

SEPTEMBER 21

**Saint Matthew,
Apostle, Evangelist and Martyr**

IN HIS simple-hearted gratitude, Levi made a feast for his divine Benefactor [*cf.* Mt. 9:10]. It was at this banquet that Jesus, defending His disciple as well as Himself, replied to those who pretended to be scandalized: ‘Can the children of the Bridegroom mourn, as long as the Bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall fast.’ Clement of Alexandria bears witness to the apostle’s subsequent austerity; assuring us that he lived on nothing but vegetables and wild fruits. The legend will tell us moreover of his zeal for the Master who had so sweetly touched his heart, and of his fidelity in preserving for Him souls inebriated with the ‘wine springing forth virgins’ [Zach. 9:17]. This fidelity, indeed, cost him his life: his martyrdom was in defense and confirmation of the duties and rights of holy virginity. To the end of time the Church, in consecrating her virgins, will make use of the beautiful blessing pronounced by him over the Ethiopian princess, which the blood of the apostle and evangelist has imbued with a peculiar virtue.

The Church gives us this short account of a life better known to God than to men:

“Matthew, also named Levi, was an apostle and evangelist. He was sitting in the custom-house at Capharnaum when called by Christ, whom he immediately followed; and then made a feast for Him and His disciples. After the resurrection of

Christ, and before setting out for the province which it was his lot to evangelize, Matthew was the first to write the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He wrote it in Hebrew, for the sake of those of the circumcision, who had been converted. Soon after he went into Ethiopia, where he preached the Gospel, and confirmed his teaching by many miracles.

“One of the greatest of these was his raising to life the king’s daughter, whereby he converted the king and his wife, and the whole country. After the king’s death, his daughter Iphigenia was demanded in marriage by his successor Hirtacus, who, finding that through Matthew’s exhortation she had vowed her virginity to God and now persevered in her holy resolution, ordered the apostle to be put to death, as he was celebrating the holy mysteries at the altar. Thus on the Kalends of October, he crowned his apostolate with the glory of martyrdom. His body was translated to Salerno; and in the time of Pope Gregory VII it was laid in a church dedicated in his name, where it is piously honored by a great concourse of people.”

How pleasing must thy humility have been to our Lord; that humility which has raised thee so high in the kingdom of heaven, and which made thee, on earth, the confidant of Incarnate Wisdom. The Son of God, who hides His secrets from the wise and prudent and reveals them to little ones, renovated thy soul by intimacy with Himself, and filled it with the new wine of His heavenly doctrine.

Commentary from The Liturgical Year by Dom Prosper Guéranger, O.S.B. (1805-1875).

Illustration: St. Matthew and the Angel, 1635-40, by Guido Reni (1575-1642).



Proper Prayers of the Mass in the Extraordinary Form

**ADDENDUM:
COMMEMORATION OF SAINT MATTHEW**



SECOND COLLECT

BEÁTI Apóstoli et Evangelistæ Mathæi, Dómine, præcibus adjuvémur: ut, quod possibilitas nostra non obtinet, ejus nobis intercessióne donétur. Per Dóminum nostrum ...

MAY we be helped, O Lord, by the prayers of the blessed Apostle and Evangelist Matthew, that what we cannot obtain by our own efforts, may be given to us by his intercession. Through our Lord ...

SECOND SECRET

SUPPLICATIÓNIBUS beáti Matthæi Apóstoli et Evangelistæ, quæsumus, Dómine, Ecclesiæ tuæ commendétur oblátio: cujus magnificis prædicatióibus eruditur. Per Dóminum ...

MAY the offering of Thy Church, we beseech thee, O Lord, be commended to Thee by the prayers of the blessed Apostle and Evangelist Matthew; by whose glorious preaching she is instructed. Through our Lord Jesus Christ ...

SECOND POSTCOMMUNION

PERCÉPTIS, Dómine, sacraméntis, beáto Matthæo Apóstolo tuo et Evangelista interveniéntem, deprecámur: ut, quæ pro ejus celebráta sunt glória, nobis proficiént ad medélam. Per Dóminum.

WE WHO have received the Sacraments, entreat Thee, O Lord, by the intercession of blessed Matthew, Thine Apostle and Evangelist: that what we have celebrated for his glory, may profit us unto healing. Through our Lord ...

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