

5 August

Oswald

King of Northumbria, Martyr 642

Lord God almighty, who so kindled the faith of King Oswald with your Spirit that he set up the sign of the cross in his kingdom and turned his people to the light of Christ: grant that we, being fired by the same Spirit, may always bear our cross before the world and be found faithful servants of the gospel; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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5 August

Oswald

King of Northumbria

Born around the year 605, the son of King Ælfrith of Northumbria, Oswald was forced to leave home after his father's death and move to Iona where, influenced by the monks of St Columba, he was baptised. Returning to Northumbria in 634, Oswald defeated the British king, setting up a cross as his standard and gathering his men around it to pray the night before the battle. A man of humility and generosity, Oswald worked closely with his friend Aidan, travelling with him on his missionary journeys and acting as his interpreter. He died in battle on this day in 642 defending his kingdom from the Mercians.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'

6 August

The Transfiguration of Our Lord.

Father in heaven, whose Son Jesus Christ was wonderfully transfigured before chosen witnesses upon the holy mountain, and spoke of the exodus he would accomplish at Jerusalem: give us strength so to hear his voice and bear our cross that in the world to come we may see him as he is; 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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6 August

The Transfiguration of Our Lord.

The story of the Transfiguration of Jesus on the mount is told in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, and Peter refers to it in his Second Epistle. Each time, it is made clear that God's salvation is for all and Christ is the one who brings that salvation. The testimony of the law and the prophets to Jesus are given by the presence of Moses and Elijah, and the event also pre-figures the resurrection, giving a foretaste of the life of glory.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'

8 August

Dominic Priest, Founder of the Order of Preachers. 1221

Almighty God, whose servant, Dominic grew in the knowledge of your truth and formed an order of preachers to proclaim the faith of Christ: by your grace give to all people a love for your word and a longing to share the gospel, so that the whole world may come to know you and your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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8 August

Dominic Priest, Founder of the Order of Preachers

Born in 1170 at Calaruega in Castile, of the ancient Guzan family, Dominic became an Augustinian or Austin Friar and led a disciplined life of prayer and penance. He became Prior in 1201 but three years later, whilst on a trip to Denmark with his Bishop, he passed through France and came across Cathars or Albigenses. They claimed to be Christians but held the heterodox belief that flesh and material things were evil, that the spirit was of God and that flesh and spirit were in permanent conflict. Dominic formed an Order of Preachers to combat this belief, although he would have nothing to do with the vengeful Crusade that began to be waged against the Albigenses. The Dominican Order spread to many countries in just a few years and did much to maintain the credibility of the orthodox faith in late-mediæval Europe. Dominic died on this day at Bologna in 1221.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'

9 August

**Mary Sumner
Founder of the Mothers' Union**

Faithful and loving God, who called Mary Sumner to strive for the renewal of family life: give us the gift of your Holy Spirit, that through word, prayer and deed your family may be strengthened and your people served; 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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9 August

**Mary Sumner
Founder of the Mothers' Union**

Mary Elizabeth Sumner (née Heywood) was born in 1828 at Swinton. In 1848, she married a young curate, George Henry Sumner, nephew of Archbishop Sumner, and who himself became Bishop of Guildford in 1888. A mother of three children, Mary called a meeting in 1876 at which the Mothers' Union was founded, providing a forum in which to unite mothers of all classes in the aim of bringing up children in the Christian faith. Baptism and parental example were its two basic principles. At first a parochial organisation, it grew steadily into an international concern, encouraging the ideal of a Christian home. Mary died on this day in 1921.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'

10 August

**Laurence
Deacon at Rome,
Martyr, 258**

Almighty God, who made Laurence a loving servant of your people and a wise steward of the treasures of your Church: fire us with his example to love as he loved and to walk in the way that leads to eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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10 August

**Laurence
Deacon at Rome, Martyr**

The sources for the martyrdom of Laurence are among the earliest, though the details are thin. Laurence was one of the seven deacons at Rome and closely associated with Pope Sixtus II, martyred just a few days before him. His examiners insisted he produce the Church treasures. He promptly did so: assembling all the poor, he is reputed to have said, 'These are the treasures of the Church'. The story of his being put to death on a gridiron is a much later addition to his story. He died on this day in the year 258.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'

11 August

**Clare of Assisi,
Founder of the Poor Clares, 1253**

God of peace, who in the poverty of the blessed Clare, gave us a clear light to shine in the darkness of this world: give us grace so to follow in her footsteps that we may, at the last, rejoice with her in your eternal glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

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11 August

**Clare of Assisi
Founder of the Minoreesses
(Poor Clares)**

Born in 1193 in Assisi of a wealthy family, Clare caught the joy of a new vision of the gospel from Francis's preaching. She escaped from home, first to the Benedictines and then to a Béguine-style group, and she chose a contemplative way of life when she founded her own community, which lived in corporate poverty understood as dependence on God, with a fresh, democratic lifestyle. Clare became the first woman to write a religious Rule for women, and in it showed great liberty of spirit in dealing with earlier prescriptions. During the long years after Francis' death, she supported his earlier companions in their desire to remain faithful to his vision, as she did. Some of her last words were, 'Blessed be God, for having created me.'

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'

13 August

Jeremy Taylor

**Bishop of Down and Connor, Teacher
of the Faith, 1667**

Holy and loving God,
you dwell in the human heart
and make us partakers of the divine nature
in Christ our great high priest:
help us who remember your servant Jeremy Taylor
to put our trust in your heavenly promises
and follow a holy life in virtue and true godliness;
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.

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13 August

Jeremy Taylor

**Bishop of Down and Connor, Teacher
of the Faith**

Jeremy Taylor was born in Cambridge in 1613 and educated there at Gonville & Caius College. He was ordained in 1633 and, as the Civil War got under way, he became a chaplain with the Royalist forces. He was captured and imprisoned briefly but after his release went to Wales, where the Earl of Carbery gave him refuge. He wrote prolifically whilst there, notably *The Rule and Exercise of Holy Living* in 1650 and *of Holy Dying* the following year. In 1658 he went to Ireland to lecture and two years later was made Bishop of Down and Connor. He found many of his clergy held to Presbyterianism and so ignored him; and the Romans rejected him as a Protestant. In turn, he treated both sides harshly. His health was worn down by the protracted conflicts and he died on this day in 1667.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'

15 August

The Blessed Virgin Mary

Blessed are you, Mary for you believed that what was said to you by the Lord would be fulfilled. Alleluia.

In the womb of Mary, you found a dwelling place on earth, O Christ; remain for ever in our hearts. Alleluia
Mary gave birth to the Word of God; truly she is the ever-blessed mother of Christ our Lord. Alleluia.

Almighty God, who looked upon the lowliness of the Blessed Virgin Mary and chose her to be the mother of your only Son: grant that we who are redeemed by his blood may share with her in the glory of your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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15 August

The Blessed Virgin Mary

Mary was a young Jewish girl living in Nazareth when a messenger from the Lord announced that she was to be the bearer of the Son of God to the world. Her response, 'Let it be to me according to your word' revealed her natural sense of obedience to God and her reverence for his word, showing her worthy to be the bearer of the Word made flesh.

This day is now celebrated as the major feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary throughout most of Christendom.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'