**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.

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**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.

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**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.

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**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.

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**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’*