

The Feast of St. Matthew  
September 21, 2010  
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Today is the prayer book Holy Day of the Feast of St. Matthew. The eucharistic lectionary appointed for Matthew points us in every way to the sacredness of Holy Scripture. Beginning with Proverbs 3:1-6, we read "My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments," and the lessons then turn to 2 Timothy 3:14-17 where we read ". . . continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." In the Gospel lesson, Jesus simply says to Matthew "Follow me." (Matthew 9:9). Even Psalm 119:33 tells us "Teach me O Lord the way of thy statutes." Every scripture appointed for the day calls us to be steeped and rooted in God's Word. We are called even from childhood to know the "sacred writings" - to study and be guided by the commandments of God and His Holy Word.

As I reflect on all of this and relate it to St. Matthew, my mind's eye sees an image of this great evangelist sitting not at a desk writing his book of the Gospel, but rather sitting in a first century version of a lazy-boy recliner, reading and studying the Bible. For to be an evangelist is to be centered in prayer, steeped in scripture, and enveloped with the Holy Word of God as a blanket and as a shield. Indeed, the true Christian walk - answering the call of Jesus to "follow me" is grounded in knowing and striving to live by the teachings he has given us. We are to start learning his Word as children (parents: the onus is in you!!) and we continue to learn and pray the Word as adults.

For bishops, priests, deacons (and many lay persons), the Daily Office is the foundation one embraces for staying submerged in the Word. For a busy professional, a mom at home with the kids, or a student in the midst of papers and required readings, scripture study may be a short reading from a daily devotional or an online bible site. Whatever your method of being in the Word - just be in it. Learn from Matthew and be blessed not only by his writing, but by the image of this great Saint sitting and getting lost on the beauty of Holy Scripture.

Blessings to you on the Feast of St. Matthew.