

May 3 2016
 Feast of St Phillip and James
 1 Corinthians 15:1–8
 Psalm 19:2–5
 / John 14:6–14

Today is the Feast Day of Saints Phillip and James. We know nothing of this man James, other than his name, and of course the fact that Jesus chose him to be one of the 12 pillars of the New Israel, his Church. He is James, son of Alphaeus, also known as James the Lesser to avoid confusing him with James the son of Zebedee, also an apostle and known as James the Greater.

We know a little more about Philip. Philip came from the same town as Peter and Andrew, Bethsaida in Galilee. Jesus called him directly, whereupon he sought out Nathanael and told him of the “one about whom Moses wrote” (John 1:45).

Like the other apostles, Philip took a long time coming to realize who Jesus was. In today’s Gospel, Phillip is still unclear about who Jesus is as Jesus’ question: Have I been with you so long and you still do not know me”, makes clear.

Phillip and the others still had much to discover and learn, not only about Jesus, but about their true calling. A calling in which they would not only share in the work of Jesus but would indeed do even greater works than Jesus.

The greater work they would do would be to take the message that Jesus had shared with them and begun to instill in them. A message they would carry out from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. We are here because the Apostles took to heart Jesus’ prophetic words and willingly engaged in their Apostolic calling.

St. Paul summarized this apostolic mission this way:

the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand,² through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain.¹

It is the Gospel of Proclamation. This is the essence of the Apostolic Witness. It is the declaration of what God has done in Jesus Christ. Such a proclamation when received and adhered to becomes the very basis by which a person orientates their life. This is where they stand and are also being saved. The challenging thing is to through a life time to hold onto the message and to continue to live out our vocation as Christians. What is that witness in which we are to stand and by which we are being saved?

¹ *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition.* (1993). (1 Co 15:1–2). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

Let me put it this way. The Father assigned us with a life-long mission to fulfill: to be like Jesus always in being united with him, in obeying his Holy Will and in proclaiming his kingdom of love. The essence of holiness is doing willingly and lovingly the Will of the Father, the way Jesus and Mary did and the way the Apostles learned to do through much trial, heartache and error.

In the end there are three powers controlling the universe: God's Will, the human Free Will and the devil's Free Will. United with God, no powers of hell can prevail over us.

Moreover, the personal, unique mission of all persons can only be fulfilled by their body and soul united with God. Without the soul attached to God, they can never perform their life's mission nor overcome the obstacles cunningly set up by their greatest enemy, the devil.

Such a vocation is only possible because God himself revealed to the Apostles that this is the vocation for which God made us.

I wear red today to remember that Phillip and James so believed in this good news that they held firmly to their vocation to the point of martyrdom.

May we take to heart their example and with them and St. Paul hold firmly to this message we have received and in which we stand and are being saved.