May 3rd: Feast of Saints Philip and James, Apostles

Gospel text (*Jn* 14:6-14): Jesus said to Thomas, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” Philip said to him, “Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever 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 is in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father. And whatever you ask in my name, I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything of me in my name, I will do it.”

“I am the way and the truth and the life. If you know me, then you will also know my Father”

Fr. Joan SOLÀ i Triadú
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Today, we celebrate the feast of Philip and James, Apostles. The Gospel refers to those conversations Jesus used to have just with the Apostles, with the purpose of giving them a clear idea about himself and his mission on Earth. This was necessary because the Apostles were very much imbued with the ideas the Jews maintained about the Messiah: they expected a worldly and political liberator, whereas Jesus' person did not match up at all with any of those preconceived images.

The first words we read in today's Gospel are in reply to a question by the Apostle Thomas. “I am the way and the truth and the life. If you know me, then you will also know my Father.” This reply to Thomas gives way to Philip's request: “Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.” Jesus' answer is —in fact— a reprimand: “Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip?”

The Apostles could not quite understand the unity between the Father and Jesus; they did not quite realize Jesus is God and Man in one person. But He does not limit himself to proving his equality with the Father; He also reminds them they are to keep on carrying out his saving work: He confers upon them the

power to do miracles, He promises them that He will forever be with them and that everything they ask in his name, He will do.

But Jesus' answers to the Apostles are also intended for all of us. Saint Josemaria Escrivá says, when commenting on this text: "'I am the way, the truth and the life'. With these unmistakable words the Lord has shown us, which is the path that leads to eternal happiness … He points it out for all men and women, but especially He emphasizes it for those who, as you and I, have told him we have decided seriously to take up our Christian vocation."

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "Christ in person is the way, therefore He says: I am the way. Which has a very true explanation, since through Him we can approach the Father." (Saint Thomas Aquinas)

- "Philip teaches us to let ourselves be conquered by Jesus, to be with Him and also to invite others to share this indispensable company; and, seeing, finding God, to find true life." (Benedict XVI)

- "God 'desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth': (1Tim 2:4), that is, of Christ Jesus. Christ must be proclaimed to all nations and individuals, so that this revelation may reach to the ends of the earth" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 74)