

Feast of St. Matthias, May 14, 2025
Paula Cooney, IHM
Acts 1:15-17, 20-26/ John 15:9-17

I find it quite fitting that the Saint we remember today has nothing to remember him by except his name, and that among the 120 gathered, he stood out as one of two who had the qualities to join the 11 as leaders of the community. It reminds me of the 133 who gathered last week and discerned that, among them, there was one who stood out, whom they believed was the one who would best assume the role of leader of the Catholic Church in our times. It looks like both groups made good choices.

Today's scripture, taken from what is called the last Discourse, is placed by the writer as an after-dinner teaching and conversation Jesus had with his disciples at the Last Supper. In the culture of the times, gathering after a shared meal with the one who had hosted it for deeper conversation was expected. For me, to have these teachings presented between the washing of the feet and the passion – between a simple gesture of service and the total outpouring of Love adds another level of urgency to listen even more deeply to what is being said.

Written toward the end of the first century for the Christian Community of that time, the writer of the Gospel of John says, "only These Things are written – that YOU, the community that is alive National Organization for Women, might believe."

That Community was deeply divided into factions – they were not one. So, for the gospel writer, it certainly seems from this passage that the readers needed to be reminded very clearly of three things: There is ONE Commandment – that it is summed up in Love – because you are Friends – of God and of one another.

As the community of OUR time that is invited to engage this text, so that WE may Believe ... How do We hear these three things? What does it look like? How does it move us, individually and as a community of believers, to first simply serve one another and be willing to risk the love that takes us all the way to the cross, because we are one with Christ and therefore with one another.

I want to share a quote I received from a friend yesterday that spoke to me of what we may need to hear:

Brothers and sisters...I speak to you, especially to those who no longer believe, no longer hope, no longer pray, because they think God has left.

To those who are fed up with scandals, with misused power, with the silence

of a Church that sometimes seems more like a palace than a home.
I, too, was angry with God. I, too, saw good people die, children
suffer, grandparents cry without medicine.
And yes...there were days when I prayed and only felt an echo.

But then I discovered something: God doesn't shout. God whispers.
And sometimes He whispers from the mud, from pain, from a grandmother
who feeds you without having anything.

I don't come to offer you perfect faith.
I come to tell you that faith is a walk with stones, puddles and unexpected hugs.

I'm not asking you to believe in everything.
I'm asking you not to close the door. Give a chance to the God who waits
without judgment.

I'm just a priest who saw God in the smile of a woman who lost her son...
and yet she cooked for others.

That changed me.

So, if you're broken, if you don't believe, if you're tired of the lies...come anyway.
With your anger, your doubt, your dirty backpack. No one here will ask you for a
VIP card.

Because this Church, as long as I breathe, will be a home for the homeless and
a rest for the weary.

God doesn't need soldiers.
He needs brothers and sisters.

And you, yes, you...
Are one of them.

Robert Prevost/Leo XIV

"This is my commandment – to love as I have loved."

That is what Matthias was chosen to do and to be, what Robert Francis Prevost was
chosen to do and to be, what you and I were chosen to do and to be.