August 24th: Feast of Saint Bartholomew, Apostle

Gospel text (*Jn* 1:45-51): ...Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, “Here is a true child of Israel. There is no duplicity in him.” Nathanael said to him, “How do you know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, I saw you under the fig tree.” Nathanael answered him, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel...”

St. Bartholomew, apostle

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Today, we contemplate Nathanael’s avowal, traditionally identified with the Apostle Bartholomew. His confession of faith stands out: "Rabbi, You are the Son of God, You are the King of Israel". This confession has the function of opening the way to the fourth Gospel, since it offers a first and important step on the path of adherence to Christ.

Bartholomew recognizes Jesus both by His special relationship with God the Father, of whom He is the only begotten Son, as well as by His relationship with the people of Israel, of whom He is called King, an attribution proper of the awaited Messiah. These two elements are essential: If we proclaim only the heavenly dimension of Jesus, we run the risk of making Him an ethereal and evanescent being. If we would only recognize His concrete role in history, we run the risk of neglecting His divine dimension, which is His proper description.

—St. Bartholomew, please mediate so that —by emulating your discreet passing through life— I may know how to hold on to God and bear witness to Him without performing astonishing works: Jesus is the extraordinary one!