

Matthias

Saint Name: St. Matthias

Dates: Early first century AD – 80 AD

Location: Judea

Feast Day: May 14



Following the Ascension of Jesus, the first act of the apostles was to find a replacement for Judas Iscariot, who took his own life after his betrayal. Despite the many questions, doubts, and dangers facing them, they turned their focus to finding a twelfth apostle. The number twelve was very important to the Chosen People; twelve was the number of the twelve tribes of Israel. If the new Israel was to come from the disciples of Jesus, a twelfth apostle was needed. One hundred twenty people were gathered for prayer and reflection. St. Peter proposed one criterion: that the new apostle be someone who had been a disciple of Jesus from the very beginning. In Acts 1:21 St. Peter spoke: “Of these men who have been in our company all the time that the Lord Jesus moved among us, from John’s baptism until the day that He was taken up from us, one must become a witness with us of His Resurrection”. Two men fit the criterion and were proposed as the new apostle: Barsabbas (Joseph) and Matthias. The disciples were aware that both these men had been with them and with Jesus through his whole ministry; they cast lots in order to discover God’s will, and Matthias was chosen the new twelfth apostle. Thus, the group was whole again as they waited the coming of the Holy Spirit. It was then that the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles. This is the first and only reference to Matthias in the Scriptures. There is no mention of a Matthias among the lists of disciples of Jesus in other gospels. According to ancient tradition handed down by Clement of Alexandria and confirmed by Eusebius and St. Jerome, St. Matthias was one of the seventy-two disciples of our Lord. Clement of Alexandria says that Matthias, like all the other apostles, was not chosen by Jesus for what he already was, but for what Jesus foresaw what he would become. Matthias was chosen not because he was worthy but because he would become worthy.

According to the Greeks, St Matthias was stoned to death in Colchis (Ethiopia). He is the Patron of Alcoholism, Carpentry, and Smallpox. We celebrate his feast day on May 14.