

Reflection Monday Easter week 5 Sts Philip & James 2021

Saints Philip and James, Apostles. Philip was born at Bethsaida and was originally a disciple of John the Baptist. After the Baptist's death he followed Christ. James the son of Alphaeus is called "James the Less", to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee. James "the brother of the Lord" ruled the Church in Jerusalem; wrote an epistle; led an austere life; and converted many Jews to the Faith. He was crowned with martyrdom in 62AD. Jerome held these two Jameses to be the same person, and this was the prevailing opinion when the feast of Philip and James was instituted in 560. Nowadays scholars prefer to divide them, in which case we might think of today as being the feast of Philip and James and James.

Jesus said to his disciples and says to us, "*If you ask for anything in my name, I will do it.*" This seems too good to be true. Jesus has just been telling his disciples that he came to do the will of the Father and that the Father is working in and through him in everything he does. Made in the image of God and baptised, we too wish to do the will of the Father and this is our fundamental prayer. All our prayers and requests of God end with *if this is the will of God*, the will of the Father. This is what motivated Jesus, motivated his disciples and motivates us. What helped his followers in those early days was their encounter with Jesus after the resurrection and our Easter season is about seeking the guidance, help and grace we need to recognise the presence of Jesus in those around us and in creation.

One way to recognise God's presence is through gratitude. Make up your mind to see the blessings in your life, no matter how small, and they will change your thinking and emotions. Your gratitude will let "*the sunshine in.*" You will feel more peaceful, more content, because you choose to see what you have, not what you don't have. Then, you will begin to see God's hand behind those blessings and discover how to recognize God's presence through gratitude. Remember, even the smallest things – a cup of cold water, food, a good night's sleep, a cheery greeting – in anything and everything, give thanks to God.