

St. Matthias - February 24
by Fr. Christopher Keough, OFP

Sometimes second string wins the game. For the last 36 years I have been emerged in the world of baseball at one level or another, from my six years of umpiring minor league professional ball, then to the ranks of the NCAA and for the last several years at the High School Varsity level. One thing that all of these levels have in common is that, at any given time, someone can come off the bench and make a fantastic play, or get the clutch hit. The old saying "It's never over until it's over" (Yogi Berra?) is really true. Anything can happen when a player steps into the batter's box holding a bat. As an umpire, I have learned to never assume anything nor discount anyone - it's not over until it's over.

So what does any of this have to do with the celebration of the life and ministry of St Matthias? Perhaps you've got this one figured out already - Matthias came in off the bench and replaced Judas. He was chosen by the eleven to take the place of the one who betrayed Jesus. The disciples were committed to continuing the mission and ministry that Jesus had established for them, and in the same way. They needed a twelfth man. In fulfillment of Psalm 109:8, they chose a replacement, and the lot fell to Matthias.

We are told about all of this in Acts 1, after Jesus ascends into heaven the disciples regroup. There are (at least) three significant lessons that one can learn from this event.

1) The "B" team sometimes gets the job done better than the "A" team. There are times in our lives when we probably feel like we're on the second string team - and that we might not even get in the game. There always seems to be more talented and more gifted people out there. There's usually someone we can point to who seems to have it better - or more together - than we do. Don't be discouraged. God has a purpose and a plan. Stay faithful and God will use you, perhaps in ways you haven't imagined, but He will.

2) Stay focused faithful, and ready to serve. Matthias was chosen because of his faithful and committed service. Even when he wasn't on the "A" team, he was faithfully serving. When called upon, he was ready to serve. Perhaps the difference to highlight is that we are already and always in His service - maybe just not in high profile ways. Stay focused, faithful, and committed.

3) The "A" team isn't always the best team, or the team that God wants to use. I have said many times in my ministry that there are probably people that can do the job better than I can, but for some reason God has placed me in this place at this time. Don't discount yourself or others in ministry. God can and will use His faithful people to make manifest His Grace and Love to this world. My Bishop is fond of saying, "It is easier to make a faithful man able, than to make an able man faithful."

Blessings on the Feast of St. Matthias. May his faithful, committed service be an

example to us all.

February 24, 2014