

14 February

Valentine

Martyr at Rome 269

Valentine was a Priest or a Bishop of Terni who was martyred at Rome under the Emperor Claudius in about 269.

The connection of this celebration with lovers seems to be either as the traditional day in mediæval belief when birds mated, or more likely as being linked with the pagan Lupercalia festival in Rome, which occurred on the Ides of February. For Christians, this day marks an acknowledgement of an all-loving God who blesses those who love one another, as Jesus implored his own disciples to do.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'

14 February

**Cyril and Methodius
Missionaries to the Slavs,
869 and 885**

Lord of all, who gave to your servants
Cyril and Methodius the gift of tongues
to proclaim the gospel to the Slavs:
make your whole Church one as you are
one that all Christians may honour one
another, and east and west acknowledge
one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and
you, the God and Father of all; through
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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14 February

**Cyril and Methodius
Missionaries to the Slavs**

Cyril and his older brother Methodius were born in Thessalonica, both developing in their youth the ability to speak several languages, including Slavonic, a language not yet written down, at least in an alphabet understood by others. Cyril created the Slavonic alphabet and set about translating the Scriptures and other liturgical texts into the language. They established the Church in Moravia, but in so doing entered into the controversy between indigenous and centralised religious practices and worship. Cyril died on this day in the year 869, whilst the brothers were in Rome, there to obtain papal approval for their evangelistic work. Methodius returned to Moravia as Archbishop, where he completed the translation of the Bible and continued the missionary work. He died in the year 885. Today they are revered in both Christian East and West and, as such, are seen as patron saints of ecumenism between these two great branches of Christendom.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'

17 February

**Janani Luwum,
Archbishop,
Martyr, 1977**

God of truth, whose servant Janani Luwum walked in the light, and in his death defied the powers of darkness: free us from fear of those who kill the body, that we too may walk as children of light, through him who overcame darkness by the power of the cross, 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.

17 February

**Janani Luwum
Archbishop of Uganda, Martyr**

Janani Luwum was born in 1922 at Acholi in Uganda. His childhood and youth were spent as a goat-herd but he quickly showed an ability to learn and absorb knowledge when given the opportunity. Soon after he became a teacher, he was converted to Christianity and was eventually ordained in 1956, becoming Bishop of Northern Uganda in 1969 and Archbishop of Uganda in 1974. Idi Amin had come to power in Uganda in 1971 and the result of a military coup and his undemocratic and harsh rule was the subject of much criticism by the Church and others. After receiving a letter from the bishops protesting at the virtual institution of state murder, Janani and two of Amin's own government ministers were stated as having been found dead following a car accident. It emerged quickly that they had in fact died on the implicit instructions of the president. Janani's enthusiasm for the good news of Jesus, combined with his willingness to sacrifice even his own life for what he believed in, led him to his martyrdom on this day in 1977.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'