

Matthias comes late to the leadership and is both the choice of the disciples and the choice of God, if one accepts choosing by lot as a way of allowing God to have a say. This subtle, or not so subtle, interplay of man proposing and God disposing, is perhaps recognisable by us all in the pattern of our own Christian lives. We may be puzzled to find ourselves in this or that position, in this or that partnership, in this or that place or people. But if we have been prayerful, as the disciples clearly are here, and our desire – however confused- is for God – that is, for the ways and means of love, then we needn't be surprised by the pattern that emerges, nor in fear. For as our desire for God, for love, grows, however haltingly, so God 's presence in us grows, too, however obscure to ourselves. We find, indeed, that God, in a sense, honours our choices and makes them his own. This is us, as branches attached to a vine, with God's love as grace, or spirit, or whatever one wants to call it, freely circulating within us. We may be unfaithful but God is always faithful; the flow of God's love ensuring that whatever our failures and weaknesses we remain part of the Body of Christ. Matthias is chosen as fertile ground for this faithfulness, partly on his own account, having witnessed Christ both in life and at his resurrection, but largely on God's account, who honours this faith with his own.

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