

August 23

**SAINT PHILIP BENIZI
ILLUSTRIOUS PROMOTER OF THE ORDER**

Feast

Philip was born in Florence in the early thirteenth century. He entered the Order and was ordained a priest. In 1267 he was elected prior general and remained in office almost until his death. He served with wisdom, developed excellent laws, and fought to keep the Order from being suppressed. Recognized for his holiness, he attracted many to enter religious life and follow his example of Gospel values and the service of Mary. Because of his strong influence, he has been considered a "father of the Order." He died in 1285 at Todi and was canonized in 1671.

Invitatory

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord who called Saint Philip to the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary!

Invitatory psalm, as in the Ordinary.

Office of Readings

HYMN

O blessed Philip, faithful, true,
Great guide of Servants on their way,
We honour him whose grace in you
Gives us your praise to sing this day.

Your great renown and virtues fine
You hid among the Servants poor;
So Mary raised you as a sign
To give her Order light most sure.

In steadfast love for Christ our God
And for his holy Mother mild
You light the path on which you trod
Where people may be reconciled.

Outstanding holiness and fame
Place you before us on the Way:
With firm example laws you frame
To lead us 'neath Christ's gentle sway.

To God the Father songs we raise
Through Christ our Lord, the loving Son;
The Virgin's Servants sing in praise
With all the Church in Spirit one.

Melody: Old 100th L.M. Text: Paul Addison, O.S.M.

Or another hymn may be sung.

PSALMODY

One of the series of antiphons (A, B, C) may be chosen. The Psalms are taken from the common of the saints

and blessed of our Order, or from the common of holy men.

Series A.

Ant. 1 All who exalt themselves shall be humbled, and they who humble themselves shall be exalted.

Ant. 2 No disciple is greater than the teacher; no servant is greater than the lord.

Ant. 3 Whoever wishes to be first among you must become your servant.

Series B.

Ant. 1 Wisdom is better than a fine pearl and no choice possessions can compare with her.

Ant. 2 The knowledge of the wise increases like a flood, their counsel like a living spring.

Ant. 3 The Lord was with him and he was successful in all he did.

Series C.

Ant. 1 No one lights a lamp and puts it under a bushel basket but rather on a stand for all to see.

Ant. 2 Let your light shine before all, so that they may give glory to your Father in heaven.

Ant. 3 He was a lamp set aflame, burning brightly.

V. Give me discernment, Lord, that I may observe your law.

R. Then I will keep it with all my heart.

FIRST READING

From the first letter of the apostle John 3:1-3; 13-24

We must lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters

See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope based on him makes himself pure, as he is pure.

Do not be amazed, [then,] brothers, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers. Whoever does not love remains in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life remaining in him. The way we came to know love was that he laid down his life for us; so we ought **to** lay down our lives for our brothers. If someone who has worldly means sees a brother in need and refuses him compassion, how can the love of God remain in him? Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth. [Now] this is how we shall know that we belong to the truth and reassure our hearts before him in whatever our hearts condemn, for God is greater than our hearts and knows everything. Beloved, if [our] hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence in God and receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. And his commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us. Those who keep his commandments remain in him, and he in them, and the way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit that he gave us.

RESPONSORY See 1 John 3:16

V. By this we have come to know the meaning of God's love: Christ laid down his life for us.

R. And so we must lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

V. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other.

R. And so we must ...

SECOND READING

Choose one of the following readings.

Exhortation on peace by an unknown Italian author of the 5th century (CCL 24, 293-296)

It is God's will that we should live in peace

My dear brothers and sisters, the Evangelist says: *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called Children of God.* It is true that all Christian virtues can flourish in those who maintain a peaceful equilibrium, but we can never be called children of God unless we can also be called peacemakers. It is peace, dear friends, that frees a person from slavery and gives this title of nobility, and in God's sight transforms both the person and state of life; from a servant one becomes a child, from a slave a free person.

It is God's will that brothers and sisters should live in peace, and so give joy to Christ; this is perfect holiness, the text of righteousness, the teacher of sound doctrine, the preservative of good morals and discipline.

