

St. Philip & St. James

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Preacher: Fr. Wade Miller

[0 : 00] In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Let me see you. It was six years and nine months ago that we began our journey together.

We started off with six people. So when my family showed up to Blacksburg, there was a real increase in the numerical growth of this church.

And one of the first things we did as a mission was to change our name from St. Francis to St. Phillips. The reason for this change had nothing to do with the name St. Francis.

That is a phenomenal name for a church. It had more to do with trying to be intentional. Focusing on a mission that was striving to connect with people here in this community.

Who desired a faith manifested in beauty and holiness. St. Phillips would be built on the foundation of scripture.

[1 : 11] Rooted, interpreted, and guided in history and the tradition of the church for some 2,000 years. Not on the latest gimmicks or fads.

Nor in one theologian or movement. It was the Apostle Philip who invited Nathaniel to come and see.

We read about that in the first chapter of St. John's Gospel. And this is our mission as well. We want to be a parish that invites people to come and see what a church rooted in her Catholic heritage looks like.

We want to be involved in the community. Whether that be in the food pantry. The pregnancy resource center. Or in the area of education and works of mercy.

The phrase come and see is more than just a catchy slogan. It involves seeing one. One in particular.

[2 : 18] And that one person is our Savior. The Lord Jesus Christ. But if St. Philip the Apostle is responsible for coining the phrase come and see.

We just heard in our Gospel text here in John chapter 14. Where this same disciple is rebuked for being blind to who Jesus really is.

We read in verse 8 of John chapter 14. Philip said to Jesus. Lord show us the Father. And it is sufficient for us.

You see Philip knew that there was something very unique about Jesus. As a matter of fact he would have confessed. That Jesus was the Messiah.

The long awaited King of Israel. The problem is that Philip wanted to see God in all of his glory. And what he failed to see is that Jesus is the glory of the Father.

[3 : 26] Like Moses. Philip wanted to experience that great Shekinah glory. Where the penetrating light of God would permeate and reveal the Father.

But again what Philip failed to grasp here in John chapter 14. Is that to see God.

Is to look upon the face. Of the Son. Jesus. To see God is to see the works of God. And all the miracles.

And all the teachings. And ultimately. Upon the cross. The cross of Jesus Christ. We're living in a time when people want some sort of religious rush.

They want some religious adrenaline. They want to feel God. They want a feeling of euphoria. They want a glimpse of the miraculous.

[4 : 29] They often want a production with feel good music and shiny happy people. People want the rush of the divine.

But very few want the cross of Jesus Christ. Jesus rebuked Philip. And we read here in verses 8 through 10 of John chapter 14 the following.

Jesus says. Have I been with you so long and yet you have not known me Philip. He who has seen me has seen the Father.

So how can you say Philip. Show us the Father. Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me. What Jesus is saying to Philip is that to see the Father is to look upon him.

The Son. The Father and the Son cannot be separated. Although they are two distinct persons. They are one in being.

[5 : 35] One in essence. And they are united in perfect love. With the Holy Spirit. Making up the perfect and loving family. Therefore if anyone wants to know God.

All they have to do is look to Jesus. He is the eternal God. Who has come down in human flesh. Friends our mission. Is to invite people to come and see. And to enter into this loving family. Of the Holy Trinity.

We don't experience some mere force. Or distant deity. We find God. In the God who came to us. In the person of Jesus.

And Jesus reveals himself. By the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit takes simple water. And makes it into a bath of new life.

[6 : 37] Washing away our sin. It's in baptism. It's in baptism. We die with Christ. We are raised with Christ.

And we are raised to walk a new path. A path to eternal life. The Spirit takes bread and wine. And transforms them.

And us. To be partakers. Of that glorified body and blood. Of Jesus. And God forgives our sins. Through our bishops and priests. And he promises us. And he promises us. An eternity of sharing. In this divine family. With all the saints. Who are our brothers and sisters in Christ.

That make up the one holy Catholic. And apostolic church. You see friends. We don't find God in the spectacular.

[7 : 34] We find God through his work on the cross. We find God in the ultimate act of love. The God from all eternity.

Came down to us. Being born of flesh and blood. By the blessed virgin Mary. In order to offer his own life. Out of love.

As a sacrifice. For our sins. And we now mystically enter into the sacrifice. Participating in this once and for all.

Sacrifice of the paschal feast. Every time we partake of the holy Eucharist. And there is where we have communion with God.

Through Jesus. As we are now. Partaking of that love. That divine love. As adopted sons and daughters of God.

[8 : 37] By way of holy baptism. Friends. Today is not about me. It's not.

And quite frankly. It's not about you. It's not about the diocese. It's not about the Anglican province of America.

It's about God's faithfulness. It's about God's faithfulness. And bringing people through baptism. To be a family. People that are aimlessly wandering.

And having no connection. It's bringing them to the ultimate connection and family of God. And it's bringing people to worship in the beauty and holiness of our triune God.

Where life and family has its beginning and its ultimate purpose. Eternal communion. Eternal communion. With the most holy trinity.

[9 : 36] And all the blessed saints. Our prayer should be that when I. When Bishop Chad.

When Bishop Grundorf. When we all breathe our last breath here on earth. This parish. Will continue to be alive and well.

Actively calling on people to come and see. And to worship God through the cross of Jesus Christ. But even though today is not about us.

We are gathered here because. A bishop. Bishop Grundorf.

Believed in what could happen here. In Blacksburg, Virginia. And he took a chance. Some people thought he was crazy.

[10 : 43] Some people might still think he's crazy. He called on the diocese to raise \$150,000. For this mission.

So that we could rebuild and engage this community. And the mission of making Christ known. Therefore, dear friends.

Dear brothers and sisters. May we be good stewards of that investment. For future generations. By inviting others. To come and see.

To come and see God. In the person of Jesus. Made evident by the spirit. Through the sacraments of the church. And may we be a parish. That continues to see baptisms.

Confirmations. Communicates in the Holy Eucharist. Men ordained to holy orders. So that God's people might be unleashed. To call upon others.

[11 : 47] To come and see God. In the face of Jesus. Who is the way. The only way. The truth. The truth. And the life.

Amen. In the name of the Father. And of the Son. Of the Holy Ghost. Amen.