

**24. August 2019**  
**St. Bartholomew**  
**“To proclaim unafraid the Gospel”**

***Jn 1:45-51***

***Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph, from Nazareth.' Nathanael said to him, 'From Nazareth? Can anything good come from that place?' Philip replied, 'Come and see.' When Jesus saw Nathanael coming he said of him, 'There, truly, is an Israelite in whom there is no deception.' Nathanael asked, 'How do you know me?' Jesus replied, 'Before Philip came to call you, I saw you under the fig tree.' Nathanael answered, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God, you are the king of Israel.' Jesus replied, 'You believe that just because I said: I saw you under the fig tree. You are going to see greater things than that.' And then he added, 'In all truth I tell you, you will see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending over the Son of man.'***

"A man without falsehood". This is a high praise of Jesus for Nathanael, who is one and the same person with the Apostle Bartholomew.

The following description is an excerpt by Otto Bitschnau OSB

*Bartholomew remained the faithful companion of Jesus throughout his public life and eyewitness of his miracles, his suffering, his death and his resurrection from the tomb, received the Holy Spirit on the feast of Pentecost with the other apostles, and was a very diligent proclaimer of the holy gospel. Tradition describes the three great countries as the scene of his apostolic works. India, Phrygia and Greater Armenia, where he suffered the martyrdom for Jesus, his master, in the city of Albanopolis, not far from the Caspian Sea, around the year 71.*

*The reason for the martyrdom is told in the following way:*

*Bartholomew performed in this country great miracles on the sick and the possessed. When King Polymius received a letter from this, he asked the*

*Apostle to heal his daughter, who had to be placed in strong chains because of her tantrums. Bartholomew came and, through a short prayer, freed the princess from the evil spirit. The joy of this miracle was extraordinary throughout the city. The overjoyed king wanted to give the apostle gifts of gold and precious rock; But he rejected all things with the words: "It was not the desire for gold and silver that brought me into this land: but the desire for the happiness of souls: I do not desire that you should give me the treasures of your kingdom, but that you should make the treasures of the kingdom of heaven by renouncing idolatry and knowing the One God of heaven and earth." Then he proclaimed Jesus, the crucified, and added, "To prove that your gods are only devils speaking out of your dead images, we will go into the temple, and I will compel the devil to publicly confirm the truth of my words." The bidding pleased, and the king with a great many people accompanied him to the main temple of the goddess Astaroth.*

*In the name of Jesus, Bartholomew commanded her to profess aloud who she was. With a grisly howl she confessed, "I am a devil, and I have so far deceived the king and his people: there is only one God whom he proclaims to you."*

*Bartholomew therefore commanded this devil to destroy all the idols of the whole city. And behold, at the hour the idols were found in all the temples. At this event, the king, his family, and many inhabitants of the kingdom were baptized.*

*The idolatrous priests, who saw their prestige destroyed, burned in deadly hatred against Bartholomew, sought and found in Astyages, the king's brother, who ruled part of Armenia, a mighty confederate.*

*He expressed the desire to get to know Christianity and invited the Bartholomew to himself. But when the apostle appeared before him, he angrily approached him, immediately offering to the gods, or dying. Bartholomew refused, and Astyages ordered his skin to be ripped off and only then his head cut off.*

*The holy body of the Apostle was buried honorably by the Christians, later came to Dora in Mesopotamia, where Emperor Justin built a magnificent church in his honor; at the time of the Saracens to Benevent, and Emperor Otto II brought several of his relics to Rome.*

*St. Bartholomew is especially revered as the patron saint of sinners; for because he suffered the most cruel and painful of all martyrs, he exercised the most sublime generosity, praying excellently for the conversion of sinners.*

As far some aspects of the life of St. Apostle.

So we see how the St. Apostle, the true Israelite and man without falsehood, remained faithful to his vocation. The proclamation of the Gospel goes along with the expulsion of the idols behind which the demons hide in order to deceive men.

It is important that we are aware of this today. Neither has anything changed in the urgency of the proclamation of the Gospel, which is to be proclaimed without falsehood on behalf of the Lord, nor have idols disappeared and demons with them. Even in ecclesiastical circles this seems to be less and less present, for example, if one looks for questionable healing methods, seeks esoteric contents and practices, even lets oneself be blessed by shamans.

The clarity and sincerity with which the apostle in the above description shows the incompatibility of the Gospel with the deceptions of the dark spirits must also return to the Church. What is in harmony with the Gospel and the Catholic faith and what is not, where are inadmissible mixtures and deceptions? One can not, for example, emphasize the good values in other religions one-sidedly without also perceiving their errors or shortcomings.

The uniqueness of the proclamation of the Messiah, the Redeemer of all human beings, must not be abandoned for a general religious structure in which all religions are willed by God in equal measure.

May St. Bartholomew, through his intercession and example, ask us the courage to proclaim the Gospel in wisdom and boldly and to pray with us for the conversion of sinners.