**26 April (transferred from 25 April)**

**Mark the Evangelist**

Almighty God, who enlightened your holy Church through the inspired witness of your evangelist Saint Mark: grant that we, being firmly grounded in the truth of the gospel, may be faithful to its teaching both in word and deed; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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**26 April transferred from 25 April)**

**Mark**

**Evangelist**

John Mark was a Jew and, according to Paul’s letter to the Colossians, cousin to Barnabas. He accompanied Barnabas and Paul on their first missionary journey. Afterwards, he went to Cyprus with Barnabas and to Rome with first Paul then Peter. Mark’s gospel is generally regarded as the earliest and most likely written whilst he was in Rome. It was probably based as much on Peter’s preaching of the good news as on Mark’s own memory. Mark’s gospel has a sharpness and an immediacy about it and he does not spare the apostles in noting their weaknesses and lack of understand that Jesus The Christ would suffer for the world’s redemption. Sharing in the glory of the resurrection means sharing in the giving of self, both in body and spirit, even to death; sharing the gospel was, for all, in essence both excessively generous and ultimately sacrificial.

*Sourced from ‘Exciting Holiness’*

**27 April**

**Christina Rossetti**

**Poet**

Christina Rossetti was born in 1830 and was associated

with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, of which her older

brother, Dante, was a prominent member. Her elder sister became an Anglican Religious. Christina’s own fame rests

upon her poetry, which dealt mainly with religious subjects

but also the sadness of unrequited or disappointed love.

Her first recorded verses, addressed to her mother on the

latter’s birthday, were written on 27 April 1842. She was

the author of the Christmas carol *In the bleak mid-winter.*

She died on 20 December 1894.

*Sourced from ‘Exciting Holiness’*

**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’*