

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Today our Archdiocese celebrates a solemnity as it is the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, the co-patron of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, along with Saint Patrick of Ireland. Today, we also pray in a very special way for our beloved Archbishop Cordileone, who celebrates his eighth anniversary as our chief shepherd. We are so blessed to have an archbishop who loves us and works so tirelessly and diligently on our behalf, especially during this challenging and difficult time for our local and national Catholic community. We welcome our Saint Pius Catholic School leadership team and their families to our 9:30am Mass, where they will be given a special blessing. I am proud of our students who assume leadership responsibilities. This reflects a desire to serve and to make a difference. We wish them every success in their endeavors.

As many of you already know, San Mateo County has once again allowed for indoor worship services, either 25% of a church's capacity for a maximum of 100 congregants. After consultation with our parish staff and several parishioners, I am revising our mass schedule to reflect this new county policy. **Commencing October 3, 2020, the revised Mass schedule will be 5:00pm Saturday evening inside the Church, 9:30am Sunday (outdoors & livestreamed) and 11:30am Sunday Spanish (outdoors & livestreamed). Weekday Mass will be at Noon (inside the Church & livestreamed). PLEASE HELP TO ENSURE THAT ALL HEALTH AND SAFETY MEASURES ARE ADHERED TO.** Once again, I wish to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to our staff and generous volunteers who have sacrificed so much over these many months to bring the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass into our homes. May we continue to pray for all of those afflicted with the coronavirus, their families, health care professionals and first responders.

In celebrating the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, we recall a man who gave so completely of himself in service to the Lord. Francis came from a very wealthy family, and it was his father's determination that his son inherit a very powerful and successful mercantile business. At one point, in response to his rage that his son wanted to choose a different path, his father had him imprisoned. Francis was willing to go to any lengths to fulfill his deepest desires in serving his Lord and Master. The intensity of his call from Jesus Christ and the radical way in which he lived it out makes his such an inspiration to people from every corner of the globe. The example of human compassion for all of God's creation exhibited by Saint Francis of Assisi makes him venerated by people of every race, religion, creed, and geographic region of the globe.

On September 21, the Church celebrated the Feast of Saint Matthew the Apostle. Matthew's Gospel for that day says, "As Jesus passed by, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the customs post. He said to him, 'Follow me.' And he got up and followed him." In the Office of Readings for September 21, there is a homily by Saint Bede the Venerable reflecting upon the discipleship of Matthew. It is a very powerful reflection and I wish to share it with you for your prayer and contemplation of our own call to discipleship and companionship with Jesus. May these words give you encouragement, hope, and an abundance of graces.

"Jesus saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax office, and he said to him: Follow me. Jesus saw Matthew, not merely in the usual sense, but more significantly with his merciful understanding of men. He saw the tax collector and, because he saw him through the eyes of mercy and chose him, he said to him: Follow me. This following meant imitating the pattern of his life—not just walking after him. Saint John tells us: Whoever says he abides in Christ ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. And he rose and followed him. There is no reason for surprise that the tax collector abandoned earthly wealth as

soon as the Lord commanded him. Nor should one be amazed that neglecting his wealth, he joined a band of men whose leader had, on Matthew's assessment, no riches at all. Our Lord summoned Matthew by speaking to him in words. By an invisible, interior impulse flooding his mind with the light of grace, he instructed him to walk in his footsteps. In this way Matthew could understand that Christ, who was summoning him away from earthly possessions, had incorruptible treasures of heaven in his gift.

As he sat at table in the house, behold many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples. This conversion of one tax collector gave many men, those from his own profession and other sinners, an example of repentance and pardon. Notice also the happy and true anticipation of his future status as apostle and teachers of the nations. No sooner was he converted than Matthew drew after him a whole crowd of sinners along the same road of salvation. He took up his appointed duties while still taking his first steps in the faith, and from that hour he fulfilled his obligation and thus grew in merit.

To see a deeper understanding of the great celebration Matthew held at his house, we must realize that he not only gave a banquet for the Lord at his earthly residence, but far more pleasing was the banquet set in his own heart which he provided through faith and love. Our Saviour attested to this: *Behold I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.*

On hearing Christ's voice, we open the door to receive him, as it were, when we freely assent to his promptings and when we give ourselves over to doing what must be done. Christ, since he dwells in the hearts of his chosen ones through the grace of his love, enters so that he might eat with us and we with him. He ever refreshes us by the light of his presence insofar as we progress in our devotion to and longing for the things of heaven. He himself is delighted by such a pleasing banquet."

Blessed Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi!!

Fr. Tom