**8 August**

**Dominic**

Priest, Founder of the Order of

Preachers. 1221

Almighty God, whose servant, Dominic grew

in the knowledge of your truth and formed an

order of preachers to proclaim the faith of Christ:

by your grace give to all people a love for your word

and a longing to share the gospel, so that the whole world may come to know you and your Son Jesus

Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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**8 August**

**Dominic**

Priest, Founder of the Order of Preachers

Born in 1170 at Calaruega in Castile, of the ancient Guzan family, Dominic became an Augustinian or Austin Friar and led a disciplined life of prayer and penance. He became Prior in 1201 but three years later, whilst on a trip to Denmark with his Bishop, he passed through France and came across Cathars or Albigenses. They claimed to be Christians but held the heterodox belief that flesh and material things were evil, that the spirit was of God and that flesh and spirit were in permanent conflict. Dominic formed an Order of Preachers to combat this belief, although he would have nothing to do with the vengeful Crusade that began to be waged against the Albigenses. The Dominican Order spread to many countries in just a few years and did much to maintain the credibility of the orthodox faith in late-mediæval Europe. Dominic died on this day at Bologna in 1221.

*Sourced from ‘Exciting Holiness’*

**9 August**

**Mary Sumner**

**Founder of the Mothers’ Union**

Faithful and loving God, who called Mary Sumner

to strive for the renewal of family life: give us the

gift of your Holy Spirit, that through word, prayer

and deed your family may be strengthened and your people served; through Jesus Christ your Son our

Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity

of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

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**9 August**

**Mary Sumner**

**Founder of the Mothers’ Union**

Mary Elizabeth Sumner (née Heywood) was born in 1828 at Swinton. In 1848, she married a young curate, George Henry Sumner, nephew of Archbishop Sumner, and who himself became Bishop of Guildford in 1888. A mother of three children, Mary called a meeting in 1876 at which the Mothers’ Union was founded, providing a forum in which to unite mothers of all classes in the aim of bringing up children in the Christian faith. Baptism and parental example were its two basic principles. At first a parochial organisation, it grew steadily into an international concern, encouraging the ideal of a Christian home. Mary died on this day in 1921.

*Sourced from ‘Exciting Holiness’*

**10 August**

**Laurence**

**Deacon at Rome,**

**Martyr, 258**

Almighty God, who made Laurence a

loving servant of your people and a wise

steward of the treasures of your Church:

fire us with his example to love as he

loved and to walk in the way that leads

to eternal life; through Jesus Christ

our Lord.

Amen.

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**10 August**

**Laurence**

**Deacon at Rome, Martyr**

The sources for the martyrdom of Laurence

are among the earliest, though the details are

thin. Laurence was one of the seven deacons

at Rome and closely associated with Pope

Sixtus II, martyred just a few days before him.

His examiners insisted he produce the Church

treasures. He promptly did so: assembling

all the poor, he is reputed to have said,

‘These are the treasures of the Church’.

The story of his being put to death on a

gridiron is a much later addition to his story.

He died on this day in the year 258.

*Sourced from ‘Exciting Holiness’*

**11 August**

**Clare of Assisi,**

Founder of the Poor Clares, 1253

God of peace, who in the poverty of the

blessed Clare, gave us a clear light to shine

in the darkness of this world: give us grace

so to follow in her footsteps that we may,

at the last, rejoice with her in your eternal

glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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**11 August**

**Clare of Assisi**

Founder of the Minoresses

(Poor Clares)

Born in 1193 in Assisi of a wealthy family, Clare caught the joy of a new vision of the gospel from Francis’s preaching. She escaped from home, first to the Benedictines and then to a Béguine-style group, and she chose a contemplative way of life when she founded her own community, which lived in corporate poverty understood as dependence on God, with a fresh, democratic lifestyle. Clare became the first woman to write a religious Rule for women, and in it showed great liberty of spirit in dealing with earlier prescriptions. During the long years after Francis’ death, she supported his earlier companions in their desire to remain faithful to his vision, as she did. Some of her last words were, ‘Blessed be God, for having created me.’

*Sourced from ‘Exciting Holiness’*

**13 August**

**Jeremy Taylor**

**Bishop of Down and Connor,**

**Teacher of the Faith 1667**

Holy and loving God, you dwell in the

human heart and make us partakers of

the divine nature in Christ our great high

priest: help us who remember your

servant Jeremy Taylor, to put our trust

in your heavenly promises and follow

a holy life in virtue and true godliness;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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**13 August**

**Jeremy Taylor**

**Bishop of Down and Connor,**

**Teacher of the Faith.**

Jeremy Taylor was born in Cambridge in 1613

and educated there at Gonville and Caius College.

