

May 14th: Saint Matthias, apostle

Gospel text (Jn 15,9-17): Jesus said to his disciples, «As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; remain in my love. You will remain in my love if you keep my commandments, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love.

»I have told you all this, that my own joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you. There is no greater love than this, to give one's life for one's friends; and you are my friends if you do what I command you. I shall not call you servants any more, because servants do not know what their master is about. Instead I have called you friends, since I have made known to you everything I learned from my Father.

»You did not choose me; it was I who chose you and sent you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. And everything you ask the Father in my name, he will give you. This is my command, that you love one another».

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Today, the Church remembers the day when the Apostles chose the disciple of Jesus who was to replace Judas Iscariot. In one of his homilies St. John Crisostom quite rightly says: «When we are to opt for persons who must have a certain responsibility we may have to face certain rivalries or discussions». This is why St. Peter «simply ignores the envy that it might have arisen», and leaves it up to chance and divine inspiration, thus, avoiding such possibility. And this Father of the

Church goes on saying: «And it just so happens that quite often important decisions may be very upsetting».

In today's Gospel, our Lord speaks to the Apostles of the joy they should have: that «my own joy may be in you and your joy may be complete» (Jn 15:11). And, sure enough, a Christian, like Matthias, will happily live with a quiet joy if he assumes the various events of life from the grace of divine filiation; otherwise, he is bound to be carried away by false annoyances, foolish jealousies or some kind of prejudice or other. Joy and peace are always fruit of the exuberance of our apostolic commitment and of our struggle to become saints. It is the logic and supernatural outcome of love for God and of a spirit of service towards our fellowmen.

Romano Guardini wrote: «The source of joy is to be found in a person's deeper intimacy (...). It is there where God resides. Then, joy widens and makes us glitter. And all that is beautiful can be perceived by us in all its brilliance». When we feel unhappy we must know how to pray along with St. Thomas More: «Lord, give me a sense of humor and I will find happiness in life and profit for others». And, let us not forget St. Teresa of Avila also begged: «O Lord, save me from these sullen-faced saints, for a sad saint is a sorry saint».