

SAINT OF THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER

ST. MATTHEW, SEPTEMBER 21, 2016

St. Matthew's birth & death dates are unknown, but it is believed he was born in Galilee, the son of Alpheus.

Matthew was a tax collector. He was never officially beatified or canonized as he was recognized as a saint "pre-congregation". Pre-congregation refers to the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints, and it is the formal process of review by which saints are now recognized by the Church. The Church established St. Matthew's feast day as September 21.

Matthew was collecting taxes in Capernaum when he was called to be an apostle of Christ. The Bible states that Jesus simply saw Matthew sitting in a tax collector's booth and said, "Follow me". That is all it took for Matthew to discard his previous life and follow Christ.

Little is known about his life. At first, his apostolic activity was restricted to the communities of Palestine. Information about his later life, points to Ethiopia as his field of labor or maybe Parthia and Persia. It is unknown if he died a natural death or received the crown of martyrdom.

St. Matthew's Gospel was written for his fellow countrymen, both believers and unbelievers. For the believers, it served as a token of his regard and as an encouragement in the trial to come. For the unbelievers, it was designed to convince them that the Messiah had come in the person of Jesus, our Lord, in whom all the promises of the Messianic Kingdom embracing all people had been fulfilled in a spiritual, rather than in a carnal, way.

"My Kingdom is not of this world." His gospel, then, answered the question put by disciples of St. John the Baptist, "Are You He Who is to come, or shall we look for another?"

Writing for his countrymen of Palestine, St. Matthew composed his Gospel in his native Aramaic, the "Hebrew tongue" mentioned in the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. Soon afterward, about the time of the persecution of Herod Agrippa I in 42 AD, he took his departure for other lands. Another tradition places the composition of his Gospel either between the time of this departure and the Council of Jerusalem (between 42 AD and 50 AD or even later).

Definitely, however, the Gospel, depicting the Holy City with its altar and temple as still existing, and without any reference to the fulfillment of our Lord's prophecy, shows that it was written before the destruction of the city by the Romans in 70 AD and the internal evidence confirms the early traditions.

St. Matthew is often depicted with one of the four living creatures of Revelation 4:7, which reads, "The first living creature was like a lion, the second like a bull, the third living creature had a human face, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle."

According to the Bible, St. Matthew is 1 of the 12 apostles of Jesus. According to Christian tradition, he is 1 of the 4 Evangelists.

St. Matthew tells us that our Lord commanded: "Do not worry about tomorrow, tomorrow will take care of itself" Waste no time in worry! Satan hopes to ensnare you in a trap of the moment for himself. Instead, turn to God in that moment in hope, faith and love – then God will bless you abundantly.

St. Matthew Prayer

O Glorious St. Matthew, in your Gospel you portray Jesus as the longed-for Messiah who fulfilled the Prophets of the Old Covenant and as the new Lawgiver who founded a Church of the New Covenant. Obtain for us the grace to see Jesus living in his Church and to follow his teaching in our lives on earth so that we may live forever with him in Heaven.

St Matthew is the Patron of Bankers