He was ordained in 1633 and, as the Civil War got under way, he became a chaplain with the Royalist forces. He was captured and imprisoned briefly but after his release went to Wales, where the Earl of Carbery gave him refuge. He wrote prolifically whilst there, notably *The Rule and Exercise of Holy Living* in 1650 and *of Holy Dying* the following year. In 1658 he went to Ireland to lecture and two years later was made Bishop of Down and Connor.

He found many of his clergy held to Presbyterianism and so ignored him; and the Roman Catholics rejected him as a Protestant. In turn, he treated both sides harshly, though he is gratefully remembered by many in his diocese. His health was worn down by the protracted conflicts and he died on this day in 1667.

*Sourced from ‘Exciting Holiness’*

**13 August**

**Florence Nightingale**

Nurse, Social Reformer

Florence Nightingale was born in 1820

into a wealthy family. In the face of

their opposition, she insisted that she

wished to train in nursing. In 1853,

she finally achieved her wish and headed

her own private nursing institute in London.

Her efforts at improving conditions for the

wounded during the Crimean War won her

great acclaim and she devoted the rest of her

life to reforming nursing care. Her school

at St Thomas’s Hospital became significant

in helping to elevate nursing into a profession.

An Anglican, she remained committed to a

personal mystical religion which sustained

her through many years of poor health until

her death in 1910.

*Sourced from ‘Exciting Holiness’*

**13 August**

**Octavia Hill**

Social Reformer

Octavia Hill was born in 1838 into a family active in social work, and during her teens,

she was influenced by the friendship of

F. D. Maurice and John Ruskin. Earning

her living through teaching, Octavia was appalled at the conditions in which most of her pupils lived. Borrowing money, she bought some slum properties and began to manage them in a more

sympathetic way, insisting on financial viability rather than mere charity. The success of the scheme led to its extension and Octavia became a pioneer of housing reform. Strongly motivated

by her faith, she never allowed her growing fame to undermine her personal humility.

She continued her work until her death

on this day in 1912.

*Sourced from ‘Exciting Holiness’*

**15 August**

**The Blessed Virgin Mary**

Blessed are you, Mary for you believed

that what was said to you by the Lord

would be fulfilled. Alleluia.

In the womb of Mary, you found a

dwelling place on earth, O Christ;

remain for ever in our hearts. Alleluia

Mary gave birth to the Word of God;

truly she is the ever-blessed mother of

Christ our Lord. Alleluia.

Almighty God, who looked upon the

lowliness of the Blessed Virgin Mary

and chose her to be the mother of your

only Son: grant that we who are redeemed

by his blood may share with her in the

glory of your eternal kingdom; through

Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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**15 August**

**The Blessed Virgin Mary**

Mary was a young Jewish girl living in Nazareth

when a messenger from the Lord announced that

she was to be the bearer of the Son of God to the

world. Her response, ‘Let it be to me according

to your word’ revealed her natural sense of

obedience to God and her reverence for his word, showing her worthy to be the bearer of the Word

made flesh.

This day is now celebrated as the major

feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary

throughout most of Christendom.

*Sourced from ‘Exciting Holiness’*

**20 August**

**Bernard**

**Abbot of Clairvaux**

**Teacher of the Faith, 1153**

Merciful redeemer, who by the life

and preaching of your servant Bernard,

rekindled the radiant light of your Church:

grant us, in our generation, to be inflamed

with the same spirit of discipline and love

and ever to walk before you as children of

light; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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 Church of England

**20 August**

**Bernard**

Abbot of Clairvaux,

Teacher of the Faith.

Bernard was born at Fontaines near Dijon,

in France in the year 1090. He entered the Benedictine abbey at Cȋteaux in 1112, taking with him many of his young companions, some of whom were his own brothers.

He was a leader of the reform within Benedictinism at this time and in 1115 was sent to establish a new monastery at

a place he named Clairvaux, or ‘valley of light’. Though times were hard, he built up the community with his remarkable qualities of leadership. Bernard preached widely and powerfully and proved himself a theologian

of renown. Literally hundreds of houses were founded on the Cȋteaux or Cistercian system and Bernard’s influence on his own generation and beyond was immense. He died on this day in 1153.

*Sourced from ‘Exciting Holiness’*