

# September 21st: Matthew, Apostle & Evangelist

**Gospel text (Mt 9,9-13): As Jesus moved on, He saw a man named Matthew at his seat in the custom-house, and He said to him, «Follow me». And Matthew got up and followed him (...).**

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## *Matthew, Apostle & Evangelist*

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)

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Today, we halt in St. Matthew. What we know about him is very little and incomplete. He is always mentioned in the lists of the twelve chosen by Jesus. In Hebrew, his name means "Gift of God". The first canonical Gospel which bears his name introduces him as "the publican".

Jesus welcomed into a group of His intimate friends a man who, according to the ideas in vogue in Israel at the time, was held to be a public sinner. Matthew, in fact, not only handled money held to be impure because of its provenance from people foreign to the people of God, but he also collaborated with a foreign authority that was hatefully greedy, and whose taxes could be determined in an arbitrary way. With these references, the conclusion we are driving at is immediately clear: Jesus excludes no one from his friendship.

—To the call of Jesus, Matthews responds with an instant "he got up and followed him". In this "getting up" it is fair to read the detachment from a situation of sin, and also the conscious adherence to a new existence, in his communion with Jesus.