

two words but for what ensued there were not enough words in all the languages to describe. Matthew is precisely what is prefixed to his name. A saint.

Matthew preached the Gospel for many years after the death of Christ, traveling throughout the Holy Land and finally meeting a martyr's death at the hands of pagans in Ethiopia. His final verse is his epitaph: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

*(excerped from: //members.tripod.com)

COMMENT: From such an unlikely situation, Jesus chose one of the foundations of the Church, a man whom others, judging from his job, thought was not holy enough for the position. But he was honest enough to admit that he was one of the sinners Jesus came to call. He was open enough to recognize truth when he saw him. "And he got up and followed him" (Matthew 9: 9b).

STORY: We imagine Matthew, after the terrible events surrounding the death of Jesus, going to the mountain to which the risen Lord had summoned them. "When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them [we think of him looking at each one in turn, Matthew listening and excited with the rest], 'All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age'" (Matthew 28: 17-20). Matthew would never forget that day. He proclaimed the Good News by his life and by his word. Our faith rests upon his witness and that of his fellow apostles.

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Saint Matthew Apostle

Feast Day: September 21



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Saint Matthew

*Matthew was a native of Cana, the scene of the wedding feast at which Jesus performed his first miracle of changing the water to wine. He became a tax collector for the Roman government, a position that has endeared no one to the taxpayer at any time in history, but which in the time of Christ, when the populace was taxed to excess, was deemed second in unpopularity only to the executioner. Jesus was traveling on the Mediterranean Damascus road when he came upon Matthew who was stationed there in his inglorious pursuit. Standing at a lake near the city of Capernaum, Matthew's gaze met the Lord's and Jesus spoke to him, uttering only two words: "Follow me."

Thus, in most unceremonious fashion did the divinity of Christ assert itself and an overwhelmed Matthew took up the cause of Christ without any reply. He was no doubt so overcome with emotion at the majestic power of Jesus that he could not speak, but the communication between them was clear and Matthew felt a resurgence of the spirit within him and came to know the tranquility that emanates from God.

The service of Saint Matthew is familiar to all who call themselves Christian. His close association with Jesus tends to obscure the man who shed the ignominious role of tax collector to become the most intellectual of the twelve apostles chosen by the Lord. The awesome task of carrying the word of Christ to a people oppressed for

centuries and suspicious of any newcomer was assumed by Saint Matthew with a determination that could not be denied. If the fifteenth century civilization could laugh at Columbus who said the world was round, what did they say to Matthew fifteen hundred years earlier when he declared that Jesus was the Son of God. In simple terms, it was not easy. Matthew says it in Chapter 10: 16 when he quotes Jesus as saying to his disciples: "Behold, I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves."

After the crucifixion of Christ and His resurrection, the inspiration of the Master was reaffirmed with renewed vigor at Pentecost when all the apostles were enlightened by the Holy Spirit. Christianity owes its existence to the indomitable will and courage of the apostles, who surmounted great obstacles of disbelief, superstition, distrust and open hostility in spreading the gospel. There was no mass media, only the word of mouth and the weary foot travel from village to village. Christianity is the greatest single achievement in the history of mankind and to Saint Matthew and his ten comrades goes the credit for having successfully spread the worship of Jesus Christ.

Matthew's stature is augmented by the fact that a book of the New Testament bears his name. For that reason, among others, his name can be mentioned in the same breath as the name Jesus Christ. The Savior summoned him with but