

Additional Meditation - St Matthias the Apostle - February 26th (Transferred from 24th)

Morning Prayers

Evening Prayers

∨ Hagiography.

From the Exposition of the Eighty-sixth Psalm by St Augustine, Bishop of Hippo.

Her foundation is in the holy mountains; the Lord loveth the gates of Zion. Wherefore hath the city twelve foundations, and in them the names of the Prophets and of the Apostles of the Lamb? Because their authority is the foundation whereon our weakness resteth. Wherefore are they the gates? Because through them we enter in unto the kingdom of God, since they have preached the same unto us, and when we enter in through their preaching, we enter in by Christ, Who is Himself The Door (John x:7). And, whereas it is written that the city hath twelve gates, and, again, that Christ is the one Door, Christ is all the twelve, for He is in all the twelve and therefore were twelve Apostles chosen. There lieth a great mystery in the signification of this number twelve: Ye shall sit, said the Lord, upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

If then there be set there twelve thrones of judgment (Ps. cxxi:5), Paul, in that he is the thirteenth Apostle, hath not where to sit, nor wherein to judge. Nevertheless, he hath said of himself that he will judge not men only, but angels. Know ye not, saith he, that we shall judge angels? (I Cor. vi:3) that is, the fallen angels. Then might they have answered him: Wherefore boastest thou thyself to be a judge? For where is thy seat? The Lord hath said that for the twelve Apostles there shall be twelve thrones; one of the twelve, even Judas, is indeed fallen, but holy Matthias is chosen into his place; for the twelve thrones there are still twelve to sit thereon first find whereon thou shalt sit, and afterward give thyself out for a judge. Let us see, then, what is the meaning of these twelve thrones. By them is signified in a mystery the whole world, since the Church shall be through all the earth, whence this building is called to be built up together in Christ.

Therefore is it said that there shall be twelve thrones, because from all quarters shall there come men to be judged; even as it is said that the city hath twelve gates, because from all quarters shall the nations of them which are saved, enter into it. So, not the twelve only, and the Apostle Paul, but all, as many as shall judge, have part in these twelve thrones, this signifying, that they shall judge all men; even as all that enter into the city, have part in her twelve gates. For there are four quarters of the world, the East, and the West, and

the North, and the South of which four quarters is mention often made in the Scriptures. From the four winds shall the elect be gathered together, as saith the Lord in the Gospel: And He shall send His Angels with a great sound of a trumpet; and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (Matt. xxiv:31). From the four winds, therefore, is the Church called together; and how are they called? Everywhere are they called in the Trinity; for they are called no otherwise than by baptising them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matt. xxvii:19). Now four being multiplied by three is twelve.

24 February: St Matthias the Apostle

Summary of the Morrow's Meditation

We will tomorrow consider in our meditation: first, what God did to St Matthias in his election to the apostolate; second, what St Matthias and the apostles who elected him did for God. We will then make the resolution: first, to thank God every day for His benefits, and to correspond with them, as this apostle did, by a holy life; second, to have in all things a very pure intention to please God. We will retain as our spiritual nosegay the words of St Paul to the Ephesians: *"Blessed be the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places, in Christ, as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted in His sight in charity"* (Eph. i:3-4).

Meditation for the Morning

Let us adore God calling St Matthias to the apostolate, that he might replace the traitor Judas; let us bless Him for this choice, which was so happy a one for the Church, and with this object in view let us render Him all our homage.

What God did for St Matthias in his election to the apostolate

The apostles had chosen two candidates for the place which was vacant in the apostolic college, Joseph, surnamed the Just on account of his eminent sanctity, and Matthias. In spite of the renown which surrounded Joseph, God, speaking by the voice of lots, designated Matthias: a palpable proof that He does not judge like men or that He gives the preference to whosoever pleases Him even in spite sometimes of the want of merit. He is the master of His gifts, and He disposes of them according to His pleasure, without our having the right to ask of Him the reason (Rom. ix:16, 18). In right of this liberty which is essential to Him, He chooses St Matthias. Honour, praise, and love be to His infinite mercies! Jesus Christ might Himself have chosen before His ascension this happy privileged man; He preferred to leave the choice to the drawing of lots: first, in order to show forth the

truth that He governs human things from the heights of heaven; ad, in order to authorise the supernatural economy of His Church and to show that He presides in visibly over it by a special Providence; third, to keep both the electors and the elected humble, as well as the superiors whom He charges to govern in His place and the inferiors who are subject to their guidance; humility being necessary to the first in order to command with meekness, to the second to obey with love, to both the one and the other in order to imitate Him who, being the greatest of all, made Himself the least, that He might make them sharers in His greatness. It is thus that the goodness of God shows itself in the election of St Matthias. God is good in all that He does. Let us admire His goodness towards us, to whom He sends His graces, anteriorly to all our merits, through the pure and simple mercy which anticipates all our needs.

What St Matthias and the apostles who elected him did for god

First, the apostles, in this election, had before their eyes no other interest than that of the glory of God; no other aid than His goodness; and they asked of Him, with fervent prayers, to show them him whom He had chosen in His eternal designs (Acts i:24). "Thou who knowest the hearts of all men (Ibid.), show to us him whom Thou dost prefer for this ministry of which Judas deprived himself by his crime." A beautiful lesson for us, and one which teaches us in all things to consider God and His good pleasure, without respect to whatever may be the opinion of men. Second, Matthias being elected, corresponds to the grace of his election by a wholly apostolic zeal. Judea falls to him as his share in the distribution of the provinces. He signalises himself thereby converting a great number of the heathens. From thence, carried away by his zeal, for which such narrow bounds do not suffice, he advances as far as Ethiopia; and there makes war upon error and ignorance. His conquests irritate his enemies; they put him to death and crown his apostolate with the glory of martyrdom. Let us learn from this always worthily to fill our position, whatever it may be, and to excel in all the labours which Providence confides to us, according to the precept of the sage: "*In all thy works keep the pre-eminence*" (Sirach xxxiii:23).

Resolutions and spiritual nosegay as above.