

St Matthew



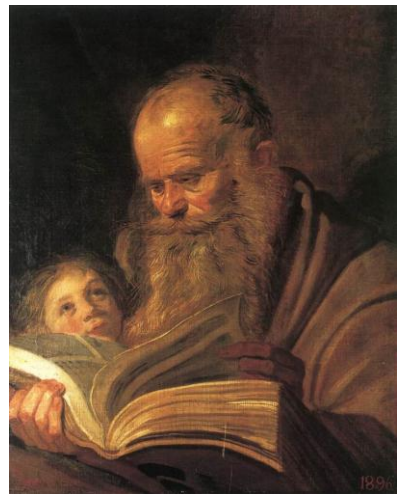
St Matthew's feast day is 21st September. Matthew was a tax collector – a very unpopular profession which made him unfit to associate with in the eyes of the teachers of the law and the Pharisees, both because the taxes were collected for the occupying Romans, and because tax collectors were reputedly corrupt. None the less, Jesus, who came to call not the

righteous, but sinners, called him to be his disciple. The calling of Matthew is the subject of a very fine painting by **Caravaggio**.



Matthew is best known as the author of the first Gospel. This Gospel is distinguished by the fullness with which it records Jesus' teaching (the Sermon on the Mount comes from Matthew), the interest it shows in the relation between the *new law* of Jesus and Jewish law, and the detail of the post resurrection appearances in Galilee.

Because of this Matthew is usually shown with a book. He also has as a



symbol a man (whereas the other evangelists get animals: a lion for Mark, a bull for Luke and an eagle for John). The two other pictures give contrasting takes on this. **Guido Reni** shows Matthew writing his Gospel at the dictation of an angel. **Frans Hals** (better known for his secular portraits such as the *Laughing Cavalier*) shows Matthew reading to a child. The two together thus make an interesting contrast in the way they use the traditional symbols.