Jesus saw Nathanael, he saw his heart. He said: Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit. Now, this is important for us. Nathanael needs conversion, but his heart is totally open to it, like a child. There is nothing in him to oppose God's presence.

You know that Satan is the father of lies. Everything coming from him is an attempt to deceive. Every temptation we experience includes a perversion of truth. And, every sin we commit is a submitting to a lie as if it were something true and good. But, in Nathanael, there is absolutely none of that opposition to truth. I think this is the absolutely greatest compliment that can be paid to a human being. It is total openness to the truth of Jesus Christ.

Nathaniel responds in innocence: "How do you know me?" Jesus only says, "I saw you under the fig tree." And, immediately, Nathanael is converted: "Rabbi, you are the Son of God, the King of Israel." But he doesn't yet know the full truth of it. He is simply giving the titles to Jesus that would be attributed to King David. So Jesus tells him, like he tells us in the mass, you don't know the half of it: "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree You will see greater things than these. Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

It is one of John's tendencies to present the whole truth about Jesus in each episode, so we get the entire Gospel message all at once: The invitation to come

and see, Jesus who sees our hearts, our response that we are impressed by him, Jesus saying it's more than you can see, and finally a sense or glimpse of the heavenly realities.

### **Revelation**

In Revelation, the angel extends the same invitation to John: Come, I will show you more than even you know. You are the faithful Apostle, John, but I will show you the ultimate victory of the Lamb of God. I will show you his beloved bride, the holy city Jerusalem, which is also the true Church, where all live who are joined to the Lamb of God. It's a glorious city, unbelievable in its beauty. The tribes of Israel are the gates and the Apostles are the foundations, but it is the City of God.

### **Call To Action**

Sometimes, the journey to faith and to God takes a very long time. And sometimes there is an instant where you can say, I believe it. I believe everything. God is real. Jesus is alive. He lives in my heart. He comes from heaven and is the king of that realm. He died for us on a cross and he lives with us in the Eucharist. Like the blind man when Jesus asks, what do you want, we must answer, I want to see. I want to be consumed by the truth. I want there to be no room for deceit in me, like the holy Apostle Nathanael Bartholomew, who held nothing back in his heart or in his body, and now lives in the holy city, the New Jerusalem.