

13 December

Lucy

Martyr at Syracuse, 304

God our redeemer, who gave light to the world that was in darkness by the healing power of the Saviour's cross: shed that light on us, we pray, that with your martyr Lucy we may, by the purity of our lives, reflect the light of Christ and, by the merits of his passion, come to the light of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

© The Archbishops' Council of the
Church of England

13 December

Lucy

Martyr at Syracuse

Lucy was a native of Syracuse in Sicily. She lived at the beginning of the fourth century, when the Roman authorities were attempting to re-establish the worship of gods they approved. The emperor himself was the focus of one of the cults. Tradition has it that Lucy, as a young Christian, gave away her goods to the poor and was betrayed to the authorities by her angry betrothed, who felt that they should have become his property. She was put to death for her faith in the year 304. Her name in Latin means light and, as her feast-day falls in December, she became associated with the one true Light who was coming as the redeemer of the world, the Light that would lighten the nations, the Light that would banish darkness and let the eyes of all behold Truth incarnate.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'

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.

© The Archbishops' Council of the
Church of England

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'