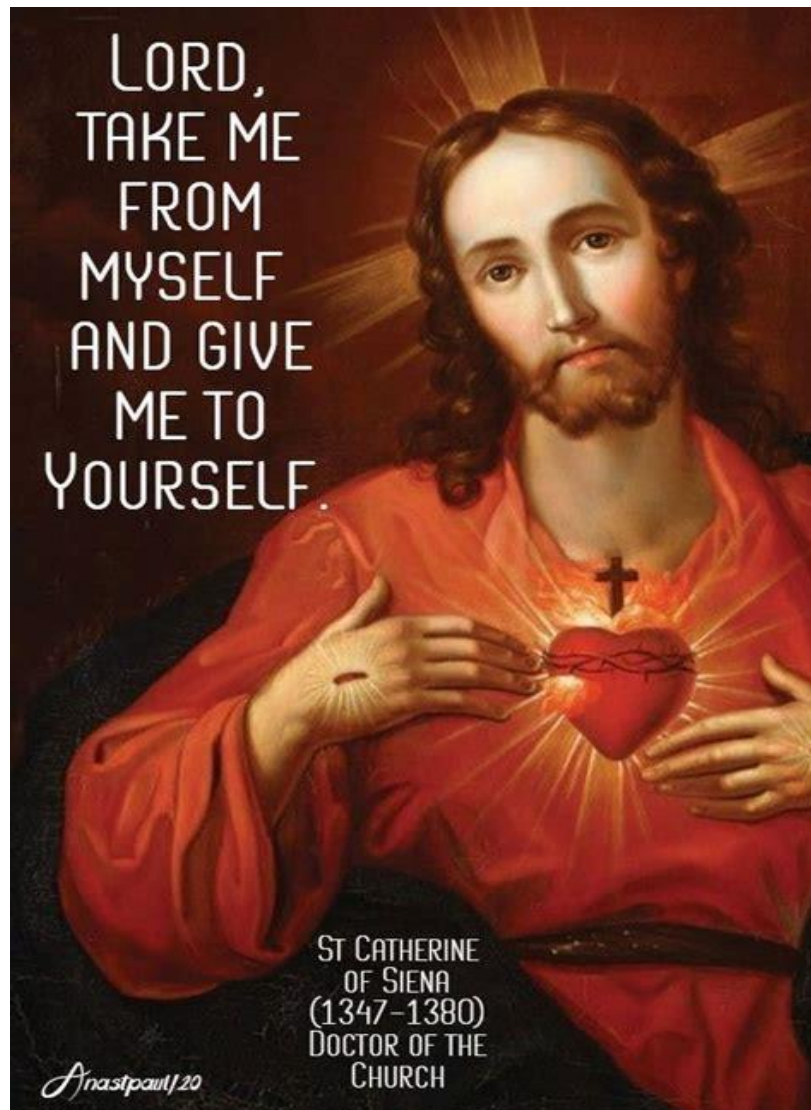


FROM FR. JOHN: “I, the prisoner in the Lord, implore you to lead a life worthy of your vocation. Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together. ... Then we shall not be children any longer, or tossed one way and another and carried along by every wind of doctrine, at the mercy of all the tricks men play and their cleverness in practicing deceit. If we live by the truth and in love, we shall grow in all ways into Christ, who is the head by whom the whole body is fitted and joined together, every joint adding its own strength, for each separate part to work according to its function.” (Ephesians 4:1 - 3, 14 – 15)

Praise the Lord, my soul!!!



St. Paul, in the letter to the Ephesians (above), implored all of us to live a life that was worthy of the call that we have received from our Lord Jesus Christ.

This past Wednesday was the Feast of St. Matthew the Apostle. St. Matthew is a great example of leading a life that is worthy of the call that we have received from our Lord Jesus Christ. He was a tax collector and a sinner. He was a wealthy and powerful man in Ancient Israel. Yet, when our Lord Jesus said to him, "Follow me," he immediately dropped everything and followed after our Lord Jesus.

His conversion must have been extremely powerful. He had been serving the Roman Empire, serving the secular world and immediately began serving our Lord Jesus. He would become one of the twelve apostles.

He was called from his tax business to follow Jesus. It was a call from one way of thinking to another. It was a call from security to insecurity, from wealth to poverty, from power to powerlessness. He was not asked to make a donation from the profits of his business, but was called to actually follow our Lord Jesus in person; to dedicate his life to our Lord.

Matthew's gospel goes on to tell us that "While he was at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat with Jesus and his disciples." A great thing happened once St. Matthew followed our Lord Jesus. Other tax collectors, other sinners flocked to our Lord Jesus and began to follow him as well. St. Bede the Venerable wrote, "No sooner was he converted than Matthew drew after him a whole crowd of sinners along the same road to 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."

St. Paul was a Pharisee, He was at the top of society in Ancient Israel. He was probably a rich and powerful man in Ancient Israel. He persecuting the early church. Yet he dropped everything and left his former way of life when he encountered our Risen Lord on the road to Damascus. St. Matthew and St. Paul are just two examples of great saints who came from wealthy, prestigious and powerful families. There are countless examples of saints who came from the top of society. But, there are also countless examples of saints who came from the bottom of society.

God calls the poor, the weak, the rich and the powerful. Our Lord Jesus calls each of and every one of us and asks each of us to follow him, to dedicate our very lives to him and to God our Father.

May God bless you and all those who love the Lord.

