**19 April**

**Alphege,**

**Archbishop of Canterbury,**

**Martyr, 1012**

Merciful God, who raised up your servant Alphage to be a pastor of your people and gave him grace to suffer for justice and true religion: grant that we who celebrate his martyrdom may know the power of the risen Christ in our hearts and share his peace in lives offered to your service; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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**19 April**

**Alphege,**

**Archbishop of Canterbury, Martyr.**

Alphege became a monk at Deerhurst near Gloucester and withdrew in later life to be a hermit in Somerset. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dunstan, drew him back to be Abbot of Bath and, in 984, Bishop of Winchester. In 1005 he was made Archbishop of Canterbury, where his austere life and lavish almsgiving made him a revered and much-loved man. In the year 1011, the Danes overran south-east England, taking Alphege prisoner. They put the enormous ransom of £3000 on his head, but Alphege refused to pay it and forbade anyone from doing so, knowing that it would impoverish the ordinary people even more. He was brutally murdered by his captors at Greenwich on this day in the year 1012.

*Sourced from ‘Exciting Holiness’*

**21 April**

**Anselm**

**Abbot of Le Bec,**

**Archbishop of Canterbury,**

**Teacher of the Faith, 1109**

Eternal God, who gave great gifts to your servant Anselm as a pastor and teacher: grant that we, like him, may desire you with our whole heart and, so desiring, may seek you and, seeking, may find you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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**21 April**

**Anselm, Abbot of Le Bec, Archbishop of Canterbury, Teacher of the Faith**

Anselm was born in Aosta, northern Italy, in 1033. As a young man, he left home and travelled north, visiting many monasteries and other centres of learning. One such visit was to the abbey of Le Bec, where he met Lanfranc, who advised him to embrace monastic life. Anselm had a powerful and original mind and, during his 34 years at Bec (as monk, prior and finally abbot), he taught many others and wrote theological, philosophical and devotional works. When Lanfranc died, Anselm was made Archbishop of Canterbury and had to subordinate his scholarly work to the needs of the diocese and nation. Twice he endured exile for championing the rights of the Church against the authority of the king, but despite his stubbornness, intellectual rigour, and personal austerity, he was admired by the Norman nobility as well as much loved by the monks. He died in 1109.

*Sourced from ‘Exciting Holiness’*

**23 April**

**George**

**Martyr,**

**Patron of England c.304**

God of hosts, who so kindled the flame of love in the heart of your servant George that he bore witness to the risen Lord by his life and his death: give us the same faith and power of love that we who rejoice in his triumphs may come to share with him the fullness of the resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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**23 April**

**George**

**Martyr, Patron of England**

George was probably a soldier living in Palestine at the beginning of the fourth century. He was martyred at Lydda in about the year 304, the beginning of the persecutions of Diocletian, and became known throughout the East as, ‘The Great Martyr’. There were churches in England dedicated to him before the Norman conquest. The story of his slaying the dragon may be due to his being mistaken in iconography for St Michael, himself usually depicted wearing armour; or it may be a mistaken identification with Perseus’s slaying of the sea monster, a myth also associated with Lydda. George replaced Edward the Confessor as patron saint of England following the Crusades, when returning soldiers brought back a renewed interest in his cult. King Edward III made George patron of the Order of the Garter, which seems finally to have confirmed his position as England’s patron saint.

*Sourced from ‘Exciting Holiness’*