

**From the Fathers:**

**From the Second Vatican Council's pastoral constitution "Gaudium et spes" on the Church in the modern world**

**The foreshadowing of the new age**

We do not know the time when earth and humanity will reach their completion, nor do we know the way in which the universe will be transformed. The world as we see it, disfigured by sin, is passing away. But we are sure that God is preparing a new dwelling place and a new earth. In this new earth righteousness is to make its home, and happiness will satisfy, and more than satisfy, all the yearnings for peace that arise in human hearts. On that day, when death is conquered, the sons of God will be raised up in Christ; what was sown as something weak and perishable will be clothed in incorruption. Love and the fruits of love will remain, and the whole of creation, made by God for man, will be set free from the frustration that enslaves it.

The blessings of human dignity, brotherly communion and freedom will be found again in the world to come, but purified of all stain, resplendent and transfigured, when Christ hands over to the Father an eternal and everlasting kingdom: "a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace." On this earth the kingdom is already present in sign; when the Lord comes it will reach its completion.

**Saints and Heroes: St Bartholomew the Apostle**

On 24th August the Church keeps the Feast of one of the twelve holy Apostles of the Lord, St Bartholomew. Bartholomew is traditionally believed to be Nathaniel whom St Philip brought to meet Jesus, as the Fourth Gospel tells us. Little else is known about him for certain, but it is reported that he was martyred for the Lord in Armenia where he was skinned alive. Many images of St Bartholomew picture him holding his own skin as a witness to his fidelity to Christ. His relics were eventually enshrined on an island in the Tiber that was used as a hospital. Hence, St Bartholomew has always been associated with the sick and with hospitals. St Bartholomew, holy Apostle of the Lord, pray for us!

*Almighty and everlasting God, who didst give to thine Apostle Bartholomew grace truly to believe and to preach thy Word: Grant, we beseech thee, unto thy Church, to love that Word which he believed, and both to preach and receive the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

20<sup>th</sup> August 2023

Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time



In today's Gospel we hear of the Canaanite woman who approaches Jesus and shouts (expressing urgent need, even desperation), 'Sir, Son of David, take pity on me. My daughter is tormented by a devil'. The Lord is initially silent in response – as often God at first appears to be when we pray to him in urgent need – but then he responds after an exchange between them, granting her her petition. The Canaanite woman is, in so many respects, the model of Christian prayer. She exemplifies the proper attitude of prayer - she stands in the place of each of us. Her need is urgent; it is more for another than for herself; she is actively seeking the Lord (we are told that she comes out from that district); and she exhibits both boldness in her encounter with the Saviour as well as humility. The Canaanite woman knows her need of God and yearns for the healing that he alone can give, and so she approaches him with deference, yes, as we must. God is God and we are not. He is totally other, yet calls us to intimacy with him. But this intimacy the woman pursues with resolution and persistence, and so she stands defiantly in her encounter with Jesus as they engage in a back-and-forth until the resolution of healing comes and her prayer granted. Deference and defiance, persistence and patience, searching and finding: this is the attitude of Christian prayer.

*Today's Gospel: St. Matthew 15: 21-28*