22 June

Alban
First Martyr of Britain
c. 250

Eternal Father, when the gospel of Christ first came
to our land you gloriously confirmed the faith of Alban
by making him the first to win a martyr's crown:
grant that, following his example, in the fellowship of
the saints we may worship you, the living God, and give
 true witness to Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

Amen.

Alban was a citizen of the Roman city of Verulamium
(now St Albans in Hertfordshire) who gave shelter to a
Christian priest fleeing from persecution, hiding him in his
house for several days. Greatly influenced by his devotion
to prayer, Alban received instruction from the priest and
was converted. When the priest's hiding-place was
discovered, Alban dressed himself in the priest's cloak and
was arrested in his place. Tortured by the Roman
authorities, Alban refused to renounce his faith. He was
beheaded on this day, probably in the year 250, and so is
acknowledged as the first British martyr. The remains of
his shrine stand today as a place of pilgrimage in the
Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'