

Reading for the Feast of St Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist

21st September 2026

First reading

Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13

‘To the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.’

Brothers and Sisters: I, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit — just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call — one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. And he gave the Apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 19(18):2-3. 4-5. R5a

Their sound goes forth through all the earth.

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims the work of his hands.

Day unto day breathes forth a word, and night unto night imparts the knowledge.

No speech, no word, whose voice goes unheard; their sound goes forth through all the earth, their message to the utmost bounds of the world.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

O God, we praise you, O Lord, we acclaim you;
the glorious choir of Apostles sings to you, O Lord.

Alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 9:9-13

‘I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.’

At that time: As Jesus passed on from Capernaum, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, ‘Follow me.’ And he rose and followed him.

And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, ‘Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’ But when he heard it, he said, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means: “I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.” For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.’

Short reflection on the reading for today

The name Matthew is derived from the Hebrew *Mattija*, shortened to *Mattai* in post-Biblical Hebrew. In Greek it is sometimes spelled *Maththaios* and sometimes *Matthaios*, but there is no agreement as to which of the two spellings is the original. He is mentioned five times in the New Testament; first in Matthew 9:9, when called by Jesus to follow Him, and then four times in the list of the Apostles, where

he is mentioned in the seventh (Luke 6:15, and Mark 3:18), and again in the eighth place (Matthew 10:3, and Acts 1:13). The man designated in Matthew 9:9, as “sitting in the custom house,” and “named Matthew” is the same as Levi, recorded in Mark 2:14, and Luke 5:27, as “sitting at the receipt of custom.” The account in the three Synoptics is identical, the vocation of Matthew-Levi being alluded to in the same terms. Hence Levi was the original name of the man who was subsequently called Matthew; the phrase “Who was called Matthew” (Mt 9:9,) would indicate this.

Matthew, the son of Alphaeus (Mark 2:14) was a Galilean, although Eusebius informs us that he was a Syrian. As tax-gatherer at Capharnaum, he collected custom duties for Herod Antipas, and, although a Jew, was despised by the Pharisees, who hated all publicans (tax collectors). When summoned by Jesus, Matthew arose and followed Him and tendered Him a feast in his house, where tax-gatherers and sinners sat at table with Christ and His disciples. This drew forth a protest from the Pharisees whom Jesus rebuked in these consoling words: “I came not to call the just, but sinners.”

No further allusion is made to Matthew in the Gospels, except in the list of the Apostles. As a disciple and an Apostle he thenceforth followed Christ, accompanying Him up to the time of His Passion and, in Galilee, was one of the witnesses of His Resurrection. He was also amongst the Apostles who were present at the Ascension, and afterwards withdrew to an upper chamber, in Jerusalem, praying in union with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and with his brethren (Acts 1:10 and 1:14).

Of Matthew’s subsequent career we have only insecure or legendary data. Ancient writers do not agree on which countries were evangelized by Matthew, but almost all mention a land to the south of the Caspian Sea and some Persia and the kingdom of the Parthians, Macedonia, and Syria.

The Latin Church celebrates the feast of St Matthew on 21 September, 2013. He is represented under the symbol of a winged man, carrying in his hand a pen as an emblem of his authorship of the Gospel.