

One

Philip the Apostle

Yesterday we had the dual feast of James the Less and Philip. It was too much to cover in one meditation. So today we meet Philip. He always comes fifth in the list of the Twelve. Tradition hands down that Philip went to Greece and then Southwestern Turkey in Hierapolis, being martyred by crucifixion or stoning.

However, at the very beginning the Gospel of John recounts that after Jesus had decided to leave for Galilee, he met Philip and said, 'Follow me'. Philip then found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph"

Immediately Nathaniel reacts with a very skeptical response, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

Philip simply invites Nathaniel to "Come and see!" (Jn 1: 46) and Jesus does the rest.

We can imagine that Philip is also addressing us with those two verbs, "Come and see."

Two

Friendship with Christ

In his Gospel Mark writes, "Jesus went up into the hills and summoned those he wanted. So they came to him and he appointed twelve; they were to be his companions and to be sent out to preach, with power to cast out devils."

Three things are striking: First, what Jesus wanted was a group of companions, a group of friends. Second, he sends them out to help other people into friendship with Jesus. Third, he sends them with power, enough power to overcome the devil.

Really, we could say that Christianity is about a friendship with Jesus and friendship with others that carries so much power that Satan will never be able to withstand the force of our friendships!

Three

Prayer is Friendship with Jesus

Jesus chose the Twelve primarily "to be his companions." Later, in Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, he tells us that what is important is to "learn Christ" (4: 20). But how will we get to know him by being distant? It takes friendship and friendship takes time - time talking, listening and just being together. And this is prayer.

That's why the Apostle Philip invites us to "come" and "see", that is, to spend time with Jesus every day in mental prayer, talking to him from the heart, sharing with him what we are thinking about and how we feel, and by listening to him.

Pope Benedict in his audience on Philip says something striking, "If this commitment to prayer is lacking, we would be reflected back to ourselves as in a mirror and become more and more lonely!"

If we commit to seek Jesus in prayer, then we will experience a deep friendship with him that will also result in deep friendships with others here on earth and forever in heaven.

If we don't, if we get more and more trapped in our own heads, just thinking and worrying and trying to figure things out on our own instead of going to Jesus, the result will be that we become more and more lonely.

Philip teaches us instead to let ourselves be won over by Jesus, to be with him, and also to invite others to become friends with Christ.

Four

Invite others to meet Jesus in prayer.

Before the Passion, some Greeks who had gone to Jerusalem for the Passover "came to Philip... and said to him, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus'. Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew went with Philip and they told Jesus" (cf. Jn 12: 20-22).

This teaches us always to be ready to accept questions and requests, whoever they come from, and then direct them to the Lord, the only one who can fully satisfy them.

It happens so often that people tell us about difficult, painful, or frustrating things in their life. We should say to them "I promise I will speak to the Lord for you." And then tell them, "But you can also speak to him directly." Then ask them "Have you talked to Jesus about this?"

It is important to know that the prayers of those who approach us are not ultimately addressed to us, but to the Lord. It is to Him that we must direct anyone in need.

Five

Friendship with others

Because Nathaniel was friends with Philip, Philip introduced him to Jesus. Friendship is the bridge because people come to God through other people. But where do we begin?

People are used to book clubs but most people never stay up on the reading. So how about this...Invite a small group of family and friends to get together at your house for drinks or desert, or get them together on Zoom or some platform, catch up with one another in friendship, then take one of these Rosaries, play it or print out the transcript and read the meditation just like I do and pray together. And then ask them what I ask Teresa, "What struck you during the meditation? What did it make you think of and why?"

When I am with family and friends we have a little conversation at the end of each point of meditation and then we pray the decade. In this way, we weave friendship, good conversation, and the Rosary all together. I image that's what it was like between Jesus, the Apostles, and the Holy Women who traveled with them.