

Parish Prayer List (Living)

(Parish)

Evangelos	Carolyn	Robert	Sharon
John	Maria	Anamay	Ron
Lawrence	Dianna	Efthalia	Denny
Anthony	Pauline	Kathleen	John L.
Beverly	David	Michael	Anastasia
Nina	Walter	Nathan	Mary
Joseph	Duncan	Thecla	Michael
Reader Mark	Jason	Silouan	Susan Mary
Maximus	Emily	Clint	George
Magdalini	Connie	Emil	John H.
Barbara	Yevgeniya	Roman	Ilija
Olga	Marina	Seraphim	Maria
Sophia	Danny	Katina	Jeffery
Andrea	Subdn. Gregory		

(non-Parish)

Alexandra	Rachael	Jessilyn	Amanda
Christopher	Fr. Michael	Paige and Paul	Sean
James	Nicholas B.	Karin	Meg
Barry Pierce	Rick P.	Susan K	Rdr. David
Anna	Brian	Hugh	Salvatore
Travis	Megan	Alma	Charles Kahn
Peter	Maria	Michael	Timothy
Petrese	Mary	Clyde	Dan Brown
Pietra & Piero	Michael	Tad and Terra	Valentina

Parish Prayer List (Fallen Asleep)

Richard Lynn (+10/11)

Lois Lynn (+10/24)

Nicholas Georgeopoulos (+11/3)

Betty Pilja (+12/6)

Mary Louise Blomeley (+12/10)

Thoughts from the Fathers

"...no one can thwart someone who wishes to be saved. Only God who has made us has power over us, and He is ready to help and protect from every temptation those who cry out to Him and want to do His holy will."

St. Peter of Damaskos.

"A brother whom another brother had wronged came to see Abba Sisoës and said to him: 'My brother has hurt me and I want to avenge myself.' The old man pleaded with him saying, 'No, my child, leave vengeance to God.' He said to him, 'I shall not rest until I have avenged myself,' The old man said,

'Brother, let us pray.' Then the old man stood up and said, 'God, we no longer need You to care for us, since we do justice for ourselves.' Hearing these words, the brother fell at the old man's feet, saying, 'I will no longer seek justice from my brother; forgive me, abba.'"

The Paradise of the Fathers

"True patience consists in bearing calmly the evils others do to us, and in not being consumed by resentment against those who inflict them. Those who only appear to bear the evils done them by their neighbors, who suffer them in silence while they are looking for an opportunity for revenge, are not practicing patience, but only make a show of it. Paul writes that 'love is patient and kind.' It is patient in bearing the evils done to us by others, and it is kind in even loving those it bears with. Jesus himself tells us: 'Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who persecute and calumniate you.' Virtue in the sight of others is to bear with those who oppose us, but virtue in God's sight is to love them. This is the only sacrifice acceptable to God."

St. Gregory the Great

In order to strengthen yourself in self-restraint, reflect that he who desires to receive from God the forgiveness of sins and purification and to have peace in heaven with Christ, must unfailingly refrain not only from great passionate desires, but from small ones as well, and even from mental attachments. Reflect always to yourself on the words of Holy Scripture, that nothing defiled or unclean can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Abbot Nazarius of Valaam

"If, then, the time of this life is for repentance, the very fact that a sinner still lives is a pledge that God will accept whoever desires to return to Him. Free will is always part and parcel of this present life. And it lies within the power of free will to choose or to reject the road of life or the road of death...for it can pursue whichever it wishes. Where, then, are the grounds

for despair, since all of us can at all times lay hold of eternal life whenever we want to?"

St. Gregory Palamas

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A Tax-Collector, Apostle and Evangelist (Saint Matthew, 16 November)

In the lists of the Twelve disciples who are recorded in the New Testament, the name Matthew is mentioned. He calls himself this in the list of disciples he quotes in his Gospel (*Matth.* 10, 3), and also in the narrative of his call to the role of apostle. In the narrative of his call, he talks about a man who was sitting at his tax booth, which is why he calls himself “Matthew the Tax-Collector [=Publican]”. In Mark’s Gospel (2, 4), this tax-collector is called “Levi, the son of Alphaeus” and in Luke’s (5, 27) he is called simply “Levi”. We should mention that in the list of disciples, the apostle James is also called “the son of Alphaeus”, but he was not Matthew’s brother. Had he been, this would have been mentioned in the Gospels, as is the case with other apostles who were brothers, such as Peter and Andrew, and James and John.

Matthew lived in Capernaum, a city that belonged to the jurisdiction of Herod. As a clerk, he would have been in the service of some larger employer who had paid the tax revenues of the city, or even the region, to the Romans and then had the right to keep whatever monies he had raised. Matthew would certainly have known the Aramaic spoken by the Jews in the area, and Greek as well.

When the Lord said: “Follow me”, he left immediately, abandoning everything without hesitation. This indicates that he already knew and respected the Lord. He, too, belonged to the tax-collectors who approached the Lord and concerning whom the Pharisees condemned Him for being “a friend of tax-collectors” (*Luke* 7, 35; 15, 1). Matthew must have been a rich man. This is apparent from the fact that he had his own house. It was there that, to celebrate his call and the abandonment of his profession, he gave a farewell meal, to which he invited a good many people. It is not clear from the Gospels whether he, too, was a disciple of Saint John the Baptist, as other disciples of Christ seem to have been.

After his call, he was not prominent among the circle of disciples. Not when the Lord was alive, nor after the resurrection. His name is not mentioned anywhere in the New Testament [except as we have indicated above]. This was almost certainly because of his humility. Clement the Alexandrian provides us with details of his strictly ascetic life: “ For the Apostle Matthew ate cereals, nuts and vegetables, without meat”.

Clement, Eusebious [Eusebius] and Irinaios [Irenaeus] report that, after the Lord’s resurrection, Matthew preached Christ for about eight years to the Jews. It was here that, between 60-66 A.D., he wrote the Gospel, originally in Aramaic, and then either translated it himself or had it translated into Greek. It contains narratives of the events in the life of the Lord and also teachings which He used in His catechesis. Irinaios is the first to mention that “the Gospel according to Saint Matthew was written to the Jews”, meaning that the recipients were Jews who had become Christians or, as Origen says: “those who believed from Judaism”.

The purpose behind the writing of the Gospel of Saint Matthew was to make manifest that Christ came “from the seed of Abraham”, which is why the narrative begins with His nativity. As Saint John Chrysostom says: “He wanted nothing more than to show that He was of the seed of Abraham and David... for nothing would soothe a Jew so much as to know that Christ was the descendant of Abraham and David”. This is why he selects important events in the life of Christ, compiles His sayings and presents them in such a way that they demonstrate that Jesus Christ is, indeed, the Messiah Who was foretold for the Jews. By quoting the prophecies of the Old Testament, he makes it clear that they were fulfilled in the person of Christ.

As for his later activities, we cannot regard what has been handed down to us as either accurate or historical. Rufinus, Gregory the Great and the Church historian Socrates, all declare that he went to Ethiopia. Paulinus of Nola mentions that he converted the pagan Parthians to Christ, while Saint Nikodimos the Athonite declares that: “later he was put to death by fire by the infidels”, in Ierapolis, in Syria. It may be that this is confirmed by a verse in his *Life*: “‘Jesus You also save tax-collectors; grace belongs to You’. This is what Matthew cried, when he was in the midst of the fire”.

A. *Christodoulou*, Theologian.