

**Memorial Mass for Sarah McNair  
August 24, 2018**

**My friends, it is not every day we have a memorial Mass for one of our dearly departed sisters on the feast of an Apostle and Martyr. Then again, it is not every day we gather to remember the life of such a person as Sarah Ward Grider McNair. Our sister Sarah, or Sherry, as she was known by many, lived a life of service, leadership, and care. We are here to offer our prayers for her eternal rest. We are here to remember her and to celebrate her life. We are here to commend her to the Lord whom she loved. We do all of this in the context of the Apostle, St. Bartholomew.**

**It is possible to draw surface parallels here. Bartholomew was also called Nathaniel, and he was sent to many places to spread the Good News. Sherry was called by different names and ministered and served in so many different ways. The list of her service and labors literally goes on for pages. These comparisons could be instructive, but we really find grace in the readings for today. These are also very unusual readings for a memorial Mass. But our God is good, and his providence has given us readings that show the love he has for our sister Sarah.**

**In the Gospel, our brother St. Bartholomew, called Nathaniel, asked Jesus a very profound question. He said: “How do you know me?” Jesus’ answer is not a first very clear to us. He tells Bartholomew: “I saw you under the fig tree.” Immediately, Bartholomew proclaims this great declaration of faith. Bartholomew declares: “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.” What could this mean? What is it about a Jesus seeing Bartholomew under a fig tree that makes him so sure that Jesus is the messiah and that he truly knows him? Well, Bartholomew knows the scriptures and he has read the prophets. He knows from the likes of the Prophets Micah and Zechariah, that the fig tree is a symbol of**

the peace that will reign on the day of the messiah. It is a sign of the fulfillment of God's will for his people. Is it any wonder then than Jesus goes on to tell Bartholomew, "you will see greater things than this!" He tells him of the heavens opening, and the angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man. In the first reading from Revelation, we get the amazing image of the New Jerusalem – our heavenly home – coming down out of heaven, gleaming in splendor. This is the meaning of today's feast. This is Good News we celebrate as we remember Sherry.

Sherry was blessed to see so many graced moments in her life. She served and blessed her family, her friends, her Church – from bishops to babies. She sacrificed of herself, and she endured the hard times and heartaches of life. She, her husband, and her family worked to build up this world, and worked to build up their souls and the faith and salvation of their family and community. Sherry saw so much grace in this life. But now we commend her to God, who will show her so many greater things than this. Our prayer for her is to meet the Lord who will open to her the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem. She will ascend with angels and sit along side St. Bartholomew and our Blessed Mother, with the Lord she loved so well in this life. Even in our mourning for the loss of our sister, we remember her with hope today, because of the promise of God in her life. As Pope Francis reminds us: "Eternal life is the immeasurable and gratuitous love of the Father."

So, may we pray well today. May we remember Shelley today, and share the stories of her life, freely and with great hope. Through the intercession of St. Bartholomew and Our Lady of Guadalupe, may we rest in the knowledge that Shelley has now heard the answer of that profound question: "Lord, how do you know me?" She is in his hands now, hearing him say in eternity, "I know you because you are mine."