

Reflection Monday Week 21 – St Bartholomew 2020

Although there is still debate about Nathanael and Bartholomew being the same person, it is generally accepted that they are. The name Bartholomew means *Son of Tholmai (or farmer)*. Tradition has it that he was skinned alive and has been made a patron of the sick. Nathanael means *God given* often understood as *gift of God*. He was a forthright man who as Jesus said lacked guile or deceit. Yet was willing to acknowledge openly his mistake about Jesus. Although little is known about his life, his character stands before us as a lesson to be open, honest and upright; essential qualities of a follower of Christ. He was certainly one whom we would want to be a pillar of the Church. Jesus said he recognised him even before he was called, through Philip, to come to Jesus. We are also numbered among those who are called so we can be certain that Jesus knows our qualities and how we can best serve him today. Let us say with the psalmist, as *"Your friends, O Lord, we want to make known the glorious splendour of your reign."* There is a story about the people of Lipari, an Italian Island, who celebrated his feast annually. The people would take the solid silver and gold statue from the Cathedral of St Bartholomew and carry it through the town. On one occasion, while taking the statue down to the town, it became very heavy and had to be set down. When the men regained their strength, they lifted it a second time. After a short while, it became even heavier. They set it down. In attempting to pick it up once more they couldn't. Seconds later, walls further downhill collapsed. If the statue had been carried as normal, many townspeople would have been killed!! . . . Be that as it may let us remember, like Saint Bartholomew, that the Lord *"is close to all who call him, who call on him from their hearts."*

Honestly . . .

A preacher giving a sermon on temperance said: *"If I had all the beer in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river."* With greater emphasis he then said, *"And if I had all the wine in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river."* And then finally, he said, *"And if I had all the whiskey in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river."* He sat down. The song leader then stood up very cautiously and announced with a smile, *"For our closing song, let us sing Hymn 365: **"Shall We Gather at the River."***