



BULLETIN INSERTS

August 29, 2021 – Pentecost 14 (B) The Feast of St. Bartholomew the Apostle

The Church celebrated the Feast of St. Bartholomew on August 24.

One of the twelve apostles of Jesus, Bartholomew is known to us only by his being listed among them in the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke. His name means “Son of Tolmai, and according to *Holy Women, Holy Men*, “He is sometimes identified with Nathanael, the friend of Philip, the ‘Israelite without guile’ in John’s Gospel, to whom Jesus promised the vision of angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man” (*Holy Women, Holy Men*, 538).

Unfortunately, this is the only information recorded about Bartholomew across the Gospels; few other historically reliable sources are available. Despite this lack of a reliable historical record, tradition has filled in several details around his travels, ministry, and martyrdom.

This *hagiography*, or writing of the life of a saint, has come to diverse conclusions. Some sources hold that church historians Jerome and Bede knew of a Gospel of Bartholomew, though such a text is lost to us today. Eusebius of Caesarea writes in the third century that a Hebrew text of Matthew’s Gospel was found in India by a traveling philosopher-theologian, attributed by locals to “Bartholomew, one of the Apostles.”

There is also a tradition that Bartholomew, along with the Apostle Jude Thaddeus, brought the gospel to Armenia. While there, they are reputed to have converted Polymius, the king of Armenia, to Christianity, thus enraging the king’s brother, who ordered Bartholomew’s execution. The story holds that the apostle was flayed alive and crucified at Albanopolis, leading to a common (and sometimes grotesque) depiction of the saint as a man or skeleton holding his own skin.

There are at least 18 Episcopal churches named in honor of the saint, from California and the Dominican Republic to Michigan and Georgia. Perhaps the most famous example is St. Bart’s on Park Avenue in New York City, a rare example of Byzantine Revival architecture from 1916 and a National Historic Landmark.



*Detail of St. Bartholomew the Apostle
from Michelangelo's The Last Judgment*

Collect for St. Bartholomew

Almighty and everlasting God, who gave to your apostle Bartholomew grace truly to believe and to preach your Word: Grant that your Church may love what he believed and preach what he taught; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.