

28. April 2025

## ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

### “The choice of Matthias”

Acts 1:13-26

*When they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. All these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. In those days Peter stood up among the brethren (the company of persons was in all about a hundred and twenty), and said, “Brethren, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David, concerning Judas who was guide to those who arrested Jesus. For he was numbered among us, and was allotted his share in this ministry. (Now this man bought a field with the reward of his wickedness; and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their language Akel'dama, that is, Field of Blood.) For it is written in the book of Psalms, ‘Let his habitation become desolate, and let there be no one to live in it’; and ‘His office let another take.’ So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.” And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, “Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show which one of these two thou hast 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 enrolled with the eleven apostles.*

Before the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples, they were gathered together in prayer with some women, among whom the mother of the Lord is expressly mentioned. They give us an example of what to do when important events are about to happen. The Lord wants to see us gathered in prayer, for prayer prepares us for His coming and makes us more receptive to His instructions. It is not for nothing that the great liturgical feasts of

the Church, which commemorate decisive events in the history of salvation, are prepared by prayer. In the past, it was also common to fast during these periods of preparation, a custom which is still practised today, especially in Eastern Christianity. We can also apply the mention of the Virgin Mary to our own time: we gather with her in prayer. She will give wings to our prayer and make it fruitful.

But before the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles, they had an important matter to resolve. It was Peter, their spokesman, who pointed it out, having been strengthened in his position of leadership by the Lord's own commission: the succession of Judas, who had betrayed Jesus, had to be decided. The number of apostles was to be restored. *"Let his office another take"*, as the Scriptures testify.

Whom should the disciples choose? There is a condition for the new apostle: *"One of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection"*.

The disciples presented two candidates who met these criteria. But they wanted to be sure that it was the Lord who would choose the twelfth apostle. So they decided to cast lots, asking the Lord to show them whom he had chosen. We know the result: the lot fell on Matthias, who completed the number of the twelve apostles.

After this act, they were ready, and it was not long before the awaited Paraclete descended upon them. Between Ascension and Pentecost, the Church prays a novena to recall and renew each year the nine days of preparation experienced by the disciples in the Upper Room.

It was only when the Holy Spirit descended that the Apostles were endowed with all the necessary authority to carry out the mission entrusted to them by their Lord. The same is true for us today. Only when we are filled with the Holy Spirit will our testimony have the strength and spiritual flavour necessary to reach the hearts of others. Only then will the Word of God be able to divide the spirits and give people the comfort and guidance they need to truly meet the Lord. Without the Holy Spirit it is no more than a human work.

So come, Holy Spirit, and from your celestial home shed a ray of light divine.

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Meditation on the Reading of the Day:

<https://en.elijamission.net/to-proclaim-the-gospel-with-boldness-2/#more-5240>

Meditation on the Gospel of the Day:

<https://en.elijamission.net/10228-2/#more-10228>