

Dear Friend

I thought it might be good to talk about our Patron Saint, St Matthew, whose feast day we celebrated (in a suitably sombre way due to mourning for HM Queen Elizabeth's death) yesterday. We had the joy of the ministry of Bishop Karawei, who did mention St Matthew in his sermon but there was a great deal to take in so it won't hurt to go over his life again.

**St. Matthew**, also called **St. Matthew the Evangelist**, **St. Matthew the Apostle**, or **Levi**, (flourished 1st century AD in Palestine) was one of the Twelve Apostles of [Jesus Christ](#) and the traditional author of the [first Synoptic Gospel](#) (the Gospel According to Matthew).

According to Matthew 9:9 and Mark 2:14, Matthew was sitting by the customs house in Capernaum (near modern Almagor, Israel, on the Sea of Galilee) when Jesus called him into his company. Assuming that the identification of Matthew with Levi is correct, Matthew (probably meaning "Yahweh's Gift") would appear to be the Christian name of Levi (called by Mark "Levi the son of Alphaeus"), who had been employed as a tax collector in the service of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee. Because Levi's occupation was one that earned distrust and contempt everywhere, the scribes of the Pharisees criticized Jesus on seeing him eat with tax collectors and sinners, whereupon Jesus answered, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mark 2:15–17). According to Luke 5:29, the aforementioned dinner was given by Levi in his house after his call.

Other than naming Matthew in the list of Apostles, usually pairing him with St. Thomas, the New Testament offers scant and uncertain information about him. Outside the New Testament, a statement of importance about him is the passage from the Apostolic Father [Papias of Hierapolis](#) preserved by Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea: "So then Matthew composed the Oracles in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted them as he could." The Gospel According to Matthew was certainly written for a Jewish-Christian church in a strongly Jewish environment, but that this Matthew is definitely the Synoptic author is seriously doubted. Tradition notes his ministry in Judaea, after which he supposedly missioned to the East, suggesting Ethiopia and Persia. [Legend](#) differs as to the scene of his missions and as to whether he died a natural death or a martyr's. Matthew's relics were reputedly discovered in Salerno (Italy) in 1080. His symbol is an angel, and he is a patron saint of tax collectors and accountants.

*(Source: The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, most recently revised and updated by Melissa Petruzzello.)*

I commend to you the booklet explaining the parables in our wonderful, [stained glass windows](#) as we should all be able to explain each one to visitors and then we can take Bishop Karawei's injunction to us to take that message out to the people we meet on any day of the week, not just on Sundays.