**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.

© The Archbishops’ Council of the

 Church of England

**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.

© The Archbishops’ Council of the

 Church of England

**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.

© The Archbishops’ Council of the

 Church of England

**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 rȏle 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 that that of his death.

*Sourced from ‘Exciting Holiness’*