

Homily for May 9th, 2020
Saturday 4th Week of Ordinary Time

Today I want to begin my homily by talking with you about St. Phillip because of his place in today's Gospel. He came from 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. In today's reading from Acts the universal mission of the Church is described this way, in quoting Isaiah 49:

***I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles,
so that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."***

What we see throughout the Acts of the Apostles is the greater work of Jesus, what I am calling 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. The challenging thing is through a lifetime to hold onto the message and to continue to live out our vocation as Christians. What is this vocation?

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 our reading from Acts there is this verse that can be troubling.

When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and praised the word of the Lord; and as many as had been destined for eternal life became believers¹

¹ [*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*](#). (1993). (Ac 13:48). Washington, DC: National Council of Churches of Christ.

There are some Christians who in reading this verse argue that it affirms the doctrine of predestination, that only some are chosen for salvation, those destined for eternal life. However, Paul says in 1 Timothy that God desires all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4). What does it mean then to say “: those destined for eternal life”? It is those who have freely responded to the message of the Gospel who can receive the grace whereby they can fulfill God’s will for them.

God’s destines for eternal life those who cooperate with his love. It is this that Phillip discovered as did those who in Antioch where today’s Acts reading was set. But as the reading also show us, we can resist God’s love and drive far from us the message entrusted to the Apostles and the Church.

May you discover more the gladness of those who in responding to God share in the greater work of God’s saving love.