**14 December**

**John of the Cross,**

**Poet,**

**Teacher of the Faith, 1591**

O God, the judge of all, who gave your

servant John of the Cross a warmth of

nature, a strength of purpose and a mystical

faith that sustained him even in the darkness:

shed your light on all who love you and grant

them union of body and soul in your Son Jesus

Christ our Lord. Amen.

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**14 December**

**John of the Cross**

**Poet, Teacher of the Faith**

Born to an impoverished noble family near Avila in Spain in 1542, Juan de Yepes was brought up by his widowed mother and went to a charity school. He worked as a nurse and received further education from the Jesuits before entering the Carmelite order when he was twenty-one. Having distinguished himself at Salamanca University, he was ordained in 1567 and met Teresa of Avila soon afterwards. Small of stature, he made a great impression on her and she persuaded him to help with her reform of the Carmelite Order. His labours brought him into conflict with the religious authorities, and he was even imprisoned for a period, yet these experiences prompted some of his finest poetry and mystical writing. In particular, he described the ‘dark night’ of the soul as it is purified in its approach towards God. After ten years as Superior to several different houses, he again fell out of favour and was banished to Andalusia in southern Spain, where he died after a severe illness on this day in 1591.

*Sourced from ‘Exciting Holiness’*