



Christian Art

Daily Gospel Reading and Art Reflection

Luke 6:12-19

Jesus went out into the hills to pray, and picked out twelve



The Communion of the Apostles,
Painted by James Tissot (1836-1902),
Painted between 1886-1894,
Opaque watercolour over graphite on grey wove
paper

Daily Gospel Reading

Luke 6:12-19

Jesus went out into the hills to pray; and he spent the whole night in prayer to God. When day came he summoned his disciples **and picked out twelve of them;** he called them 'apostles': Simon whom he called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon called the Zealot, Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot who became a traitor.

He then came down with them and stopped at a piece of level ground where there was a large gathering of his disciples with a great crowd of people from all parts of Judaea and from Jerusalem and from the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon who had come to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. People tormented by unclean spirits were also cured, and everyone in the crowd was trying to touch him because power came out of him that cured them all.

Reflection on the watercolour

Our watercolour by James Tissot titled 'The Communion of the Apostles' depicts the establishment of the Sacrament of the Eucharist, in which the bread and wine of the Passover feast are changed into the body and blood of Christ. We see Jesus himself distributing the bread to each disciple, suggesting the intimacy each of them shared with him at this solemn moment. Christ is painted with stronger white tonalities, thus being the source of light in our composition.

In today's reading we hear how Jesus chose his apostles, the very twelve men who were there at the institution of the Eucharist. Luke, more than the other evangelists, portrays Jesus as a person of prayer. Everything he does flows out of prayer. And so it goes with today's reading, Jesus spends the whole night in prayer before he chose the Twelve. He prayerfully discerned those who would form this important group.

Even with discernment, we know how afterwards the leader of this group of twelve would go on to deny him three times; and one of the group would go on to betray him with a kiss. Jesus' prayer did not guarantee perfect results. And so it goes for us. The fact that we pray does not mean that everything will work out just right and that we will get perfect results. However, what prayer does do is to deepen our love for God and strengthen our communion with God... we thus join in with the Communion of the Apostles, the theme of today's watercolour.