

his death. The predominant tradition is that Bartholomew converted Polymius, King of Armenia, to Christianity and it was for this that he was martyred; that he was flayed alive and then beheaded on the order of the Armenian king, Astyages, Polymius' brother, who feared Roman reprisals. Another tradition is that he was martyred by being crucified upside down, like St Peter. There is a ruined 13th century monastery dedicated to Bartholomew in Vapurakan, Greater Armenia (now in Turkey). Bartholomew is one of the patron saints of the Armenian Apostolic Church. However, there is no record of any Armenian King Polymius of the Arsacid dynasty which ruled Armenia from 12 A.D. to 428 A.D. Current scholars (see e.g. Frances Spilman's 2017 *"The Twelve: Lives & Legends of the Apostles"*) suggest that Bartholomew probably died in Kalyan in India, where there was an official named "Polymius". Kalyan is a small city not far from Bombay (Mumbai).

Some of Bartholomew's relics are said to be in the Basilica of San Bartolomeo in Benevento, near Naples. Other relics were sent to Rome by Otto II, the Holy Roman Emperor, in 983 A.D. and are in the Church of San Bartolomeo all'Isola. This church is founded on the site of the temple of the Greek god, Asclepius, the god of medicine, healing and physicians. Hence the association of St Bartholomew with a number of hospitals, including, of course, St Barts in the City of London. **-Stephen S.**

Entrance antiphon: My eyes are always on the Lord, for he rescues my feet from the snare. Turn to me and have mercy on me, for I am alone and poor.

First Reading: Exodus 17: 3-7

Psalm 32: Response: O that today you would listen to his voice: 'Harden not your hearts'.

Second Reading: Romans 5: 1-2, 5-8

Gospel Acclamation: Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God! Lord, you are really the Saviour of the world; give me the living water, so that I may never get thirsty. Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God!

Gospel: John 4:5-42

Memorial Acclamation: Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your cross and resurrection you have set us free.

Communion Antiphon: For anyone who drinks it, says the Lord, the water I shall give will become in him a spring welling up to eternal life.



Third Sunday of Lent

Cycle A, 2023 Weekly Reflection: **The lesser-known apostles: (3) St Bartholomew:**

St Bartholomew is mentioned in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke as one of the Apostles. In the Acts of the Apostles Bartholomew is referred to as one of the Apostles in the upper room after the Ascension. These passages apart, there is no

mention of him in the New Testament. The name, Bartholomew, is a Hebrew family name meaning son of ('Bar') Tolmai. He may well, therefore, have had a first name. Bartholomew is always linked with St Philip in the Apostle lists. Because of these factors tradition has identified Bartholomew as Nathaniel who was introduced to Jesus by Philip at the beginning of His ministry. This is especially so since Nathaniel, whose calling is detailed by St John, does not appear in the Apostle lists. Philip told Nathaniel that they had found the Messiah. When Nathaniel followed Philip to Jesus, Jesus said: *"Behold an Israelite in whom there is no guile"*. Nathaniel asked Jesus how He knew him, and Jesus said that before Philip called him He had seen him under the fig tree. Nathaniel responded: *"Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"* (John 1:47-49). On this basis, Bartholomew's full Hebrew name was Nathaniel Bar Tolmai. It is this Gospel passage which is read on the feast of St Bartholomew. It shows that Bartholomew was a good, honest Jew who had been awaiting the coming of the Messiah. He knew that the prophet Micah had foretold that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem and was therefore initially sceptical when Philip said that Jesus of Nazareth was He. However, on encountering Jesus, Bartholomew was immediately convinced and became an Apostle.

Nothing is known for certain about Bartholomew after the Ascension. Bishop Eusebius and St Jerome in the 4th century relate that a 2nd century Christian visited India and found a Hebrew copy of St Matthew's Gospel which had been taken there by Bartholomew. Early Christian tradition refers to other missions by Bartholomew to Ethiopia, Mesopotamia, Parthia (modern Iran), Lycaonia (modern Turkey) and Armenia. It is not clear how he met