

(Jn1:45-51) Bartholomew, also known as Nathanael, received high praise from our Lord in today's gospel. Jesus said, "Here is a true child of Israel. There is no duplicity in him." True to our Lord's assessment of him, Nathanael completely sidesteps the compliment and gets right down to business. "How do you know me?" he asks. Jesus in turn gives him a personal sign that transforms his initial skepticism into firm conviction. "Rabbi," he exclaims in astonishment. "You are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel." We're left in the dark about the particulars of this extraordinary sign. We don't know what the significance was of Jesus seeing Nathanael under the fig tree, but Nathanael did, and all his doubts were resolved instantaneously.

God has given us many public signs that Jesus is Son of God and King of Israel. These include the many ancient prophecies that were marvelously fulfilled by our Lord. Although these signs are utterly objective, they only appear conclusive to those who are very familiar with the Bible and salvation history. We might long for a subjective sign like the one Jesus gave Nathanael, one that makes perfect sense to us alone precisely because it was taken from our everyday experience. This private sign would likewise transform any doubts we might have into a firm conviction. Our Lord will give each one of us such a sign if we only give Him the chance. If we pray our Lady's Rosary assiduously day in and day out, week after week, month after month, our lives will start to change. We will begin to conquer whatever it is that enslaves us – whether it be gluttony or greed, lust or anger, envy or addiction. Once our manifold vices have been subdued, we will be ready to face our most formidable foe: the unholy trinity: me, myself and I.

As this battle with self unfolds, people on the outside may be amazed but they won't be able to arrive at the conviction that we alone will have reached on the inside, namely: that we are witnesses to a bona fide miracle! True, I do indeed live. But I'm not really the one who is conquering self. Christ lives and conquers within me. Joy and amazement will follow immediately in the wake of this conviction. With Nathanael in today's gospel, we too will cry out: "Lord Jesus! You are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel." We will thank Him for setting us free! Our Lord in turn will promise us the sight of greater things still. So be it! St. Bartholomew, guileless apostle of our Lord! Lead us along pathways that are genuine and sincere! Amen!