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May 14: Saint Matthias, Apostle

Gospel for May 14th, feast of Saint Matthias, and commentary.

Gospel (*Jn 15:9-17*)

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. This I command you, to love one another.”

Commentary

Today in the Church we celebrate the feast of the apostle Matthias. The Gospel places us in the context of the Last Supper. Jesus continues teaching

about the meaning of true love, which time and again He relates to life and joy. He invites us to remain in his love. And doing so means remaining in his words: actively listening to them and making them the foundation of our own life. We remain united to Christ through faith and love. And our own love is a response to the Love we have received.

Jesus' words in today's Gospel tell us that the Father's commandments are not something foreign to us, something that comes from outside, but rather they are, as it were, our "spiritual DNA." The commandments tell who we are, what we are made for, what we need to aspire to. At the heart of this spiritual DNA is the commandment to love one another, but with a love whose measure we can only grasp by looking at Christ's love for us.

God is the one who first chooses us, and grants us a vocation. As he did with Saint Matthias. In the passage from the Acts of the Apostles that the Church presents to us in the first reading of the Mass, the disciples pray for guidance to determine the call of a new apostle. After praying, they cast lots and the lot fell on Matthias, who was added to the eleven apostles. According to Tradition, "Matthias, who completed the number of the twelve apostles, went to Ethiopia where, after leading many people to Christ, with a courageous spirit he received the crown of martyrdom" (cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*).

Like the apostle Matthias, you and I too are called by God to proclaim the Good News. Each of us, in our specific circumstances, but all with the same radical call. We too are lucky, for God has fixed his eyes on us. A vocation, every vocation, is a

mystery, and its discovery is a gift of the Spirit. Benedict XVI said: “The secret of a vocation is in one’s relationship with God, in prayer that grows amid interior silence, in the ability to hear the God who is always near us. And this is true both before the choice, that is, at the moment of deciding and setting out on the path, and afterwards, in order to persevere and be faithful on the path.”^[1] Let us ask God for light to see our vocation and strength to bring the message of love for one another to every corner of the world, as did Saint Matthias.

^[1] Benedict, Encounter with Young People in Sulmona, 4 July 2010.

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