

May 3rd: Philip and James, apostles

Gospel text (Jn 14,6-14): Jesus said, «I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me. If you know me, you will know the Father also; indeed you know him and you have seen him». Philip asked him, «Lord, show us the Father and that is enough». Jesus said to him, «What! I have been with you so long and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever sees me sees 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?

»All that I say to you, I do not say of myself. The Father who dwells in me is doing his own work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; at least believe it on the evidence of these works that I do. Truly, I say to you, the one who believes in me will do the same works that I do; and he will even do greater than these, for I am going to the Father. Everything you ask in my name, I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. And everything you ask in calling upon my Name, I will do».

«I am the way, the truth and the life. If you know me, you will know the Father also»

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Today, we celebrate the feast of Philip and James, Apostles. The Gospel refers to those chats Jesus used to have with the Apostles only, with the purpose of giving them a clear idea about himself and his Mission on Earth. For the Apostles were very much imbued with the ideas Jews maintained about the Messiah: they expected a terrestrial and political liberator, whereas Jesus' person did not meet 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, the truth and the life. If you know me, you will know the Father also» (Jn 14:6). This reply to Thomas gives way to Philip request: «Lord, show us the Father and that is enough» (Jn 14:8). Jesus' answer is—in actual fact—a reprimand: «What! I have been with you so long and you still do not know me, Philip?» (Jn 14:9).

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 prove 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 they will forever be with him, 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 says, when commenting 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, but especially He emphasizes it for those who, as you and I, have told him we are decided to take up seriously our Christian vocation».