

May 3: Saints Philip and James, Apostles

Gospel for May 3rd, feast of Saints Philip and James, and commentary.

Gospel (*Jn* 14:6-14)

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; henceforth you know him and have seen him.”

Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied.”

Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know

me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else believe me for the sake of the works themselves.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; if you ask anything in my name, I will do it.”

Commentary

First of all, perhaps it is worth highlighting that our Lord's statement – “No one comes to the Father, but by me” – can also be stated in positive terms: “Everyone can reach the Father through me.” Let us also recall another sentence with the same grammatical structure, written in the negative: “Without me you can do nothing” (*Jn* 15:5), which really means “with Him we can do everything.” These are not only linguistic issues. Rather we want to thoroughly understand our Lord's advice, in order to put it into practice more faithfully.

The first sentence in today's Gospel passage is Jesus' response to Thomas' question about the meaning of his words: “You know the way where I am going” (*Jn* 14:4). Philip then makes a further request, thanks to which we are given a clear guideline for our life on earth. Our final goal is to return to the house of the Father.

God has created us and we will return to Him if we are faithful. Jesus himself is the Way, the only one, that leads to the Father.

Saint Josemaría always strove in his life of piety to follow this itinerary. He also advised all those who asked for guidance in their spiritual life to do the same. Jesus tells us that he is the Way and that, if we turn to him and strive to say close to him, he will lead us to the Father, to God the Father. He always advised us to seek in everything and for everything the solid foundation of our divine filiation. Not only at certain moments in life, for example, when setbacks and difficulties arise, but also in our ordinary daily lives.

As he tells us in one of his homilies: “Haven’t you noticed in families how children, even without realizing it, imitate their parents? They imitate their gestures, their habits; much of

their behavior is the same as that of their parents. Well, the same kind of thing happens to a good son or daughter of God. One finds oneself acquiring – without knowing how, or by what means – a marvelous godliness, which enables us to focus events from the supernatural viewpoint of faith; we come to love all men as our Father in Heaven loves them and, what is more important, we become more fervent in our daily efforts to come closer to God. Our wretchedness, I insist, doesn't matter, because we have the loving arms of our Father God to lift us up.” (*Friends of God*, no. 146).

Let us ask Saints Philip and James the Less to help us come to know our Lord Jesus Christ even better, so that he may lead us to the Father, already in this world. Let us also ask the Virgin Mary to teach us to treat with the greatest possible intimacy her Divine Son, in his Holy Humanity.

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