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Gospel for 5 January: Under the Fig tree

Gospel for January 5th, and
commentary.

Gospel (*Jn* 1:43-51)

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. And he found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.”

Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip 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.” Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of

Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”

Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile!”

Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?” Jesus answered him,

“Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”

Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

Jesus answered him, “Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these.” And he said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”

Commentary

The Gospel for today's Mass is the continuation of the passage we read yesterday. Our Lord continues to call his apostles and today it is the turn of Philip and Nathanael, who later will be known as Bartholomew.

Just as happened with Andrew, who immediately went to tell his brother Peter about his encounter with Jesus, today it is Philip who, after being called by the Master and sensing the love in his Heart, runs to tell his friend Nathanael. Scripture is filled with examples of people who acted as mediators for others to encounter God.

In a society like today's, these examples of mediators between God and other people can imbue us with trust in the saving force that God has over the world and over each of us.

Christians are called to love God above all things, and therefore to make known to others the beauty of

the gift that fills our own heart. But we should never forget that our Lord is the only one who can move hearts and that he does it as he wants and when he wants, always counting on each person's freedom.

With Nathanael, a true Israelite “in whom there is no guile” (v. 47), our Lord does so thanks to a mysterious comment that reaches the depths of his heart. We don't know what happened under the fig tree. Philip probably didn't know either, but Nathanael does. Our Lord knows us better than we know ourselves. And He, the Lord of time, knows when and how to best reach each person's heart.

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