

The Feast of St Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist – Monday 21st September 2026:

God does not just call the perfect to follow him but extends this invitation to all, calling us to follow him into eternal life. Jesus calls Matthew (also known as Levi) to be one of his closest disciples. At first glance, this is a scandalous decision, as a tax collector for the Roman occupiers he is a traitor to his people and yet, Jesus chooses him inviting him to leave behind his sinful life, becoming an apostle and evangelist documenting the actions and teaching of Jesus, showing to the people of Israel that He is the long-awaited Messiah. In becoming Christian, we too leave aside our sinful past and profess the faith of the Church. Now our conduct should be above reproach, always consistent with our baptismal calling of being priests, prophets and kings, and like Matthew, we are called to make known the gospel and catholic faith, known to others.

Tuesday in 25th Week in Ordinary Time – 22nd September 2026:

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the perfect example of discipleship because of her perfect fulfilment of what God asks of her, both her yes to being '*The Mother of God*' and to taking station at the foot of the cross. For the other disciples of the Lord, they needed the Resurrection Appearances and the Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost to give them the necessary grace and strength to announce the good news of salvation to the nations, even to the point of death, the laying down of their lives for the sake of the gospel and the salvation of souls. Jesus considers those who do the will of His Heavenly Father as a member of His own family, and so, even though it be emotionally difficult, we should devote ourselves to proclamation of the gospel even though our families may wish us to do something else, which they think is more worthwhile.

Memorial of St Padre Pio – Wednesday 23rd September 2026:

St Padre Pio received a 'stigmata', a physical mark of the cross on his hands. He suffered from ill health, but his strong faith allowed him to understand that '*in weakness God perfects his power*', granting him visions of heaven. It was said that in Confession, he had a special gift for getting to the bottom of sin, and he was known as a '*martyr of the confessional*', as many people flocked to him for absolution, a commitment that took its toll on his health. People spoke of his holiness, saying that the blood from his '*stigmata*' smelled of floral perfume, that he was already exuding the "*odour of sanctity*," and multiple eyewitnesses said he had the gift of bilocation. Fellow friars remember seeing him in prayer outside when they knew he was still in his room.

The Feast of Our Lady of Walsingham – Thursday 24th September 2026:

In 11th century, Richeldis de Faverches has a vision of Our Lady asking her to build a replica of the House of the Annunciation, Nazareth in Walsingham. Within a century, the Augustinian Canons had built a priory and made Walsingham a shrine, rivalling even Canterbury. It was popular with Kings and people alike, with many coming on pilgrimage to walk the holy mile, until King Henry VIII's commissioners caused the site to close along with the suppression of the monasteries. The priory was destroyed, and the statue of Our Lady of Walsingham was taken to London and burnt. In 1896 Catholics reacquired the Slipper Chapel (*the place where people removed their shoes to walk the holy mile*) and over time, pilgrimages resumed and continue to do so.

Friday in 25th Week in Ordinary Time (II) – 25th September 2026:

The coming of Christ marks the fullness of time. This is the '*last age*' as we await his return in glory, the time when he '*comes to judge the living and the dead*'. In every season of life, we are reminded that we belong to Christ. As the Easter season tells us, as the Candle is blessed, the priest prays: '*Christ yesterday and today, the beginning and the end, the alpha and the omega, all time belongs to him, and all the ages, to him be glory and power through every age for ever and ever*'. Jesus is the Lord of Time, the beginning and its end; every day and year, indeed, every moment are embraced by his Incarnation and Resurrection, becoming the goal of our life – not just now in time, but a share in his life for eternity, even when time no longer exists.

Opt. mem. of St Cosmos and St Damian – Saturday 26th September 2026:

In the Eucharistic Prayer I, the Roman Canon, after the names of the Apostles we hear: Linus, Cletus, Clement, Sixtus, Cornelius, Cyprian, Lawrence, Chrysogonus, John and Paul, and finally Cosmos and Damien; these are the names of the first popes, bishops and martyrs of the Roman Church. The last two seem to be the odd ones out, for Cosmos and Damian are saints of the Eastern Church and yet take a prominent place in the Roman Canon! They were martyred during the Diocletian persecution, dying at Antioch, the place where the followers of Jesus were first called 'Christians' and where Peter was its first bishop. They were doctors who accepted no payment for their service; by their spirit of charity, they attracted many people to the faith, healing out of love of God and neighbour. Their fame was widespread and so, Pope Symmachus encouraged devotion to them, adding them to the Mass.