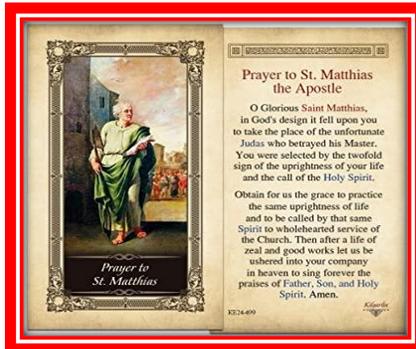


May 14, 2020 – Thursday of the 5th Week of Easter - Feast of St Matthias



“Being docile to accept God’s strange Will in our lives and to be bold to totally trust in Him, in order to bear fruits for the Kingdom!”

(Acts 1:15-17, 20-26 and Jn 15:9-17)

Happy Feast of St Matthias, the Apostle.

1. St Matthias stands in the place of the traitor Judas. But not as another traitor

There goes a legend of the early Church. Some pagans, once forced a holy person who had been imprisoned to drink a potion of poison, as part of persecutions against the faithful. He drank it, and not only did he himself remain unharmed, but he also healed others who had been blinded by the potion. When he left the prison, the pagans searched for him in vain, for he had become invisible to them. The holy person was St Mathias.

Today is the Feast of this Apostle, St Mathias. He is the Apostle, chosen by lot, to go “into the place of the traitor Judas”. The Acts of the Apostles describes: “that he may take his place in this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell.” (Acts 1:25). St Mathias had one of the most unique privileges as well as one of the most awkward moments. He had the unique privilege of being counted the Twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ. He had the unique awkward moment of taking the position left blank by Judas, the betrayer.

It is usually hard to fill up empty spaces of vacancies and opportunities. And it indeed gets too hard to fill up the vacancy of being counted among the exclusive Twelve Apostles. This task gets too complicated especially if the vacancy was created as a shameful result of “betrayal” and “treachery”. St Mathias had to fill in the gap left by the “traitor” Judas Iscariot. Yet, Divine

Providence had it that St Mathias should replace Judas, to be "counted as one among the Twelve". St Matthias stands in the place of the traitor Judas. But not as another traitor but as one who knows the treachery of human hearts and the need for Heavenly Grace.

Life sometimes is such. We are asked to take up tasks that may seem highly uncomfortable. We are invited to draw up duties which may seem highly insulting. Are we willing to accept them, seeing God's providential hand in them? Are we ready to undertake them, knowing God's Will is at work in that? Let us trust in the mighty and assuring words of Jesus, "You did not choose me, but I chose you..." (Jn 15:16)

The Feast of St Mathias is a reminder of this naked and frightening, yet remarkable and bold truth: There is a possibility of being a traitor in all of us like Judas, but there is also the glorious chance of being His faithful apostle like St Mathias. There are elements of betraying God, within each of us like Judas, but there are also graces of being passionately committed to the Lord like St Mathias.

2. The Lord's choice of us is prior to our choice of him.

According to today's first reading, the disciples chose two candidates they thought would be suitable, Joseph and Matthias, but in prayer they sought which of these two the Lord had chosen. The Lord was choosing one and not the other, and the church discerned that Matthias was the Lord's choice. There is another sense in which the Lord chooses each one of us equally. That is clear from today's gospel reading. Jesus is speaking to his disciples, who, in John's gospel, represent disciples of every generation. He says to them, 'You did not choose me; no, I chose you'.

The Lord's choice of us is prior to our choice of him. To put that in other terms, the Lord loves us before we love him. The Lord loves us first. His love for us is a given, as he says at the beginning of the gospel reading, 'As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you'. The Lord's love for us is a constant and our task, according to the gospel reading, is to remain in the Lord's love. The Lord's love for us remains, endures, and it falls to us to remain in his enduring love. According to Jesus in the gospel reading, we remain in his love by living his one commandment to love one another as he has loved us. We might have expected Jesus to say, 'you remain in my love by loving me'. Instead, he says, 'you remain in my love by loving one another as I have loved you'. The Lord's love for us is to empower us to love one another with his love. This is our fundamental baptismal calling.

According to Jesus in the gospel reading, when we love one another as the Lord loves us, we will enter into the Lord's own joy, which is the completion of every human joy. We don't find happiness by seeking happiness directly but by opening ourselves to the Lord's love for us and then by seeking to share that love with each other.

Let us pray:

May St Mathias intercede and inspire us to be docile to accept God's strange Will working in our lives, to be bold to take up the challenge of filling up gaps caused by betrayal and uneasiness and to be aware of God's mighty Providence guiding every action of the Church and the world.

Jesus, I Trust In You