May 3, 2021

Good Morning All,

1. Today's Readings: Feast of Saints Philip and James, Apostles | USCCB

2. The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus: Today we celebrate the Feast day, not just a memorial, of two of the apostles, Philip and James. Although there is no full evidence for the identity of James, the three men in the New Testament by this name (James, the son of Alpheus, and James, the brother of the Lord, and James, the son of Mary of Clopas) are often viewed as one and the same person. But there are those who dispute this.

Noteworthy is St. James' holy life, one that spanned 96 years. It is known that people used to strive with each other to touch the hem of his garment.

3. Quotes of the Day:

~ Prayer to St. Philip
O Glorious Saint Philip, at the Last Supper you said to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father and it will be enough for us." Help us to make this our prayer also and to seek God in all things. Obtain for us the grace to know the Father and Jesus Christ whom he has sent - for in this does eternal life consist.

~ Prayer to St. James the Less
O Glorious St. James, you were our Lord's cousin and at the same time his friend and follower. You wrote that every good and perfect gift comes to us from the Father of lights, and that faith without works is useless. You preached the divinity of Jesus until your death as a martyr. Obtain for us from the Father of lights the great gift of a living faith in Jesus' divinity which will inspire us to unstinting labor in the service of God and our fellow human beings and enable us to reach our heavenly destiny.

St. Philip, Pray for Us!
St. James, Pray for Us!
St. Joseph, Pray for Us!

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Feast of Sts. Philip and James

For centuries, the Catholic Church had special feasts to honor only four of the apostles: Sts. Peter and Paul, St. John the Evangelist, and St. Andrew, the brother of Peter. The Church memorialized the remaining apostles all together on June 29. But in the sixth century, the bodies of Sts. Philip and James were brought to Rome from the East and were laid to rest in the Basilica of the Holy Apostles. Since they arrived together at the same location, the Church instituted a single feast day for both apostles.

The saint named James whom we celebrate today was often referred to as "St. James the Less" to distinguish him from the other apostle named James, who was the brother of John. This nickname likely refers to his younger age, not that he was any less important. In fact, this James was referred to as "the brother of the Lord," because his mother was related to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Tradition says that James authored the eponymous epistle, which is perhaps best known for the line, "[F]aith without works is dead" (Jas 2:20). Martin Luther

famously hated this canonical book because it challenged his belief that justification came through faith alone.

The Catholic Church also derives the Sacrament of the Sick from the book of James since it says, "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up" (Jas 5:14-15).

Saint James became the bishop of the Church in Jerusalem and played a central role in the Church's first council (Acts 15). He confirmed the decision that the Gentiles need not undergo circumcision to follow Christ.

Because of his piety, James earned the nickname "the Just One." He remained a virgin all his life, he never shaved, never cut his hair, nor did he ever consume alcohol or meat. He never wore anything ostentatious, but always a simple linen garment. Since he prostrated himself so much in prayer, he developed callouses on his knees and forehead.

In 62 A.D., the Jewish leaders accused James of breaking the Law and delivered him to the mob. He was taken to the top of the Temple and pressured to deny his claim, before all, that Jesus was the Messiah. Of course, James refused, and instead, he affirmed his belief that Jesus would return to judge the world on the Last Day. The Jewish leaders had him pushed off the battlements of the Temple. Though bruised by his fall, James garnered enough strength to kneel in prayer. As he begged God to forgive his executioners, they violently rained stones down upon him. He finally succumbed to death after someone struck him on the head with a club.

As for St. Philip, he was one of the first of the 12 apostles called by Christ. The day after the Lord called the first apostles, Peter and Andrew, He found Philip in Galilee. Unlike St. James the Less who remained a virgin, Philip was a married man and father to several daughters at the time of his calling.

Philip was one of the first apostles to come to faith directly through Christ with no intermediary person. Simon Peter found the Lord through Andrew, and Nathanael was brought to the Lord by Philip, himself. John's Gospel says, "Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow Me.'" (Jn 1:43) It continues, "Philip found Nathanael and told him, 'We have found the one Moses wrote about

in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote - Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (Jn 1:45). Philip believed in Christ as soon as he encountered Him, after hearing only a couple of words. So powerful was Philip's newfound faith that he felt compelled to bring another into Christ's fellowship, too.

In response to Philip's invitation, Nathanael responds, "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" This question prompts Philip to deliver one of his most memorable lines in Scripture, "Come and see" (Jn 1:46).

Three days later, Philip joins some other apostles to attend the wedding at Cana and witnesses Christ's first miracle, solidifying his faith in Christ.

Also, Scripture says, "When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, 'Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?' He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. Philip answered him, 'It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!'"(Jn 6:5-7).

Christ tests Philip because a few moments later, Jesus multiplies five loaves and two fish into enough food to feed five thousand men.

Philip also speaks during the Last Supper in the Gospel of John after Jesus says, "No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." To which Philip replies, "Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us" (Jn 14:6-8).

Jesus answers, "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father and that the Father is in me?'" (Jn 14:9-10). Both of these examples in the Gospel of John prove that despite Philip's initially quick ascent to faith in Christ, his faith remains feeble through most of the Gospel. But Philip's example reminds us that God can use us effectively in spite of our weaknesses.

In the end, Philip followed in the footsteps of James the Less and many of the other apostles by being martyred for his faith in Christ. After preaching with Bartholomew

in Greece, he was scourged, imprisoned, and ultimately crucified upside down in 62 A.D.

Though Philip and James served as apostles of Christ in significantly different ways, in the end, they both gave their lives for Christ and today, continue to rest in the Basilica of the Holy Apostles, awaiting their glorious resurrection. Saints Philip and James, pray for us!

Source: thedivinemercy.org