

## Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Aug 24th 2017

Feast of Saint Bartholomew, Apostle

"This man is a real Israelite. There is no guile in him."

This simple portrait of guile-less Bartholomew can give us all great hope and a great challenge.

"Guile" is defined as "deceitful cunning." Bartholomew becomes a disciple through his simplicity, rather than through any cleverness.

I remember a dinner I had with a young man who was interning at a prestigious law firm. He was being "wined and dined" and shown all the perks. He has seen things, gone to places, sat in the best seats, had people treat him with extraordinary respect. And, he was making many times what he ever made before.

I was proud of him and marveling at his good fortune and delighting in hearing of all of the good things that were coming his way. But then he paused and told me he wasn't sure about it all. As he was experiencing his new status and all the privileges that come with it, he was beginning to ask himself some serious questions. "I'm wondering how all of this might change me."

I listened with absolute fascination as he told me that the people he worked with were wonderful people. He wasn't being judgemental about them. He was just pausing, reflectively, at the entry way of a very seductive experience. It was attractive, exciting, and an opportunity he had worked hard for. Everything and everyone around him was telling him that he "deserved" all of this. But, some movement deep inside of him was telling him that it was a bit "dangerous." "All of this just has to affect how a person sees the world, sees other people." He didn't want to go forward without being a bit wary of the "good things" coming his way.

My respect for this young man grew to the level of inspiration. He in-spired me because I felt the breath of the Holy Spirit as he spoke. There was a simplicity and deep faith here. I felt I was admiring what Jesus admired in Bartholomew.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if each of us could desire some level of innocence and freedom before the things that beckon us, seductively?

Dear Lord, give me the grace I need today to see clearly. Simplify my heart. Restore in me a new innocence. Let me ask simple questions about the choices before me - where they will lead. And, help me purify my desiring. Heal my lust for more things, more comfort, more respect, more power. Let me know your love and your grace, and I will be rich enough, and ask for nothing more.

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