Peace is the prayer of prayers, the easy and agreeable way of our requests, the fullness which satisfies all our desires. Peace is the mother of love, which obtains from God whatever it asks. The precepts of the rule only exist to preserve peace, as Christ himself said: *I give you my peace, I leave my peace with you.* Whoever wants to follow Christ must learn to keep his commandments, for no one can be his disciple who does not follow his precepts; hence, obedience is the best way to maintain peace in all circumstances.

I give you my peace, I leave my peace with you. As much as to say: In peace I part from you, in peace let me find you when I come. As he set out he gave what he hoped to find in all on his return; it is the very will of heaven that we keep what he left with us. Listen to that divine voice saying: *Let me find in you what I left with you.* He who plants peace deep down is of God, but the one who uproots it is his enemy, because love among one's brothers and sisters is from God, while hate is from the devil. Thus all feuds are to be condemned, as Scripture says, *He who hates his brother is a murderer.* Let us all strive to restrain anger, my friends; peace is delightful, and union of hearts to be treasured; these two give birth to charity and nourish it. You know that, as the apostle says, *love is of God.* One without love is separated from God.

Peace among the people constitutes the glory of the priesthood, and perfect love among children is supreme joy for the father. So, let us keep the commandments of life; let the community remain bound together in the bonds of profound peace, and gladly support the ties of mutual love, *for charity covers a multitude of sins.* We should strive after charity wholeheartedly, because it brings us as many blessings here as rewards hereafter. Peace, too, must be preserved with all our might, for God makes his home where he finds peace.

Do not give the enemy room to creep in and sow his weeds among the wheat, or, just when the farmer feels secure, he will be deprived of the reward of his long labour. The enemy carries off the fruit of the harvest as soon as it is ripe; into the sweetest honey he introduces a poison more bitter than gall. So let us close the door firmly on disputes, contentions, and bitter words; each of us must impress firmly on the mind that backbiting and hypocrisy are deadly chains, capable of dragging us down to endless punishment. Keep your love of peace intact, and all will be harmony. As well as winning happiness for yourself, you will be our reward, and the Church of God, founded on the unity of peace, will maintain the tranquillity of order in Christ.

RESPONSORY See 2 Corinthians 13:11 Philippians 4:8-9

V. Rejoice, brothers and sisters! Seek to be perfect and encourage one another to live in harmony and peace.

R. The God of peace and love will be with you.

V. Know what is true, just and worthy of love, and live according to what you have heard me say.

R. The God of peace ...

Alternative.

From the Life of Blessed Philip

(Nn 7-12.15.19.23 passim; *Monumenta OSM*, II, 70-79)

The Lord has looked upon the humility of his servant

Since the hour for the midday meal had now arrived, God's servant Philip joined the friars for dinner. When they had finished, they gathered together in chapter and received Philip among them as a brother and companion. Thus, in the year of the Lord 1259 or thereabouts, blessed Philip was clothed as a lay brother in the Order. He received, as it were, the armour of humility and obedience with which to resist all the tactics of the evil one.

He had been following this pattern of life for some time when it pleased the Almighty to look favourably on the friars of the Order and to manifest to them the wisdom of this man destined to illuminate the whole Order. It happened that Philip, out of obedience, went on a journey to Siena with a friar by the name of Victor. On the road they were met by two religious of the Order of Preachers coming from Germany. These were puzzled at seeing our friars' habit. Their curiosity soon led them to a conversation with blessed Philip and they inquired what kind of life they led and what Order's habit they were wearing. The man of God, Philip, in true humility and with marvellous wisdom, made the following reply: "If your question is about our place of origin, we are sons of this land. But if you wish to know our status, we are called Servants of the glorious Virgin, the habit of whose widowhood we wear. We lead the life instituted by the holy Apostles, and follow the rule of the saintly doctor Augustine." As they continued their conversation, they began to discuss profound questions, to which the man of God replied with great wisdom and conviction, proving his adherence to true doctrine in every case and his ability to support it with numerous authorities and examples from the lives of the saints. When they had finished, each went his way.

