

Homily  
Feast of Saints Philip and James, Apostles  
May 3, 2024

St. Philip was one of the first Apostles, bringing Nathanael along with him. Jesus tested him at the feeding of the great crowd. Philip takes the Greeks request to Andrew who then together go to Jesus. And today, Philip tells Jesus to, "Show us the Father..." And he is mentioned as one of the Apostles who returned from the Ascension of the Lord to await the coming of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem. He is believed to be one of the seven original deacons and he was martyred as our Lord, by crucifixion.

James the Lesser, called "the brother of the Lord," was a fuller, preparing the sheared rough wool and making it soft for the clothing of the time. Tradition holds James was clubbed to death, likely by a fuller's club. He was Bishop of Jerusalem indicating his prominence among the Apostles because of the importance of Jerusalem as the cradle or birthplace of Christianity.

Not much more is known about these two of the original twelve, who walked and talked with Him and witnessed the Lord in His earthly ministry. Yet we hold them in a special place today.

When I was in college, I worked for the administration doing odd jobs. One time a friend and I were tasked with reducing the files of previous students. Each file had the student's entire collegiate career in a manila folder, and we removed all but their academic transcripts. I wonder today who tossed my file.

The lives of great men and women are often bound between two pieces of cardboard in the form of a biography. And more often than not, the lives of great men and women are nearly forgotten except in the memories of their children and grandchildren. Sadly, I barely know the names of my great-grandparents. But God knows us, down to the number of hairs on our heads.

We are merely creatures, fallen and suffering, struggling in this life with a constant barrage of concerns, health, family, money, the list goes on. Yes, God knows us, cares for us, loves us. He sent His only Son who died for us, making way to life abundant. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me... whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, ... If you ask anything of me in my name, I will do it."

You and I may do many great things, and maybe, just maybe, our great-grandchildren will remember, but God does not forget. He remembers you, He knows you, He loves you and He wants you to be with Him for eternity. We just need to believe.