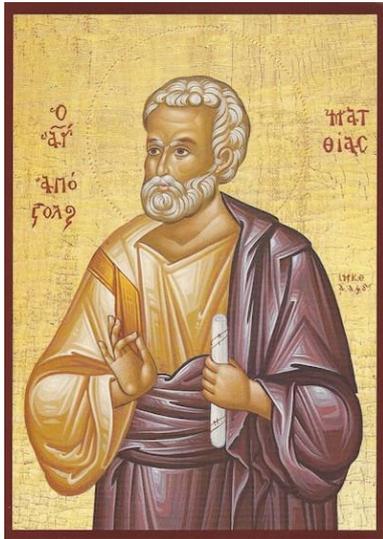


In praise of quiet acts of service



You probably don't know much about St Matthias, whose feast we celebrate today. We meet him at the beginning of the book of Acts – Jesus' followers have seen him ascend to heaven and are now back in Jerusalem. But there are no longer twelve disciples to take forward the mission Jesus gave them, now that Judas has betrayed Jesus. Peter tells the other believers that they need to find someone else, someone who has been with them since the beginning and can testify to all that has happened.

So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. Then they prayed and said, 'Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.' And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

Acts 1:23-26

And after this – well, we don't know for sure. Matthias is never mentioned again by name, either in Acts or anywhere else in the New Testament. Some have suggested that this means he was never really chosen by God, but there is nothing in the way Luke tells us the story that suggests Luke is in any way critical of what happened. So Matthias may not have done anything else to be singled out by name, but as we read about the believers in the rest of Acts, we can be pretty sure that Matthias was in and among them, doing what he had been called to do, quietly serving his Lord, and loving his fellow believers in Jesus' name.

We often look to people who have done amazing and exceptional things to inspire us. But just as inspiring, in my opinion, are the ordinary people who quietly go about their lives, not looking for fame or fortune, but simply looking to do what they can in their life to serve God and to make a difference for others, one quiet act of service at a time. You can probably name a few people you have come across in your life, who have inspired you by their quiet service of others. And right now, in the midst of

these challenging times, people in our congregation, and in congregations up and down the country, are quietly looking out for one another, and for their friends and neighbours.

These quiet acts of service might not be noticed by anyone else, but they can make a huge difference to those who are cared for. And they don't go unnoticed by God. Jesus told his followers, in the Sermon on the Mount, that those who did their acts of service in public, received their reward there and then in the praise they got. But those whose service is hidden will be seen and honoured by God.

So don't get tired of doing good, but continue your quiet acts of service. Because your Father in heaven sees what you are doing. And it is by such quiet acts of service that the world is quietly transformed.