Then blessed Philip's companion said to him: "Brother, when you were received into the Order, why did you not make known the knowledge you possess, as we are so short of men of learning? I can tell you for a certainty that this very day the light of learning has begun to shine in our Order." Then blessed Philip begged him on his knees, for the love of God, not to reveal this to anyone. But as soon as they had both returned to Florence, Fra Victor began to speak and make known to all the others how blessed Philip had dealt with those strangers. This caused much rejoicing among the friars. They promoted Philip to the clerical state and gradually advanced him to sacred Orders. The day came when the prior, Fra Bonfilius, went the way of all human flesh. Then, in the year of the Lord 1266, the friars gathered to celebrate the chapter in the city of Florence. In that year Fra Manettus of Florence, the general of the Order, resigned his office. Then the entire chapter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, unanimously elected blessed Philip, even though he was at that time resident at Cesena. Humble and gentle as he was, he did not wish to accept the office. We read of him that he governed the Order in the office of prior general for nineteen years. Every year at the chapter he besought the friars with tears to release him from the office, asserting out of humility that he was not equipped for such a task. But the friars took into consideration Philip's holiness and the good of the Order, and so were never willing to grant his request. He would then spend days weeping to himself because he was not able to carry out his desire. When the holy man saw that it was in vain for him to try to obtain the consent of the friars to his resignation, and unable to put the matter out of his mind, he contemplated achieving his goal through the Holy See. An occasion to do this presented itself when he had to go to Rome with some companions to see to affairs of the Order. But Fra Lotharingus, a prudent and wise man, knowing Philip's mind from other occasions, became suspicious of what blessed Philip wished to do, although he was not yet certain. And so, while Fra Lotharingus was going with blessed Philip to the palace of the lord Pope and fearing what he had heard, he asked why they were going there. He said that he would not move another step until he learned the truth. Then blessed Philip, since he could not hide or change the truth, revealed to him his real intention and begged of him sincerely to help carry out his wish. Fra Lotharingus was very upset on hearing this, and insisted that Philip should banish the thought from his mind, since it would be to the Order's disadvantage and contrary to the wish of all the friars. So, this time also

blessed Philip could not effect his purpose. On a certain occasion when the man of God, Philip, was travelling on a visitation of the Order, he approached the village of Gagliano and came across a leper sitting by the roadside who begged alms of him. Blessed Philip gave him his tunic. As soon as he put it on the leper was cured and ran after Philip crying, "Please wait for me, man of God, so that I may give you thanks." Philip, when he saw him, replied, "Give glory to God the Father and go in peace; but make sure you tell no one." When the time arrived for the man of God, Philip, to receive heavenly glory with the blessed, he was en-

lightened by the Lord about it. He immediately directed his steps toward the region of Todi, where there was a newly erected priory of the friar Servants, the poorest and least important of the whole Order. When the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady in August was over, it was the will of God that his servant Philip be raised up by the angels. On the octave of this feast, a Sunday, while all the friars were praying, the man of God was taken to heaven. It was the year of the Lord 1285.

RESPONSORY See Proverbs 11:2; James 4:6 Sirach 35:17,18

V. With the humble there is wisdom. God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble. R. The prayer of the lowly pierces the sky and will not rest until answered by God. God resists ...

Alternative.

He was a light placed upon the lampstand of the Order

Philip was born into the noble Florentine family of Benizi at the beginning of the thirteenth century, around the time of the founding of the Friar Servants of the blessed Virgin Mary. He studied both medicine and theology. The love of God was very strong in him, so that he fulfilled the divine law to perfection, by self-discipline, bringing help to the poor of Christ, praying, and particularly by reciting each day the office of the Holy Virgin.

At a certain point he felt drawn to leave aside the joys of the world and to enter the service of the Lord; he was in the church of the Servants in Florence on the Thursday after Easter, and he heard the scripture text, "*Philip, go and join yourself to that chariot.*" He took these words as applying to himself, that he should join himself to the chariot of the glorious Virgin, namely, the religious fraternity of the Servants. And so, he applied to the local prior, Bonfilius, and asked in all humility if he might take the habit of a brother in the religious order. This he did, but it was the Lord's wish that his wisdom as seen by his brothers should lead him to accept the priesthood.

