September 21st: Feast of Saint Matthew, Apostle and evangelist

Gospel text (*Mt* 9:9-13): As Jesus passed by, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the customs post. He said to him, “Follow me.” And he got up and followed him...

Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)
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Today, we pause for 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. Given these references, there is a fact that is obvious: 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.