

We know relatively little about Philip and even less about James the Less. In today's gospel reading Philip's long apprenticeship with Jesus is, however, made clear and also Jesus' exasperation with his lack, still, of full understanding:

Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and still you do not know me?

And there, perhaps, is the essence of our own struggle and of our own need to revisit these signposts in our lives and in the life of the Church which point towards this fuller truth. I'm thinking here of Paul's need, too, to remind the Corinthians of the basic 'facts' of their faith and of our Sunday recitation of the Creed. It's not that we need to know all the 'ins and outs' of what's being said but that we need to revisit them as grounds for further exploration. And one can see the whole New Testament and Old Testament, too, in this light, as a *lectio divina* that never ends and, rather than see this as a cause for despair, one can see it as a means for getting to know the one we love, and who loves us, more and more. Jesus' exasperation is a sign then, not of a limited, but of an excess of love: Philip know me and know my Father, too. Can you not see what you're missing? And perhaps Jesus is also fearful that his little band of followers will be overwhelmed by his death and lost to the Father through unbelief. So it's a re-affirmation of Jesus' concern for us all and of the way to follow: *Keep going. You're on the way. Don't stop now.*

Br John Mayhead
Monastery of Christ Our Saviour