In the year 1267, in the Order's General Chapter of Florence, Philip was elected prior general, an office he held for eighteen years, almost to the time of his death, in spite of frequent humble requests on his part to be relieved of it. He was a good pastor and a faithful Servant of Mary. He watched over the Order of Our Lady with great care, in both its doctrine and its holiness. Like a father he would visit all the communities making long and arduous journeys. By a miracle, on one occasion, he brought food to the friars of Arezzo; their district had been laid waste by war and great famine, and at Philip's prayers to Mary the Mother of her Servants, food was provided. He was responsible for an increase in the number of communities and provinces in the Order, and he helped to draw up, complete and publish Constitutions through the work of chapter meetings. When the Second Council of Lyons decreed the suppression of the Order, Philip applied his great gifts of wisdom in the Roman Curia along with Blessed Lotharingus and succeeded in preparing the way for definitive approval of the Order in the Church. For this reason, Philip is often called a holy Father of the Order.

As follower of the Apostles, he was tireless in proclaiming the word of God, and worked frequently for peace in disturbed cities. He drew many from worldliness to a life of great perfection, and many came to follow the same way of life he himself lived.

There was a leper once who was healed by touching Philip's garments. Some of the saint's miracles became so well known that, when the reigning pope died, a number of cardinals suggested that Philip should be his successor as Supreme Pontiff in the Church. It is also told how his fatherly

kindness and persuasion drew two sinful women from their former lives to the love of the Virgin Mother of God; the Holy Spirit's conversion of them led them to great sanctity. On the octave day of the Assumption, 1285, having received the holy sacraments, and comforted by the presence of Blessed Ubald, Philip addressed his brothers exhorting them to greater charity, and clasping tightly the crucifix of the Lord which he frequently called his living book, Philip died in the priory of Todi. His body was subsequently moved on a number of occasions, but now rests in the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Todi where it is devoutly honoured. Philip was included among the saints of the Church by Pope Clement X in 1671.

RESPONSORY See Isaiah 41:9; 1 Samuel 3:9

V. I called you and said:

R. You are my servant, my chosen one; I will be with you always.

V. Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.

R. You are my servant, my chosen one; I will be with you always.

HYMN, Te Deum.

Prayer, as in Morning Prayer.

Morning Prayer

HYMN

Great is the mercy of God's might
Who, as our morning praise we sing,
To sevenfold stars of dawning light
Splendid and strong the sun does bring.

Noble was Philip born, but you
Called him, O God, to change his name.
Far nobler yet his title new:
"Servant" and "Brother" his great fame.

Though in great learning honour came
He hid himself from world renown,
And left success in quiet disdain
To find in Christ his only crown.

Now, as the light of day grows strong
Dawn sees this Servant watch in prayer,
His spirit warmed by Christ the Son,
Life, light and power everywhere.

Lord, may saint Philip be our guide
To riches which do not decay,
Poor, and as Servants may our pride
Be in the life of heaven's way.

Father, to you our song we raise
Through Christ, our Lord, the loving Son;

Servants of Mary sing your praise
With all the Church, in Spirit one.

Melody: Old 100th L.M. Text: Paul Addison, O.S.M.

Or another hymn may be sung.

Ant.1 Like the morning star, shining through the clouds, so Philip was a light to his world.

Psalms and canticle from Sunday, Week I.

Ant.2 Like the radiant sun, Philip was a guiding light for the community of Servants.

Ant.3 Philip, surrounded with brothers, was the vine of the Virgin planted in the vineyard of the Lord.

READING 2 Corinthians 4:5-6

For we do not preach ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for the sake of Jesus. For God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to bring to light the knowledge of the glory of God on the face of [Jesus] Christ.

RESPONSORY See Ephesians 5:8-9; 1 Thessalonians 5:5

- V. Live as children of the light, for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good, just and
R. Live as children of the light, for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good, just and
V. All of you are children of the light and of the day.
R. For the fruit of the light is found in all that is good, just and true.
V. Glory to the Father ...
R. Live as children ...

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH

Ant. Philip, faithful Servant of Mary, served the Lord and his brothers in holiness and justice all the days of his life.

INTERCESSIONS

We give thanks to you, O Lord. You have shown a wonderful generosity to the community of Servants where many have found Christ and experienced him in their lives. So we pray:
Open our hearts, Lord, to your holy word.

Lord, you sent prophets and apostles among your people to share their sorrow and to give them hope.

- Help us to be sensitive and loving toward those who suffer.

Lord, you sent your Son as servant of the poor to care for the least of our brothers and sisters.

- Teach us to serve every person without concern for money or power.

Lord, you entrust to the leaders of our Order the loving care of each member.

