

May 3, 2018 - Ss. James and Philip

[1 Co 15, 1-8; Jn 14, 8-14](#)

H O M I L Y

James is one of the most important figures of the early Church.

This is not James, brother of John, who was killed at the very beginning of the persecution by Herod, even before this one put Peter in jail. It is the other James, who was the head of the Church of Jerusalem. A great authority is recognized to him by everyone, including Peter and Paul.

When Peter is freed from his jail by an angel, and comes to knock at the door of the house of Mary, where many were assembled, he asked them to inform James. When Barnabas and Paul come to Jerusalem reporting how the Gentiles are receiving the Gospel, they go to see Peter and James. At the important meeting of the early Church that took place at that time, and that is called the Council of Jerusalem, Peter spoke first, with authority, but James made the final decision saying: "I have come to the conclusion..."

The other Apostle whom we celebrate today is Philip. He is one of the first apostles called by Jesus. He was from Bethsaida, in Galilee, like Peter. Jesus met him and simply said: "Follow me". And he did. He was almost always the first to react to what Jesus said: When Jesus told the disciples to feed the crowd, Philip did a quick count and said: "Six months' wage would not be enough to buy enough bread..." Shortly before the Passion, when Jesus said that he was going to his Father, Philip said: "Show us the Father, and we will be satisfied"... And this was for Jesus the occasion to reveal more clearly than ever before the depth of his relationship with the Father.

In the Gospel that we have just heard, and which is his response to Philip, Jesus tells us that the Father dwells in him and that he dwells in his Father. This is very important because later on in the same discourse to his disciples, at the last Supper, Jesus will say: "If you love me you will observe my commandments... the Father will love you... We will come and we will make our dwelling in you (monè).

This tells us a lot about the meaning of our monastic life. A monastery is a dwelling place (not a guesthouse, not a hotel). There is an element of stability. But we don't simply dwell in a place. On the contrary: the place is where we dwell in God and God dwells in us. It is a place where we dwell together in God's love.

Document extrait du [site de l'abbaye Notre-Dame de Scourmont](#), qui se trouve sur le territoire de Forges, à sept kilomètres au sud de la ville de Chimay, en Belgique. Notre-Dame de Scourmont est une abbaye de l'Ordre Cistercien de la Stricte Observance.

There could hardly be a more diversified bunch a people than the twelve apostles. They had their tensions, before and after Jesus' death. But together they dwelled in God's love and established the Church. Any monastic community is the gathering of people who have not chosen each other but have been chosen by God to dwell together in his love. It is a transforming love that can perform daily miracles in our life, if we only allow them to be performed.