

St. Philip the Apostle
Roman Catholic Church

Saturday, January 2, 2021

-- Memorial of Saints Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen,
Bishops and Doctors of the Church

First Reading: 1 John 2:22-28

Beloved: Who is the liar? Whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Whoever denies the Father and the Son, this is the antichrist. Anyone who denies the Son does not have the Father, but whoever confesses the Son has the Father as well.

Let what you heard from the beginning remain in you. If what you heard from the beginning remains in you, then you will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that he made us: eternal life. I write you these things about those who would deceive you. As for you, the anointing that you received from him remains in you, so that you do not need anyone to teach you. But his anointing teaches you about everything and is true and not false; just as it taught you, remain in him.

And now, children, remain in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not be put to shame by him at his coming.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 98:1, 2-3, 3-4

All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

Sing to the Lord a new song,
for he has done wondrous deeds;
His right hand has won victory for him,
his holy arm. ***R/.***

The Lord has made his salvation known:
in the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice.
He has remembered his kindness and his faithfulness
toward the house of Israel. ***R/.***

All the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation by our God.
Sing joyfully to the Lord, all you lands;
break into song; sing praise. ***R/.***



Gospel: John 1:19-28

This is the testimony of John. When the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to him to ask him, “Who are you?” He admitted and did not deny it, but admitted, “I am not the Christ.” So they asked him, “What are you then? Are you Elijah?” And he said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” He answered, “No.” So they said to him, “Who are you, so we can give an answer to those who sent us? What do you have to say for yourself?” He said: “I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.” Some Pharisees were also sent. They asked him, “Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ or Elijah or the Prophet?” John answered them, “I baptize with water; but there is one among you whom you do not recognize, the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie.” This happened in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

Reflection

I am not the Messiah. (John 1:20)

Imagine how tempting it might have been! A delegation from Israel’s leaders come to John the Baptist and ask if he is a prophet or the promised Messiah. *You keep saying and doing messianic things, they say. Why not just come right out and proclaim yourself the Messiah?*

With all this pressure, maybe John felt tempted to take up the mantle of the Messiah for himself. Imagine the difference he could have made if he did. He already had a group of devoted followers and was admired by the general population. What if he led a march on Jerusalem to unseat the king? He could make it much easier for Jesus if he did. With Herod gone, Jesus could easily ascend the throne and restore the line of David. The age of the Messiah would begin — and John would be the one to usher it in!

But John knew he had a different role to play, so he refused whatever temptations he may have faced. Rather than prepare a *throne* for Jesus, he would prepare people’s *hearts* for him. Rather than stage a coup that would put him at Jesus’ side, he would remain by the river and continue pointing to Jesus. He would stay in the background and die a martyr’s death without even seeing the fulfillment of all he had announced.

It’s not always easy to accept God’s plan for us. Sometimes we envision ourselves doing great things for God — and getting recognized and praised for it in the process. But no opportunities present themselves, and we go unnoticed. Or sometimes we are tempted to shrink back when the cross we are called to carry seems too heavy to bear.

When situations like these come up, remember John the Baptist and stand firm. Trust that, like John, you can be a far more effective voice announcing the good news if you stay faithful to your call than if you try to forge your own path. Believe that Jesus is trustworthy; he will reward you for your faithfulness.

Thank you, Lord, for the steadfast witness of your servant, John. Help me to hold fast to my calling when I am tempted to go my own way.

An Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus,
I believe that You
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament
I love You above all things,

and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment
receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there
and unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen.

Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel

St. Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle.
Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil.
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,
and do thou,
O Prince of the heavenly hosts,
by the power of God,
thrust into hell Satan,
and all the evil spirits,
who prowl about the world
seeking the ruin of souls.
Amen.