

Reading for the Feast of St Matthias

Saturday May 14th 2022

First Reading:

Acts 1:15-17,20-26

'Let someone else take his office'

One day Peter stood up to speak to the brothers – there were about a hundred and twenty persons in the congregation: 'Brothers, the passage of scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit, speaking through David, foretells the fate of Judas, who offered himself as a guide to the men who arrested Jesus – after having been one of our number and actually sharing this ministry of ours. Now in the Book of Psalms it says:

Let his camp be reduced to ruin, Let there be no one to live in it.

And again: Let someone else take his office.

'We must therefore choose someone who has been with us the whole time that the Lord Jesus was travelling round with us, someone who was with us right from the time when John was baptising until the day when he was taken up from us – and he can act with us as a witness to his resurrection.'

Having nominated two candidates, Joseph known as Barsabbas, whose surname was Justus, and Matthias, they prayed, 'Lord, you can read everyone's heart; show us therefore which of these two you have chosen to take over this ministry and apostolate, which Judas abandoned to go to his proper place.' They then drew lots for them, and as the lot fell to Matthias, he was listed as one of the twelve apostles.

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 112(113):1-8

The Lord sets him in the company of the princes of his people.

Praise, O servants of the Lord,
praise the name of the Lord!
May the name of the Lord be blessed

From the rising of the sun to its setting
praised be the name of the Lord!
High above all nations is the Lord,
above the heavens his glory.

Who is like the Lord, our God,
who has risen on high to his throne
yet stoops from the heights to look down,
to look down upon heaven and earth?

From the dust he lifts up the lowly,
from the dung heap he raises the poor
to set him in the company of princes,
yes, with the princes of his people.

Gospel:

John 15:9-17

You are my friends if you do what I command you

Jesus said to his disciples:

‘As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy be complete. This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you. A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends.

You are my friends, if you do what I command you. I shall not call you servants any more, because a servant does not know his master’s business; I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father. You did not choose me: no, I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last; and then the Father will give you anything you ask him in my name. What I command you is to love one another.’

Short reflection on the readings for today

We met this gospel passage a few days ago, but we find it again today because it is the reading of the feast of the Apostle Matthias, who took the place of Judas after the Ascension. As we read these moving words of Jesus, we can dwell on his love and care for his friends. He wants above all to reassure them of his love which, as they will soon see, cannot be greater. Let us realise that these words are also addressed to us, in all our weakness and uncertainty. May we always ask for God’s help that our love will be like that of Jesus, that we may be ready to give ourselves for others.

The core of the Christian message is love, God loves me! How is it to sit with this reality? If we could grasp God’s unconditional love for us, life would be radically a journey of joy. To accept that God loves us is also to accept the reality that God loves all others in the same way. We are called to love ourselves and others, and it is clear from the Gospel that we are also called to love the poor, the excluded, and the marginalised in a special way. In addition we are called to care for the earth, described by Pope Francis as “our common home”; which God has entrusted us.

“God, who calls us to generous commitment and to give him our all, offers us the light and the strength needed to continue on our way. In the heart of this world, the Lord of life, who loves us so much, is always present. He does not abandon us, he does not leave us alone, for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward.” (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si* 245).