

April 22, 2020-Wednesday, Second Week of Easter

Matthew the Apostle

Matthew was a tax collector in Capernaum when Jesus called him to be a disciple. Mark and Luke call him Levi. Little is known about his life in the early Church. Tradition says he preached in Ethiopia, Parthia (modern-day Iran) and Persia, and that he was beheaded for his faith. His feast is September 21, and he is the patron saint of accountants.

Is Matthew the Apostle also Matthew the Evangelist?

Early Christian tradition attached Matthew's name to what is known as the "Gospel of Matthew." However, since this Gospel appears to have been written sometime after 80 A.D., and uses a great deal of material from an earlier Gospel (that of Mark), biblical scholars think it unlikely that the author was an eyewitness of the events narrated.

Toward the end of the first century, there was a tendency to attach the names of deceased apostles to various writings, because these writings preserved the apostolic tradition. I may be that the name of the apostle Matthew was given to this Gospel because it was written by someone who was part of an early Christian community evangelized by Matthew himself.

The Sunday Gospel readings during Cycle A (which are used this year) are generally taken from the Gospel of Matthew, especially during Ordinary Time.

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***When Jesus had said this, he breathed on the disciples and said to them, "Receive the holy Spirit." Jesus said to the disciples: "Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." (John 20:22-23)***

It is Easter Sunday evening, about 48 hours after Jesus' death on the cross.

During the passion and death of Jesus, the disciples were not the world's finest disciples. Peter denied Jesus three times. The rest of them (except, in John's account, the beloved disciple) were noticeably absent from the moment he was arrested.

But notice Jesus' first words to them 48 hours later—not, "Where were you?" or "How could you have done such a thing?" or "I am so disappointed in you."

Look again at his first words: "Peace be with you."

Then he starts talking about forgiveness, a welcome word to those disciples who needed forgiveness.

I can almost feel the sense of relief that must have come over them.

We're all sinners, and down deep we know it. And the Lord always approaches us with words of peace and forgiveness.

Maybe I need to thank the Lord for this great kindness to me.

Spend some quiet time with the Lord