

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.

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22 June

Alban
First Martyr of Britain

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'

23 June

**Etheldreda
Abbess of Ely, c.678**

Eternal God, who bestowed such grace upon your servant Etheldreda that she gave herself wholly to the life of prayer and to the service of your true religion: grant that we, like her, may so live our lives on earth seeking your kingdom that by your guiding we may be joined to the glorious fellowship of your saints; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

23 June

**Etheldreda
Abbess of Ely**

Etheldreda (Audrey) was born in Suffolk in the seventh century, a daughter of the King. She desired to commit her life to prayer and chastity and, after two arranged and unconsummated marriages, founded a religious house at Ely for both men and women, over which she ruled as Abbess. At her death on this day in 678, she was revered as a woman of austerity, prayer and prophecy.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'

24 June

Birth of John the Baptist

Almighty God, by whose providence your servant John the Baptist was wonderfully born, and sent to prepare the way of your Son our Saviour by preaching of repentance: lead us to repent according to his preaching and, after his example, constantly to speak the truth, boldly to rebuke vice, and patiently to suffer for the truth's sake; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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24 June

The Birth of John the Baptist

The biblical story of John, the son of Elizabeth and Zechariah, begins even before his birth. His leaping in his mother's womb is seen as a great alleluia in anticipation of the birth of his redeemer, and the good news of Jesus Christ is related in all four gospels as beginning with John as Christ's forerunner. He seemed to have a predestined rôle akin to that of the Old Testament prophets, particularly in encouraging the people of God to live lives worthy of their calling and in imminent anticipation of the coming of the Anointed One. In the tradition of the early Fathers, John was seen as endowed with grace from before his birth, and consequently the Church has always kept the celebration of this day with greater solemnity than that of his death.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'