**17 January**

**Anthony of Egypt**

**Hermit, Abbot 356**

Most gracious God, who called your

servant Anthony to sell all that he had

and to serve you in the solitude of the

desert: by his example may we learn

to deny ourselves and to love you

before all things; through Jesus

Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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**17 January**

**Anthony of Egypt**

**Hermit, Abbot**

Born in about the year 251, Anthony heard the gospel

message, ‘If you would be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.’ He was twenty years old and rich, following the death of his parents, but he did as the gospel instructed and went to live in the desert, living an austere life of manual work, charity and prayer. His many spiritual struggles left him both wise and sensible and he became a spiritual guide for many who flocked to him. His simple rule of personal discipline and prayer was taken up and spread throughout Christendom. He died peacefully in the desert in the year 356, asking that he be buried secretly, so that his person might be hidden in death as in life.

*Sourced from ‘Exciting Holiness’*

**18 January**

**Week of Prayer for**

**Christian Unity**

O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace: give

us grace seriously to lay to heart the great

dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions.

Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatever else may hinder us from godly union and concord; that, as there is but one body and one Spirit, one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart and of one soul, united in one holy bond of peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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**19 January**

**Wulfstan**

**Bishop of Worcester, 1095**

Lord God, who raised up Wulfstan to be

a Bishop among your people and a leader

of your Church: help us, after his example,

to live simply, to work diligently and to make

your kingdom known; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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**19 January**

**Wulfstan**

**Bishop of Worcester**

Born in about the year 1009. Wulfstan’s first twenty-five years after his ordination was spent in the monastery at Worcester. Against his will, he was elected Bishop of Worcester in 1062 but went on to prove an able administrator and pastor. He carefully and gently nurtured both church and state through the transition from Saxon to Norman rule. He died at Worcester on this day in the year 1095.

*Sourced from ‘Exciting Holiness’*

**21 January**

**Agnes,**

**Child Martyr at Rome 304**

Eternal God, shepherd of your sheep,

whose child Agnes was strengthened

to bear witness in her living and her

dying to the true love of her redeemer:

grant us the power to understand, with

all your saints, what is the breadth and

length and height and depth and to know

the love that surpasses knowledge, even

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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**21 January**

**Agnes**

**Child Martyr at Rome**

Agnes is one of the most well-known and widely venerated of the early Roman martyrs, perhaps because of the expression of mature resilience and sheer bravery in a girl of thirteen. Agnes is reputed to have refused an arranged marriage because of her total dedication to Christ and stated that she preferred even death of the body to the death of her consecrated virginity. The growing veneration for the state of consecrated virginity at this time, combined with the last major Roman persecution under the emperor Diocletian, climaxing in an innocent virgin-child willingly shedding her blood for Christ, placed her at the forefront of veneration almost from the moment the persecution ended. She is believed to have died in the year 304 and her feast has ever since been celebrated on this day.

*Sourced from ‘Exciting Holiness’*