

**23 April**

**George  
Martyr,  
Patron of England c.304**

God of hosts, who so kindled the flame of love in the heart of your servant George that he bore witness to the risen Lord by his life and his death: give us the same faith and power of love that we who rejoice in his triumphs may come to share with him the fullness of the resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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**23 April**

**George  
Martyr, Patron of England**

George was probably a soldier living in Palestine at the beginning of the fourth century. He was martyred at Lydda in about the year 304, the beginning of the persecutions of Diocletian, and became known throughout the East as, 'The Great Martyr'. There were churches in England dedicated to him before the Norman conquest. The story of his slaying the dragon may be due to his being mistaken in iconography for St Michael, himself usually depicted wearing armour; or it may be a mistaken identification with Perseus's slaying of the sea monster, a myth also associated with Lydda. George replaced Edward the Confessor as patron saint of England following the Crusades, when returning soldiers brought back a renewed interest in his cult. King Edward III made George patron of the Order of the Garter, which seems finally to have confirmed his position as England's patron saint.

*Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'*

**25 April**

## **Mark the Evangelist**

Almighty God, who enlightened your holy Church through the inspired witness of your evangelist Saint Mark: grant that we, being firmly grounded in the truth of the gospel, may be faithful to its teaching both in word and deed; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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**25 April**

## **Mark Evangelist**

John Mark was a Jew and, according to Paul's letter to the Colossians, cousin to Barnabas. He accompanied Barnabas and Paul on their first missionary journey. Afterwards, he went to Cyprus with Barnabas and to Rome with first Paul then Peter. Mark's gospel is generally regarded as the earliest and most likely written whilst he was in Rome. It was probably based as much on Peter's preaching of the good news as on Mark's own memory. Mark's gospel has a sharpness and an immediacy about it and he does not spare the apostles in noting their weaknesses and lack of understanding that Jesus The Christ would suffer for the world's redemption. Sharing in the glory of the resurrection means sharing in the giving of self, both in body and spirit, even to death; sharing the gospel was, for all, in essence both excessively generous and ultimately sacrificial.

*Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'*

**27 April**

**Christina Rossetti**  
**Poet**

Christina Rossetti was born in 1830 and was associated with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, of which her older brother, Dante, was a prominent member. Her elder sister became an Anglican Religious. Christina's own fame rests upon her poetry, which dealt mainly with religious subjects but also the sadness of unrequited or disappointed love. Her first recorded verses, addressed to her mother on the latter's birthday, were written on 27 April 1842. She was the author of the Christmas carol *In the bleak mid-winter*. She died on 20 December 1894.

*Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'*

**29 April**

**Catherine of Siena  
Teacher of the Faith 1380**

God of compassion, who gave your servant Catherine of Siena a wondrous love of the passion of Christ: grant that your people may be united to him in his majesty and rejoice for ever in the revelation of his glory; 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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**29 April**

**Catherine of Siena  
Teacher of the Faith 1380**

Catherine Benincasa was born in 1347, the second youngest of twenty-five children. Pious from her earliest years, she overcame family opposition to her vocation and became a Dominican tertiary at the age of eighteen. Nourished by a life of contemplative prayer and mystical experience, she devoted herself to active care for the poor and sick. She became increasingly sought out as an adviser on political as well as religious matters and, in 1376, she journeyed to Avignon as an ambassador to the Pope and influenced his decision to return to Rome. She wrote a *Dialogue* on spiritual life as well as numerous letters of counsel and direction, which stressed her devotion to the Precious Blood of Jesus. She suffered a stroke on 21 April and died eight days later, on this day in the year 1380.

*Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'*