

12 is an important number in the church. Just as there were 12 tribes of Israel, Jesus selected 12 apostles to learn from him throughout his ministry. With the betrayal and death of Judas, it is important to make the apostles whole again by picking a 12<sup>th</sup> apostle.

Gathered together in Jerusalem, the apostles have certain qualifications that a person must meet. “Therefore, it is necessary that one of the men who accompanied us 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, become with us a witness to his resurrection” (Acts 1:21-22). Two individuals fulfill the basic requirements, but the ultimate decision is left to God.

The Apostles pray for help and then they make a decision that invokes the Holy Spirit’s assistance. “‘You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen’ ... Then they gave lots to them, and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was counted with the eleven apostles” (1:24, 26).

When we make choices that call people to service, there can be hurt feelings. One may feel like a winner, the other a loser. This does not happen with the system established to select Matthias. No individual had to pick Matthias over Joseph. Both were fully qualified, but the Spirit with the all-encompassing knowledge of God chooses Matthias. “It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain” (Jn 15:16).

As we make decisions in life, it is always helpful to trust in God with our prayers to make the best decision. When the College of Cardinals gather for the selection of a new pope, they always invoke the Holy Spirit to help them in their choice. God often surprises us with his selection.

O God, who assigned Saint Matthias  
a place in the college of Apostles,  
grant us, through his intercession,  
that, rejoicing at how your love has been allotted to us,  
we may merit to be numbered among the elect.<sup>i</sup>

With his newfound responsibility as an Apostle, tradition tells us “Matthias preached in Cappadocia, Jerusalem, the shores of the Caspian Sea (in modern day Turkey) and Ethiopia.” He was a martyr for the faith facing death like Christ and many of the other apostles. “He is invoked for assistance against alcoholism, and for support by recovered alcoholics.”<sup>ii</sup>

O Glorious Saint Matthias, in God’s design it fell upon you to take the place of the unfortunate Judas who betrayed his Master. You were selected by the twofold sign of the uprightness of your life and the call of the Holy Spirit. Obtain for us the grace to practice the same uprightness of life and to be called by that same Spirit to wholehearted service of the Church. Help us remember that Jesus chose you, like us, not for what you were but because of what you would become through His grace. Please help all who struggle with the addiction of alcoholism to experience this same grace and come to live in the serenity and joy of a life surrendered to God. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.<sup>iii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Collect from the Roman Missal for the Feast of Matthaïs

<sup>ii</sup> catholicnewsagency.com/saint/st-matthias-apostle-459

<sup>iii</sup> yourcatholicguide.com/prayers-and-devotions/prayers-for-healing/prayer-healing-alcoholics.html