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| St. Bartholomew – August 24 |
| Revelation 21:9-14 |
| John 1:45-51 |

**A. Text/Context**

* There is very little to know about the apostle St. Bartholomew because there are very few writings written about the life of this apostle that are existent today
* But the scholars have agreed that St. Bartholomew is identified as Nathaniel. The call of Nathaniel is also identified with the call of the apostles
* Nathaniel is known in the gospel because he followed Jesus secretly but faithfully thus identifying him as an apostle
* As the gospel puts it when Jesus saw Nathaniel he said: Here is a true child of Israel. There is no duplicity in him
* From that alone with the special words of Jesus for Nathaniel Jesus already shows him some kind of a special prophetic favor
* Jesus knows that this man Nathaniel or Bartholomew shall be delegated for the future apostolic ministry
* And what did Nathaniel say? Rabbi, you are the son of God. You are the king of Israel
* This is just a confirmation that Nathaniel is already destined to become an apostle of Jesus

**B. Human Situation**

* Well, I think you have already experienced meeting people for the first time only and you feel that such person is genuine
* What I mean is the persona, the bearing of the person, the ways and manners of the one you meet leaves you an impression that this person is good because you feel it from the inside
* Even if it’s just the first time you meet the person and you immediately feel at ease with him or her
* This is what happened when Philip introduced Nathaniel to Jesus
* Jesus felt that Nathaniel is a true follower without blemish
* You know people who only have the purity of intentions and motivations exude a certain aura of holiness which makes people around them feel at ease and comfortable
* Nathaniel or St. Bartholomew is one of these. And of course the rest of the apostles have different characters because they came from different backgrounds
* There are those who are so impatient like James and John. When they were refused entry into Samaria they want the Lord to rain fire on the people
* Peter is a little talkative that is why he is the spokesman of the group. I will follow you Lord (of course Peter denied him at the last moment)
* One unidentified disciple also draw his sword during the arrest of Jesus in Gethsemane cutting the ears of one of the arresting soldiers
* Jesus replaced it back telling his disciple those who use the sword will die with it
* Jesus must be so amused with the different characters of his disciples. But here they are, they are chosen in very mysterious ways
* God choses the ordinary people in order to become his apostles
* You see if we would play our own role of choosing our own apostles surely the standards used by the Lord would not pass
* Jesus has chosen insignificant people. Peter is a fisherman without any education at all. And there were many fisherman chosen as apostles and just the same they have no education at all
* Jesus has also chosen Matthew. Who is Matthew? He is a tax collector and tax collectors at that time are considered corrupt
* If we base it with our own standards nobody would qualify because if we will do the selection we will always look for the best
* The most brilliant, the most intelligent, the most well rounded personality, the most beautiful complexion, the most with the charisma and appeal that would make a good leader and plenty of followers
* Now we can see the difference between the standards of the world and the standards of God how different they are
* God chooses the lowly, the insignificant. God chooses the humble and the silent. God chooses the person who counts nothing before the eyes of the people
* God does not look on the physical attributes of the person. God looks at the heart of the person
* God does not care of how we look. That is why if we care so much of ourselves we become very vain. Too much vanity is sinful because we become selfish because we only think of ourselves
* If we are beautiful or handsome let it go beyond the skin. Let the beauty radiates from the inside
* So if St. Bartholomew is chosen as an apostle as his mission, even though he only follows Christ in secret, it is also the same with us. We are also given a mission to do
* And the greatest mission that we have to do is to follow God’s commandment: love God above all things and love your neighbor as you love yourself
* We must love and treat our neighbor without any discrimination because everything God has created has a purpose and nobody must discriminate

**C. Challenge**

* In this feast of St. Bartholomew we are called to be holy right in the very state of life where we belong
* God already knows all our weaknesses and shortcomings, all the limitations that we have but he is not repulsed with that
* God looks at our own efforts to follow his will to love our neighbor
* God is so mysterious he even makes use of our weakness to make his power made manifest so we will be able to do our own mission
* If other people perform better than us, we must not get discouraged. As long as we do our duties with the right intentions, and we commit honest mistakes God will always consider our limitation
* The more important part is to do our mission according to the moral standards of a good Christian
* Then as the 1st reading tells us, the apostles are rewarded with the glory of the new Jerusalem
* We will also receive our own reward that goes beyond this lifetime