

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'

28 June

**Irenæus
Bishop of Lyons,
Teacher of the Faith**

God of Peace, who through the ministry of your servant Irenæus, strengthened the true faith and brought harmony to your Church: keep us steadfast in your true religion, and renew us in faith and love, that we may always walk in the way that leads to eternal life; through 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.

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28 June

**Irenæus
Bishop of Lyons,
Teacher of the Faith**

Irenæus was probably a native of Smyrna, born in about the year 130. As a boy, he had heard Polycarp preach, who had in turn been a disciple of the apostle John. Irenæus is thus one of the important connections between the apostolic Church and the second century. He studied at Rome, and became a priest at Lyons in Gaul, succeeding as Bishop upon the martyrdom of his predecessor in 177. He contended against the mythological, unhistorical beliefs of the Gnostics, giving positive value to the full humanity of the incarnate Christ, and affirmed the public teaching rôle of the episcopate to combat false doctrine. He is honoured as the first great Catholic theologian, one who drew upon the emerging traditions of East and West. Irenæus died in about the year 200.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'

29 June

**Peter and Paul
Apostles**

Almighty God, whose blessed apostles Peter and Paul glorified you in their death as in their life: grant that your Church, inspired by their teaching and example, and made one by your Spirit, may ever stand firm upon the one foundation, Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

Amen.

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29 June

**Peter and Paul
Apostles**

Peter has often been called the 'Prince of the Apostles' because of the words of Jesus re-naming him from Simon to Cephas. This was the Aramaic form of the Greek word Peter, which means 'rock'. Jesus said that on this rock he would build his Church. But both Peter and Paul came to be seen as having different rôles to play within the leadership of the Church: Peter in witnessing to the lordship of Christ and Paul in developing an understanding of its meaning for Christ's followers. Peter and Paul have been remembered jointly on this day since the very early days of the Church, it being regarded as the anniversary of their martyrdom in Rome in about the year 64.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'