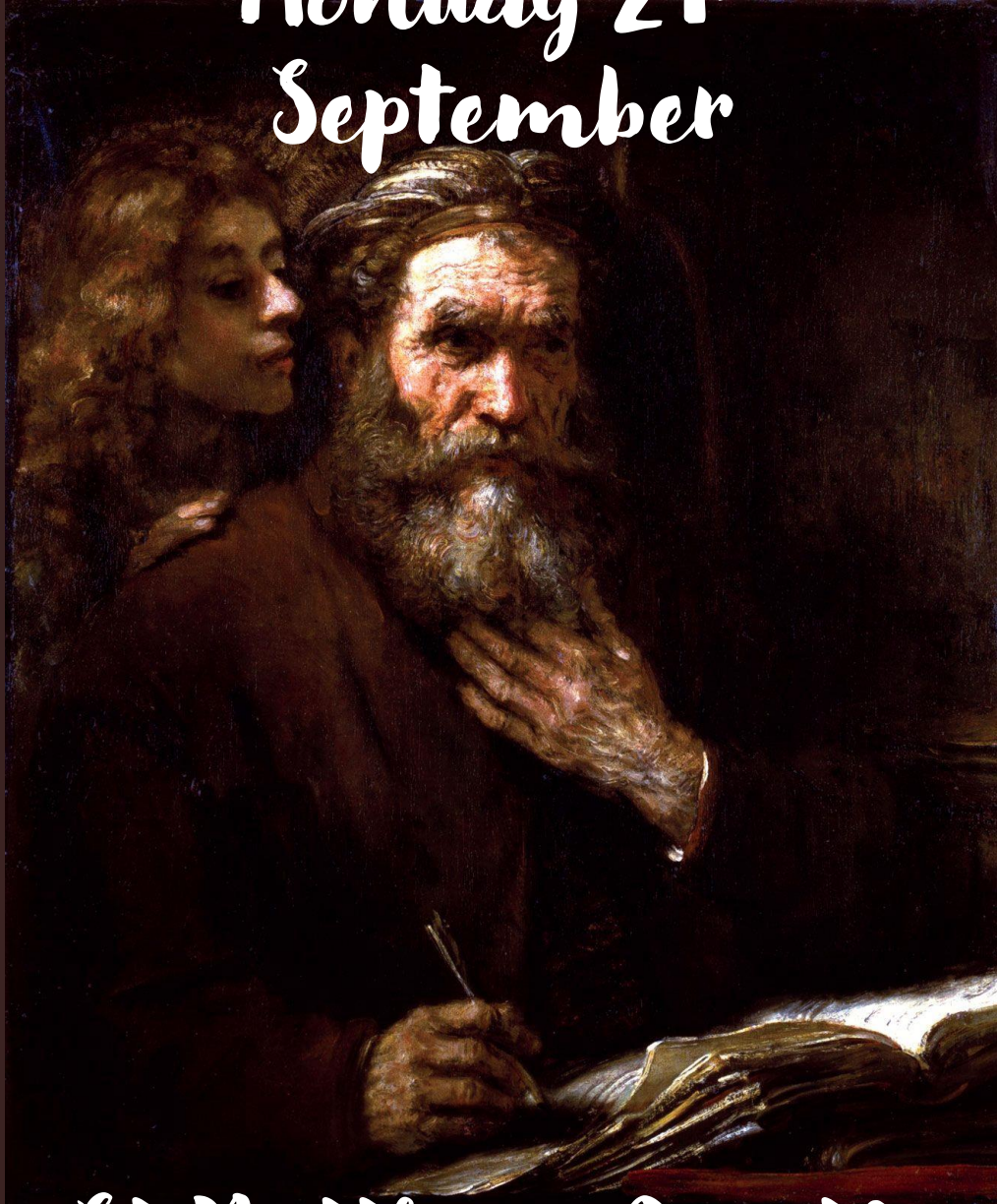




Prayers for week ahead

WEEK BEGINNING 21ST SEPTEMBER

Monday 21st
September

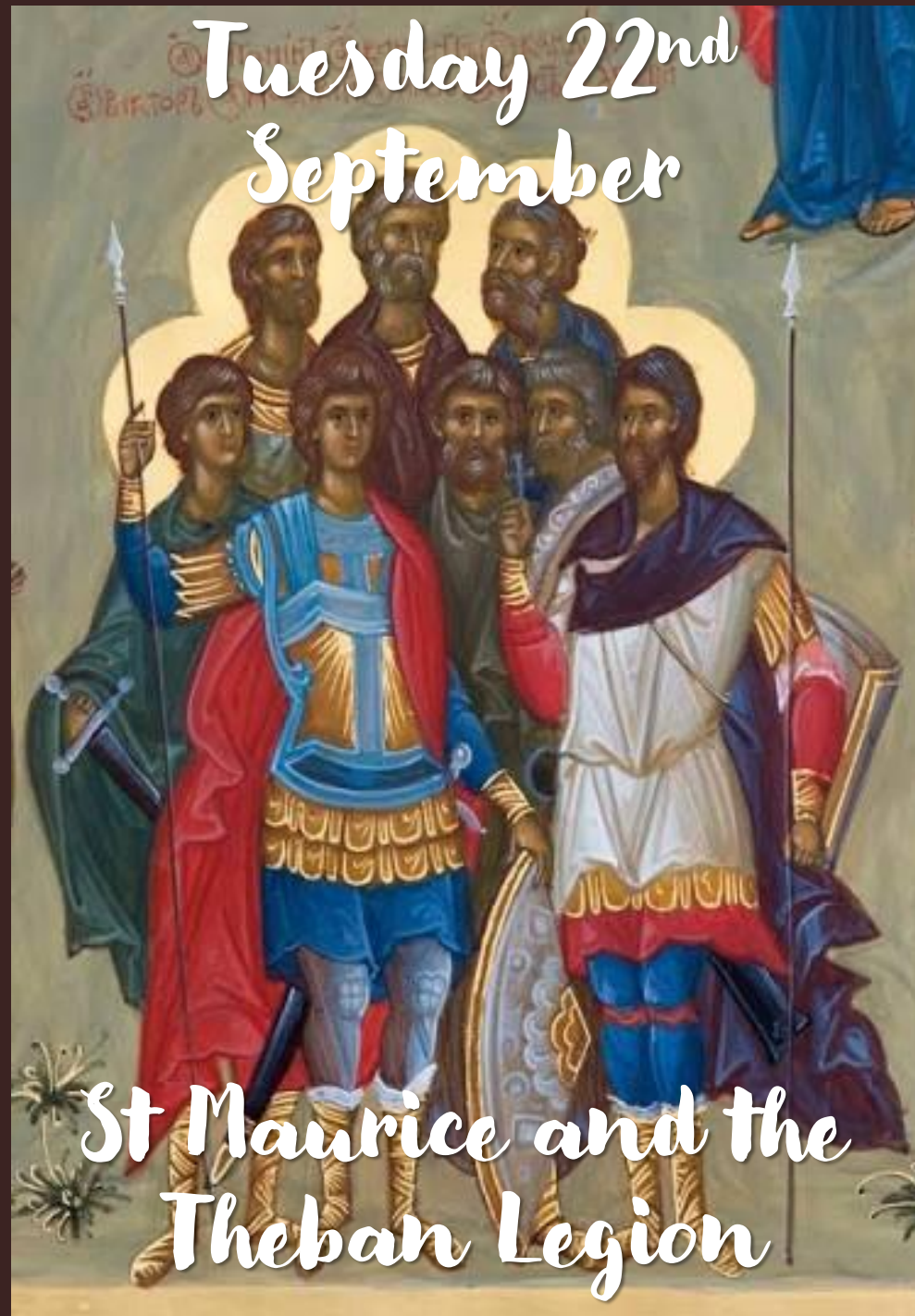


St Matthew, Apostle

St. Matthew the Apostle, originally named Levi, was a Jewish tax collector in Capernaum before his life was transformed by Jesus Christ. In the Catholic tradition, tax collectors were often marginalized and viewed as public sinners due to their collaboration with the Roman occupiers. When Jesus approached his custom post and said, "Follow me," Matthew immediately left behind his wealth and career to become one of the Twelve Apostles. He hosted a banquet in his home where Jesus famously declared that He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, highlighting the depth of divine mercy and grace.

Following Christ's Resurrection and Ascension, St. Matthew wrote his Gospel—traditionally recognized as the first in the New Testament canon—to proclaim to early Jewish Christians that Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah. Catholic teaching venerates St. Matthew as both an Apostle and an Evangelist, represented by the symbol of a winged man or angel, which reflects his emphasis on Christ's human lineage and incarnation. According to Sacred Tradition, he preached the Gospel in region of Judea and beyond before suffering martyrdom for the Faith, leaving a legacy as the patron saint of accountants, bankers, and tax collectors.

St Matthew, pray for us.



