

29 April

**Catherine of Siena
Teacher of the Faith 1380**

God of compassion, who gave your servant Catherine of Siena a wondrous love of the passion of Christ: grant that your people may be united to him in his majesty and rejoice for ever in the revelation of his glory; 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 April

**Catherine of Siena
Teacher of the Faith 1380**

Catherine Benincasa was born in 1347, the second youngest of twenty-five children. Pious from her earliest years, she overcame family opposition to her vocation and became a Dominican tertiary at the age of eighteen. Nourished by a life of contemplative prayer and mystical experience, she devoted herself to active care for the poor and sick. She became increasingly sought out as an adviser on political as well as religious matters and, in 1376, she journeyed to Avignon as an ambassador to the Pope and influenced his decision to return to Rome. She wrote a *Dialogue* on spiritual life as well as numerous letters of counsel and direction, which stressed her devotion to the Precious Blood of Jesus. She suffered a stroke on 21 April and died eight days later, on this day in the year 1380.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'

1 May

**Philip and James
Apostles**

Almighty Father, whom truly to know is eternal life: teach us to know your Son Jesus Christ as the way, the truth, and the life: that we may follow the steps of your holy apostles Philip and James, and walk steadfastly in the way that leads to your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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1 May

**Philip and James
Apostles**

Philip and James appear in the list of the twelve apostles in the first three gospels but are frequently confused with other early saints who share their names. In John's gospel, Philip has a more prominent role, being the third of the apostles to be called by Jesus and then himself bringing his friend Nathanael to the Lord. Philip is the spokesman for the other apostles who question the capacity for feeding the five thousand and, at the Last Supper, he enters into a dialogue with Jesus which leads to the farewell discourse of our Lord.

James is said to be the son of Alphæus and is often known as 'James the Less' to distinguish him. He may also be the 'James the Younger' whose mother, in Mark's gospel, is a witness at the crucifixion.

They are celebrated on the same day because the church in Rome, where their relics were laid to rest, was dedicated on this day in the year 560.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'

2 May

**Athanasius
Bishop of Alexandria,
Teacher of the Faith 373**

Ever-living God, whose servant Athanasius testified to the mystery of the Word made flesh for our salvation: help us, with all your saints, to contend for the truth and to grow into the likeness of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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2 May

**Athanasius
Bishop of Alexandria, Teacher of the Faith**

Athanasius was born in about the year 296 of Christian parents and educated at the Catechetical school in Alexandria. He was present at the Council of Nicæ as a deacon, accompanying his Bishop Alexander, whom he succeeded as Patriarch in the year 328. Athanasius held firmly to the doctrines of the Church as defined by that Council, and became the leader of those opposed to the teachings of Arius, who denied the divinity of Christ. He was deposed from – and restored to – his See several times because of his uncompromising faith. In or out of exile, Athanasius continued to write. Ever the proponent of orthodoxy over heterodoxy, he expounded the need for the Church to teach the true doctrines of the faith rather than watered-down versions of it. He was a strong believer in asceticism as a means of restoring the divine image in humanity and thus a supporter of monasticism, which was in its nascent state at that time. He was a friend of Pachomius and wrote the *Life of Anthony* of Egypt, which showed the monastic life as holding a balance between things earthly and heavenly. He died on this day in the year 373.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'

4 May

English Saints and Martyrs of the Reformation Era

Merciful God, who, when your Church on earth was torn apart by the ravages of sin, raised up men and women in this land who witnessed to their faith with courage and constancy: give to your Church that peace which is your will, and grant that those who have been divided on earth may be reconciled in heaven and share together in the vision of your glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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4 May

English Saints and Martyrs of the Reformation Era

This day is set aside to remember all who witnessed to their Christian faith during the conflicts in church and state, which lasted from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries but were at their most intense in the sixteenth century. Though the reform movement was aimed chiefly at the papacy, many Christian men and women of holiness suffered for their allegiance to what they believed to be the truth of the gospel. As the movement grew in strength, it suffered its own internecine struggles, with one group determined that they were the keepers of truth and that all others were therefore at best in a state of ignorance and at worst heretical. In the twentieth century, ecumenical links drew the churches closer to each other in faith and worship and all now recognise both the good and evil that evolved from the Reformation Era.

Sourced from 'Exciting Holiness'