

22 July

Mary Magdalene

Almighty God, whose Son restored Mary Magdalene to health of mind and body and called her to be a witness to his resurrection: forgive our sins and heal us by your grace, that we may serve you in the power of his risen life; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

© The Archbishops' Council of the
Church of England

22 July

Mary Magdalene

All four gospels give Mary Magdalene a unique place among Jesus's followers. Probably from Magdala by the Sea of Galilee, she is described as having been healed by Jesus before accompanying him during his ministry. Along with other faithful women, she stayed beside the cross during the crucifixion and was the first disciple to discover the empty tomb on Easter morning. She was privileged with the first appearance of the risen Lord, who sent her to take the good news of the resurrection to the other disciples. This commission earned her the title, 'Apostle to the Apostles' in the early Church.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'

25 July

James the Apostle

Merciful God, whose holy apostle Saint James, leaving his father and all that he had, was obedient to the calling of your Son Jesus Christ and followed him even to death: help us, forsaking the false attractions of the world, to be ready at all times to answer your call without delay; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

© The Archbishops' Council of the
Church of England

25 July

James the Apostle

James, often called 'the Great', was a Galilean fisherman who, with his brother John, was one of the first apostles called by Jesus to follow him. The two brothers were with Jesus at his Transfiguration and with him again in the garden of Gethsemane. They annoyed the other followers of Jesus by asking to sit one on his left and the other on his right when he came into his glory, and they were present for the appearances of Christ after the resurrection. James was put to death by the sword on the order of Herod Agrippa, who hoped in vain that, by disposing of the Christian leaders, he could stem the flow of those hearing the good news and becoming followers in the Way. James's martyrdom is believed to have taken place in the year 44.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'

26 July

**Anne and Joachim,
parents of the Blessed
Virgin Mary**

Lord God of Israel, who bestowed such grace on Anne and Joachim that their daughter Mary grew up obedient to your word and made ready to be the mother of your Son: help us to commit ourselves in all things to your keeping and grant us the salvation you promised to your people; 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.

© The Archbishops' Council of the
Church of England

26 July

**Anne and Joachim,
Parents of the Blessed
Virgin Mary**

In the proto-gospel of James, written in the middle of the second century, the parents of Mary the mother of Jesus are named as Anne and Joachim. The story there appears to be based heavily on that of Hannah, the mother of Samuel. The feast day of Anne and Joachim both emphasizes God's plan from the beginning to send his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem fallen humanity; and also shows God's faithfulness in keeping his covenant with all generations.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'

29 July

**Mary, Martha and Lazarus
Companions of Our Lord.**

God our Father, whose Son enjoyed the love of his friends, Mary, Martha and Lazarus, in learning, argument and hospitality: may we so rejoice in your love that the world may come to know the depths of your wisdom, the wonder of your compassion, and your power to bring life out of death; through the merits of Jesus Christ, our friend and brother who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

© The Archbishops' Council of the
Church of England

29 July

**Mary, Martha and Lazarus,
Companions of Our Lord.**

The gospels describe how Mary, Martha and their brother Lazarus gave Jesus hospitality in their home at Bethany outside Jerusalem. Jesus is said to have loved all three. After Lazarus's death, Jesus wept and was moved by the sisters' grief: he brought Lazarus back from the dead that the glory of God might be shown. Martha recognised Jesus as the Messiah, while Mary anointed his feet, and on another occasion, was commended by Jesus for her attentiveness to his teaching while Martha served. From this, Mary is traditionally taken to be an example of the contemplative spiritual life and Martha an example of the active spiritual life.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'

30 July

William Wilberforce

Social Reformer. 1833

**Olaudah Equiano and
Thomas Clarkson**

Anti-Slavery Campaigners.
1797 and 1846

God our deliverer, who sent your Son Jesus Christ to set your people free from the slavery of sin: grant that, as your servants William Wilberforce, Olaudah Equiano and Thomas Clarkson toiled against the sin of slavery, so we may bring compassion to all and work for the freedom of all the children of God; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

30 July

William Wilberforce

William Wilberforce was born in 1759 in Hull. Converted to an Evangelical piety within the Church of England, Wilberforce decided to serve the faith in Parliament instead of being ordained, becoming a Member of Parliament at the age of 21. He was a supporter of missionary initiatives and helped found The Bible Society. Settling in Clapham in London, he became a leader of the reforming group of Evangelicals known as the 'Clapham Sect'. Of all the causes for which he fought, he is remembered best for his crusade against slavery. After years of effort, the trade in slaves was made illegal in the British Empire in 1807 and Wilberforce lived to see the complete abolition of slavery, just before his death on this day in 1833.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'