**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 Minoresses

(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 our Lord. Amen.

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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 and 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 Roman Catholics rejected him as a Protestant. In turn, he treated both sides harshly, though he is gratefully remembered by many in his diocese. His health was worn down by the protracted conflicts and he died on this day in 1667.

*Sourced from ‘Exciting Holiness’*

**13 August**

**Florence Nightingale**

Nurse, Social Reformer

Florence Nightingale was born in 1820

into a wealthy family. In the face of

their opposition, she insisted that she

wished to train in nursing. In 1853,

she finally achieved her wish and headed

her own private nursing institute in London.

Her efforts at improving conditions for the wounded during the Crimean War won her great acclaim and

she devoted the rest of her life to reforming nursing

care. Her school at St Thomas’s Hospital became significant in helping to elevate nursing into a profession. An Anglican, she remained committed

to a personal mystical religion which sustained

her through many years of poor health until

her death in 1910.

*Sourced from ‘Exciting Holiness*

**13 August**

**Octavia Hill**

Social Reformer

Octavia Hill was born in 1838 into a family active in social work, and during her teens, she was influenced by the friendship of F. D. Maurice and John Ruskin. Earning her living through teaching, Octavia was appalled at the conditions in which most of her pupils lived. Borrowing money,

she bought some slum properties and began to manage them in a more sympathetic way, insisting on financial viability rather than mere charity.

The success of the scheme led to its extension and Octavia became a pioneer of housing reform. Strongly motivated by her faith, she never allowed her growing fame to undermine her personal humility. She continued her work until her death

on this day in 1912.

*Sourced from ‘Exciting Holiness’*

**14 August**

**Maximilian Kolbe**

Friar, Martyr

Maximilian Kolbe was born at Zduῆska Wola near

Lodz in Poland in 1894. His parents were Franciscan

tertiaries and, beginning his training for ordination in

1907, Maximilian joined the Conventual Franciscan

noviciate in 1940. He studied at Rome but, suffering

from tuberculosis, he returned to Poland and became

a lecturer in church history. After suffering a severe

illness, he resolved to publish a magazine for Christian

readers and this soon gained a huge circulation. Soon

his community was producing daily and weekly journals.

After the Nazi invasion of Poland, Maximilian was arrested

as an ‘intellectual’ and taken to Auschwitz in May 1941.

There he continued his priestly ministry, secretly celebrating

the Eucharist. After an escape, ten prisoners were chosen to forfeit their lives, and Maximilian stepped forward to take the place of one of them. They were starved for two weeks

before Maximilian was injected with phenol and died on

this day in 1941.

*Sourced from ‘Exciting Holiness’*