

Friday May 14th, 2021, The Feast of St. Matthias, Apostle

Good Morning from St. Bernadette's.

I hope everyone is keeping safe and well, and following all the guidance we receive to overcome these strange times, and continuing to pray for all our needs at this time.

Today we have Feast day readings from St. Matthias, but to stay with the plot, in our weekday readings the night before his crucifixion, the Lord has been reminding the Apostles that he is going to suffer, and that they will suffer persecution too. Well in Acts 18:9-18 today, the Lord reminds Paul that he would suffer for him, actually speaking to him in a vision. This comes to light with some of the Jews had trying to bring him Paul before the local Roman tribunal, just as the Jews had done with Jesus. But Gallio, the proconsul would have nothing to do with their legal quibbles and sends them out, with their frustration being taken out on poor Sosthenes, the Synagogue Official, who gets beaten up for his pains. Once again, in John 16:20-23 the Lord reminds the Apostles, and each one of us, that our sorrows will be turned to joy, *'You are sad now, but I shall see you again, and your hearts will be full of joy.'*

And, as I said, today we celebrate the Feast of St. Matthias. According to our first reading today 'Acts of Apostles 1:21–26, Saint Matthias was a disciple chosen by the apostles as a replacement for Judas Iscariot after the latter's betrayal of Jesus Christ. It was important that the community endured even after the crucifixion to spread the Christian faith all around the world, and it was crucial that the number of apostles remained 12, as 12 was the number of tribes of Israel and a twelfth apostle was required for the coming of the new Israel. Jesus himself chose the original 12 apostles, and the rest of the apostles chose Saint Matthias after the Ascension. They cast their votes through lots and selected Matthias. There is no further information about him in the New Testament. It is believed that Matthias placed his faith in Jesus Christ above everything else and was present with the other apostles at the Pentecost. He embraced all the teachings of Jesus and sacrificed his life for the service of the Lord, even after being persecuted by many. He also worked many miracles in the name of Lord Jesus, which converted many to the Christian faith. He is a patron of carpenters, tailors, and those who are affected by smallpox.

*O Glorious Saint Matthias,
in God's design it fell upon you
to take the place of the unfortunate Judas who betrayed his Master.
You were selected by the twofold sign
of the uprightness of your life and the call of the Holy Spirit.
Obtain for us the grace to practice the same uprightness of life*

and to be called by that same Spirit to wholehearted service of the Church.

*Then after a life of zeal and good works let us be ushered into your company in heaven
to sing forever the praises of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.*

‘Take My Hands,’ and make them as your own, and use them for your Kingdom here on Earth. A fitting hymn for Matthias: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W2NxOdYGIyc>

By nature of our Baptism we, like Matthias, have all been chosen by God. As we thank God for the gift of his choosing of us, let us pray this prayer to affirm that choice, and hopefully to prove that God was right in his calling of each one of us by name:

*God has chosen me and made me a part of His holy people
He loves me, so my life shows mercy to others
I am kind humble, gentle and patient
I am not angry with others, but I forgive others
If I feel someone has wronged me, I forgive them
I forgive others because the Lord has forgiven me
Together with these things,
The most important part of my new life is to love others
Love is what holds everything in perfect unity
The peace that Christ gives controls my thinking
It is for peace that I am chosen to be together united in the body
I am always thankful that the teaching of Christ lives inside me richly
I use all wisdom to teach and counsel others
I sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs
With thankfulness in my heart to God
Everything I say and everything I do is done for Jesus my Lord
In all I do, I give thanks to God the Father through Jesus.
I thank God, that God has chosen me.*

Well, it was just as well that we decided to have the Masses in the school yesterday, as the rain did indeed fall in the afternoon, just at the time we would have been celebrating out in the field. Never the less we had two lovely Masses in school, and it was great to be back celebrating Mass in school once again. After half term we will resume weekly class masses both here at St. Bernadette’s and at Holy Family, which is another great sign of ‘coming out of lockdown’.

Loving God,

If we are ill, strengthen us.

If we are tired, fortify our spirits.

If we are anxious, coming out of lockdown,

*help us to consider the lilies of the field and the birds of the air.
Help us always to hold fast to the good,
See the good in a new and hope filled future,
And remember there is just one world, one hope,
One everlasting love, for everyone.
In Jesus we make our prayer,
The one who suffered, died and was raised to new life,
The one who left the darkness of the tomb into a new everlasting light,
In whom we trust these days and all days,
Amen.*

Over in the Far East it was Mother's day at the Weekend, so my HK family took my sister-in-law out for a Mongolian Barbecue to celebrate. From what I can gather, a Mongolian Barbecue is when the restaurant stick a plate of raw meat in front of you, and then you cook it yourself on hot plates and griddles with sauces. Isn't that just another name for your own kitchen at home? I think I'm missing something – anyway, here's the pics! And Happy Mother's Day Liza!

Off to Preston for the dentist's again today – the hygienist this time. Hey ho! Keep smiling!

Once again many thanks for all your return mails. Apologies if I don't reply immediately, sometimes they seem to get lost (or kind of bunched up). Any suggestions for ways to keep our faith and spirits up at this time are most welcome!

And remember, St. Bernadette's is not closed. We're just doing things differently for a while, until we are allowed to gather together once more, more stronger, more faithful, more loving, more creative, and more grateful for the amazing community that is St. Bernadette's.

With love and faith in Jesus.

Fr. P.