Saint Maurice was a third-century Christian commander of the Theban Legion, a unit of over six thousand soldiers from Upper Egypt serving under the Roman Emperor Maximian. While deployed to Gaul (modern-day Switzerland) around AD 287 to suppress a rebellion, Emperor Maximian ordered the legion to offer pagan sacrifices to ensure military victory and to persecute local Christians. Guided by their deep Christian faith, Maurice and his fellow soldiers refused to obey the emperor's commands, declaring that while they were loyal soldiers of the empire, their ultimate allegiance belonged to God. In Catholic tradition, St. Maurice and his men embody the virtue of moral courage, showing that a true Christian must choose God's law over unjust human orders, even at the highest personal cost.

In response to their refusal, Maximian ordered the legion to be decimated—executing every tenth soldier—hoping to break their resolve. Led by St. Maurice alongside his officers Saint Exuperius and Saint Candidus, the men stood firm in their faith, encouraging one another to embrace martyrdom rather than renounce Christ. Unwilling to yield, the emperor ordered the slaughter of the entire legion, making Agaunum (now Saint-Maurice, Switzerland) a sacred site of heroic witness. Today, the Catholic Church honours St. Maurice and the Theban Legion on September 22nd, venerating St. Maurice as a patron saint of soldiers, infantrymen, and weavers, and celebrating their radical witness to faith, brotherhood, and unyielding virtue.

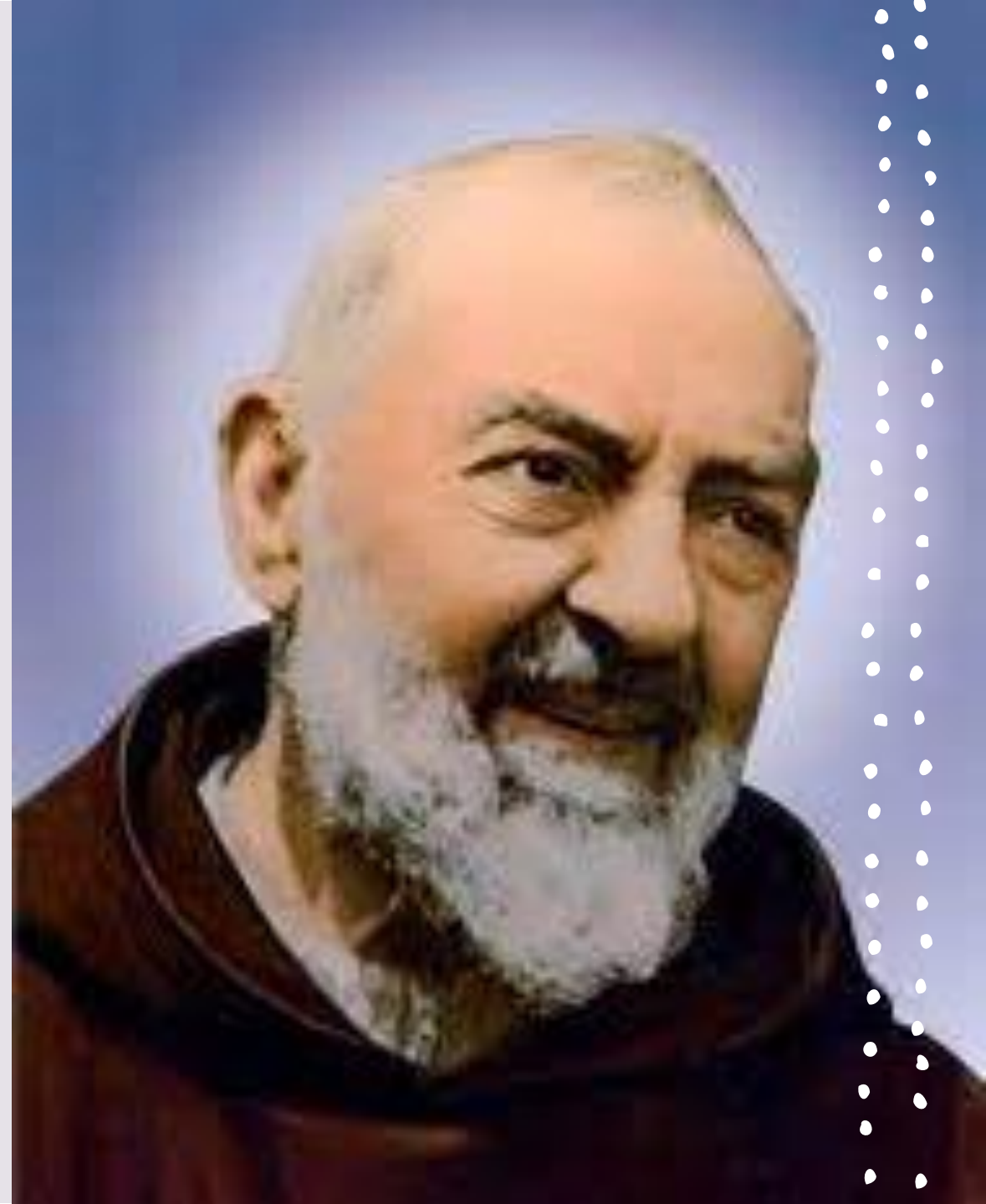
St Maurice, pray for us.