- May they know the personal worth and talents of each person so that all may share in your goodness.

Lord, by the prayer of Philip you wonderfully gave bread to his brothers.

- Make us always ready to share bread with the poor and work for the day when all those in bondage will be free.

Lord, you give joy to every creature by gifts of your goodness.

- Bless this family of Servants and help us know and faithfully do your holy will.

(The word of God assures us that the prayer of the bumble is always pleasing; let us pray to God in the words of our Master:) Our Father ...

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, through Philip, you cared for the first Servants of Mary, increased their number and gave them a rule of life. Grant that we, like Philip, in faithful service to the Blessed Virgin may zealously proclaim your kingdom. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Daytime Prayer

Antiphons and psalms from the weekday.

Midmorning

READING 2 Corinthians 5:18b, 20

God [has] given us the ministry of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, as if God were appealing through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

V. Be kind and compassionate to one another.

R. Forgive each other as God, in Christ, forgave you.

Midday

READING 1 Corinthians 2:12-13

We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the things freely given us by God. And we speak about them not with words taught by human wisdom, but with words taught by the Spirit, describing spiritual realities in spiritual terms.

V. I speak not with the persuasive words of human wisdom;

R. but with the power and revelation of the Spirit.

Midafternoon

READING James 3:17-18

The wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peaceable, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, without inconstancy or insincerity. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those who cultivate peace.

V. Do not boast or lie.

R. But speak the truth openly to all!

Prayer, as in Morning Prayer.

Evening Prayer

HYMN

Philip, well we sing your praises,
Raising hands and hymns on high.
Heaven gave you holy graces
Mary's Servants to inspire.

In pursuit of heaven's chariot,
In a love promoting peace,
In the Virgin's noble service
Lead us, Father, to increase.

As a child our name you gave us,
Titled Servants of our Queen;

May your holy deeds inflame us,
Your example be our aim.

Holy Church with joy acclaims you;
Floral birth-place tributes brings;
Resting-place its patron name you, S
ervants of your wonders sing.

Praise we God our heav'nly Father
Through our Saviour, Christ his Son,
In the Spirit, life forever,
While eternal ages run.

Melody: Stuttgart 87.87 Text: Paul Addison, O.S.M.

Or another hymn may be sung.

Ant.1 Be imitators of me as I am of Christ.

Psalms and canticle from the common of saints and blessed of our Order, or from the common of holy men.

Ant.2 I gave you an example; as I have done, so you must do.

Ant.3 He gave us an example of loving others so that we may live his way of life.

READING Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice! Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near. Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God: that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

RESPONSORY See Ephesians 4:1-3

V. I implore you to lead a life worthy of the vocation to which you have been called; be careful to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

R. I implore you to lead a life worthy of the vocation to which you have been called; be careful to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

V. Live in all humility and meekness, bearing with one another lovingly.

R. Be careful to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

V. Glory to the Father ... R. I implore you ...

CANTICLE OF MARY

Ant. This day a choir of angels led Philip to heaven. This day, the Queen of Heaven showed Jesus to her faithful servant. This day the Lord raised him on high to reign in glory.

INTERCESSIONS

We, who walk together as uncertain pilgrims, pray to God our Father, who is the beginning and end of every way of life:

Be with us, Lord, on our way of life.

Father, source of unity, you ask us to work in harmony and peace;

- help us to work for peace among all people and to dialogue with all who seek you.

Father, in our weakness you reveal the power of your Spirit;

- may we rely on the power of the word when we proclaim the Gospel.

Father, you call us to live the way of Jesus and his Mother Mary;

- may we, like them, accept the Cross as we Eve in total obedience to your holy word.

Father, you are abundant in mercy to every person;

- may we share the grace of your reconciliation and peace so that no person will be excluded from our love.

Father of life, we commend to you our brothers and sisters who sought you in the family of Servants;

- be merciful and grant them the peace of life eternal.

(United in Christ, let us recite the prayer which he himself taught us:) Our Father ...

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, through Philip you cared for the first Servants of Mary, increased their number and gave them a rule of life. Grant that we, like Philip, in faithful service to the Blessed Virgin may zealously proclaim your kingdom. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Note: Some biblical texts are taken from: The New American Bible <http://www.vatican.va/archives/>