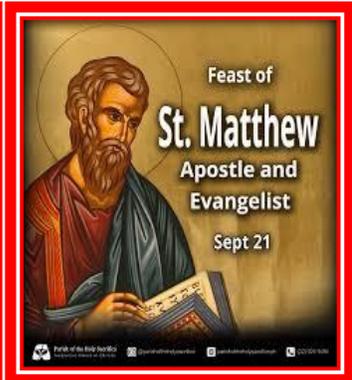
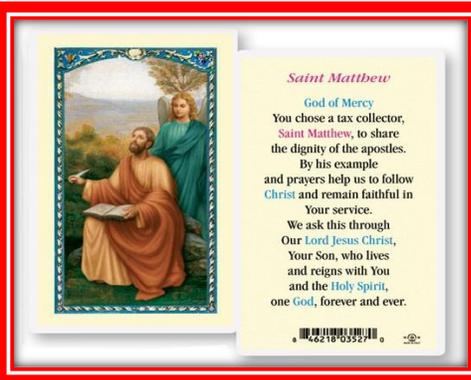


**September 21, 2020 – Monday – Feast of St. Mathew, Apostle and Evangelist**



**Let us follow Jesus, and like Mathew, let us give our hearts, our homes, and our hands to Jesus. It is only then that we would truly realize and experience the joy of the words, “Great things happen when God mixes with us” (Eph 4:1-7 Mt 9:9-13)**

**Happy Feast of St Matthew!**

Today’s Gospel episode of Matthew’s call as Jesus’ apostle reminds us of God’s love and mercy for sinners and challenges us to practice this same love and mercy in our relations with others.

One of the easiest traps in our life, today, is to acquire Cheap Popularity. ‘Popularity’ is a bane which affects many areas of our life. People choose

- to undermine values,
- forsake principles,
- abandon relations,
- disown doctrine
- and even dilute ideologies just to gain some cheap and shoddy popularity.

But Jesus came to the world,

- not seeking Cheap Popularity rather, in quest of Precious Sinners.
- He came not rendering Instant Glory rather, in granting Everlasting Peace.
- He came not to Please People rather, to Honor God.

**And Jesus is clear in His Mission: To seek the wayward, to find the lost, to grant peace to sinners.**

This Mission of the Lord would make Him lose His popularity ratings & reputed recognitions. But Jesus dared to prioritize Principles over Popularity and Choosing Reconciliation over Reputation.

The Gospel of the Day begins with the verse, “...Jesus saw a man named Matthew sitting at the customs post. He said to him, “Follow me!” (Mt 9:9). For the religious elite

of the Society, this calling of Matthew, the Tax Collector was a shocking experience! Tax Collectors were among the most hated people in the Jewish Society. They were generally despised and tainted and stained on three different aspects:

**a. National Traitors:** A tax collector, “sold himself”, to the foreign Roman government, and was a betrayer of the Nation...one of the top-most nation-betrayers.

**b. Morally Corrupt:** Each tax collector had the right from the Roman government to gather taxes; and the more he gathered, the more he could keep....one of the top-most dishonest people.

**c. Religiously Unclean:** Their constant contacts with the Gentiles made them religiously suspicious....one of the top-most impure classes.

And it is this Matthew, that Jesus invites to “Follow Him” - An unpopular approach indeed. But the Lord is least bothered by human appreciation and public popularity. He came to Seek the Lost and gather the scattered ones. And this offer of the Lord was gladly welcomed by Matthew – opening himself to the Love of the Lord.

**1. He opened His heart:** Matthew became a new person. Accepting Jesus, meant turning away from his old-ways, rejecting some of his corrupt businesspeople, forsaking a good deal of income.

**2. He Opened His Home:** Matthew was excited to share his Newfound Love, with others too. The transformation in one person, became an opportunity, for many others, to experience God’s enterprising love and be challenged to undergo a change!

**3. He opened his hands:** Matthew also opened his hands & worked for the Lord. “It could be (wittily) said, that when Jesus called Matthew, he left his job to follow Christ, but he took along with him, his pen”. And this would later help him to pen the Gospel...the Gospel according to St Matthew.

The call of Matthew was Jesus' way of telling that things happen in the Kingdom of God, not for the Sake of Popularity rather, The Kingdom is an Invitation and a Home to all who find themselves lost, least, broken, rejected, seeking, disturbed. We all are in one way or the other, facing some of these problems or difficulties in life and let these not discourage us.

As the saying goes:

Never say, “GOD, I have a big problem” Instead say, “Hey Problem, I have a big GOD” The Lord is ever-ready to welcome us. He is least bothered of what others think or criticize. He values our lives much more than losing popularity. Yes, We are more precious to Him, than popularity.

- He Values Us.
- He Trusts us.
- He Loves us.

All of us can be assured of experiencing.

- Rest in His Heart
- Welcome in His Home
- Strength in His Hands.

St Mathew presents a beautiful picture, of embracing the Lord fully into life because He realized and discovered the intimate need of the Lord in his life. May we be inspired by him and seek his intercession and imitate his example in surrendering ourselves totally to the Sovereignty of our Blessed Lord. Let us Follow Jesus, and like Mathew, let us give our hearts, our homes, and our hands to Jesus. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI says: "If you follow the will of God, in spite of all the terrible things that happen to you, you will never lose a final refuge, Go on, trusting, in the One Who loves you."

It is only then that we would truly realize and experience the joy of the words, "Great things happen when God mixes with us"

Happy Feast of St Matthew!