Wednesday 23rd September

St Pius of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio)

- St. Padre Pio was born Francesco Forgione, on May 25, 1887, in Pietrelcina, Italy. His parents were peasant farmers. He had an older brother and three younger sisters, as well as two other siblings who died in infancy. As a child, he was very religious and by the age of five he reportedly made the decision to dedicate his life to God. St. Padre Pio was an Italian priest who was known for his piety and charity, as well as the gift of the stigmata, which has never been explained.
- Today let us try and live our lives by following his advice:

“Pray, wait, and do not worry. Worrying is useless. God is merciful and will listen to your prayer... Prayer is the best weapon we have; it is the key to the heart of God. You should speak to Jesus, not with your lips but with your heart.”





Thursday 24th
September

St Gerard Sagredo

St. Gerard Sagredo (980-1046 A.D.) was born in Venice, Italy. From an early age he desired to dedicate his life to God, and as a young man became a Benedictine monk. He first served as abbot at a monastery in Venice, but left to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. While passing through Hungary he met the Hungarian king, St. Stephen, who asked him to stay in his country to evangelize and minister to his people. St. Gerard agreed, and was named Bishop of Csanád and the royal tutor of the Hungarian prince. He ministered tirelessly among the Hungarian people and helped to convert the whole country to Christianity, for which he is called the "Apostle of Hungary." After the death of King St. Stephen there was a pagan uprising against the Christians, and St. Gerard was martyred for the faith along with two others. His death took place on a hill in Budapest which is now named after him; according to one tradition he was placed in a barrel lined with spikes, and rolled down the hill. He was declared a saint in 1083 by Pope St. Gregory VII. St. Gerard Sagredo is the patron saint of Hungary, and his feast day is September 24th.

Today let us think about all of the people around the world who suffer for their faith. Give us courage and confidence to stand up for what we believe in.

Friday 25th September

Saint Finbar

Finbar was the son of an artisan and a lady of the Irish royal court. Born in Connaught, Ireland, and baptized Lochan, he was educated at Kilmacahil, Kilkenny, where the monks named him Fionnbharr (white head) because of his light hair; he is also known as Bairre and Barr. He went on pilgrimage to Rome with some of the monks, visiting St. David in Wales on the way back. Supposedly, on another visit to Rome the Pope wanted to consecrate him a bishop but was deterred by a vision, notifying the pope that God had reserved that honour to Himself, and Finbar was consecrated from heaven and then returned to Ireland. He may have preached in Scotland but definitely did in southern Ireland and he lived as a hermit on a small island at Lough Eiroe. On the river Lee, Finbar founded a monastery that developed into the city of Cork, of which he was the first bishop. His monastery became famous in southern Ireland and attracted numerous disciples. Many extravagant miracles are attributed to him, and supposedly, the sun did not set for two weeks after he died at Cloyne about the year 633.





Saturday
26th September

St Cosmas and
Damian, Martyrs

Sts. Cosmas and Damian were brothers, born in Arabia, who had become eminent for their skill in the science of medicine. Being Christians, they were filled with the spirit of charity and never took money for their services. At Egaea in Cilicia, where they lived, they enjoyed the highest esteem of the people. When the persecution under Diocletian broke out, their very prominence rendered them marked objects of persecution. Being apprehended by order of Lysias, governor of Cilicia, they underwent various torments about the year 283. They are patron saints of pharmacists.

Oh glorious martyrs of Christ, Saints Cosmas and Damian, you gave your lives for the love of God, benefiting your fellow man and crowning your martyrdom with an open and loyal profession of your faith. You taught us to love God about all things, and to love our fellow man as ourselves, professing always and without fear, the religion of Jesus. Augmenting among the faithful populace many miracles, you are glorious indeed. Through your intercession, which brings about deliverance of these miracles, we pray to you for your aid in all things. May your patronage never be far from us in the illness of our body and soul. Oh great protectors, Saints Cosmas and Damian, assist us with your love and free us from all evils. Amen.