

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'

5 August

Oswald

King of Northumbria, Martyr 642

Lord God almighty, who so kindled the faith of King Oswald with your Spirit that he set up the sign of the cross in his kingdom and turned his people to the light of Christ: grant that we, being fired by the same Spirit, may always bear our cross before the world and be found faithful servants of the gospel; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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5 August

Oswald

King of Northumbria

Born around the year 605, the son of King Ælfrith of Northumbria, Oswald was forced to leave home after his father's death and move to Iona where, influenced by the monks of St Columba, he was baptised. Returning to Northumbria in 634, Oswald defeated the British king, setting up a cross as his standard and gathering his men around it to pray the night before the battle. A man of humility and generosity, Oswald worked closely with his friend Aidan, travelling with him on his missionary journeys and acting as his interpreter. He died in battle on this day in 642 defending his kingdom from the Mercians.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'