

May 14, 2024 - Feast of s. Matthias

[Acts 1:15-26; John 15:9-17](#)

Homily

Dear Brothers,

Of saint Matthias, we know very little more than what we find in the brief narrative of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles about his election. The essential element of the narrative is Peter's discourse, which reveals many things to us about the primitive Church and about the meaning of Evangelization. We see in that narrative that the Evangelization consists essentially in being a "witness of the Resurrection". Now, we know that there were no witness present at the moment Jesus came out from the tomb. To be a "witness of the Resurrection", in Peter's mind is to have been part of the community of those who followed Christ *"the whole time the Lord Jesus came and went among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day on which he was taken up from us."*

This is the primitive Christian community, the "apostolic" community; and we could even say the first "monastic" community; because it was the community united around Jesus from the moment he was baptised by John, and by that action assumed the ascetic movement that John represented. The Apostles are not simply auditors who heard some words and reported them, who saw some things and reported them. They are persons who lived with Jesus, who abode with Him. The Resurrection of which they want to be the witnesses, is not an event that happened on Easter morning. It is the fact that Jesus is always the same, the Living one, from the time of his life here on earth, till the moment of his Ascension, after as before his Passion and his Death. They can be witness to this, because they *lived* those events with Him.

To *live* something with a person implies an element of time, of duration, of stability, which is, as we well know, an important element of monastic life according to the Rule of St. Benedict. Jesus stresses that element of duration, with a particular insistence, in his talks with his Disciples during his last Supper with them. We just read a passage of that discourse. The verb "to abide" or "abiding" is used many times, as a refrain. "Abide in my love", says He, "as I have kept my Father's commands and I *abide* in his love". He tells them

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those things, so that his joy would *abide* in them, and so that that joy might be full. Finally, he establishes them, so that they may bear fruit and that their fruit might abide.

We know how saint Benedict, in his chapter on the reception of brothers, establishes that during the year of discernment, the whole text of the Rule will be read to the candidate, so that he may be sure that this is what he wants to live and that he can live it. Each time the candidate is invited to promise his *stability* in the community. Is it really where he wants to *abide* ?

Dear Brothers, if we are all assembled here for this Eucharist, it is because we are all witnesses of the Resurrection. Since our baptism - probably, for most of us, since our childhood, we live with the Living One, who abides in us and in the midst of us. We abide in his Word, that is addressed to us every day, and that Word abides in us. Jesus, with whom we share Life, calls us his *friends*. The community of Believers that we are, makes that we are all, in the strictest sense of the word, and the most beautiful one, *friends*,

Dear friends, let us thank saint Matthias and the other Apostles, for having been faithful witnesses of the Resurrection, and let us do the same. Then, Jesus' joy will abide in us and it will be full.