

For All the Saints

revised

For All the Saints

Prayers and Readings for Saints' Days

**According to the Calendar of the
Book of Alternative Services of the
Anglican Church of Canada**

**Revised with an Appendix including
Recent Additions to the Calendar**

**compiled by
Stephen Reynolds**



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Foreword

In every time and place God calls women, men, and children to holiness. This vocation, rooted in our baptism, is the summit of Christ's work in us. In the commemoration of saints the Church celebrates Christ's victory in the lives of particular individuals who have inspired their own and succeeding generations.

The commemoration of saints has always been a part of the Anglican tradition and has evolved over the centuries. The reformers of the XVIc. used the naive (and historically flawed) principle of biblical literalism to pare down the myriad commemorations they inherited from the mediaeval calendars. Only those saints whose names could be found in scripture were celebrated liturgically. Other names included in the calendar were largely for secular, rather than liturgical, use.

Modern revision of Anglican Calendars can be dated from the publication of Walter Howard Frere's *Some Principles of Liturgical Reform* (London, 1911) in which he suggested the addition of contemporary names to future revisions of the Prayer Book. The *Book of Common Prayer* (1962) adopted Frere's suggestion and incorporated a large number of post-Reformation names in its Calendar. How these persons were to be commemorated liturgically, however, remained unclear. Archbishop Harold Sexton's *The Canadian Book of Occasional Offices* (Toronto, 1964) provided liturgical material only for the pre-Reformation entries, giving the curious impression that the Church's commemoration of God's call to holiness could not go beyond the XVIc. Further developments within Anglicanism — particularly work emerging from the Lambeth Conferences of 1958 and 1988 — established that it is both possible and permissible for Anglican churches to commemorate the saints of every age, including our own. Furthermore, it is clear that the title "saint" may be applied to all those who are included in Anglican Calendars.

For All the Saints is intended to help enrich our celebration of the communion of saints in the Anglican Church of Canada. It has been almost twenty years in the making. Initially, Dean David Carter had intended to produce a Canadian supplement to *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* of the Episcopal Church. The major reform of the Calendar to be included in the *Book of Alternative Services* made it clear that a much larger project was necessary in order to meet the needs of Canadian Anglicanism.

In June of 1980, as Chair of the Calendar Sub-Committee of the National Doctrine and Worship Committee, I asked Stephen Reynolds to compile a work that would provide liturgical propers as well

as a short biography that could be used within the liturgy for all the entries in the Calendar of the *Book of Alternative Services*. Neither he nor I imagined the immensity of the task he agreed to undertake. This task was expanded when the committee decided to append for devotional reading a number of texts from the writings of the saints commemorated. Some of these appear in new translations made by Dr. Reynolds from the Greek and Latin originals. Dr. Reynold's contribution to the life of the Anglican Church of Canada is an important one and needs to be recognized as such.

The task of working through the proposed texts fell to the Calendar Sub-Committee. Hundreds of hours were spent reading the texts aloud — so that they are as much for the ear as for the eye — and refining them until the Committee felt that they would best serve the Canadian Church. The members of that committee — Tom Cain, John Hill, Maud McLean, Archie Skirving, Ansley Tucker, and Keith Whittingham — played a vital role in forming the present text and for that also deserve the thanks of all those who will use this material.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the support of the National Doctrine and Worship Committee through the long gestation period of this book and particularly Bishop Joachim Fricker who, as Chair of the Committee through the most creative part of the Sub-Committee's work, gave us the courage to see the project to its end.

David R. Holeton
Chair, Calendar Sub-Committee

Preface

For All the Saints is a supplement to the Calendar of the Church Year, as printed in *The Book of Alternative Services* (1985) and amended by General Synod in 1989. It offers, in a single volume, a variety of resources for the observance of those festivals which occur on fixed dates. This includes most Principal Feasts and Holy Days as well as all Memorials and Commemorations.

The present book has been more than ten years in the making. In the autumn of 1979 the Doctrine and Worship Committee of General Synod approved a proposed revision of the Calendar of the Church Year. At the same time, the Committee endorsed the preparation of a volume which would include proper prayers and readings, together with biographical notices, for each of the persons commemorated. This volume was to be modelled on *The Proper for the Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, a publication of the Episcopal Church of the United States. The Reverend Stephen Reynolds was asked to compile such a volume.

A first draft was presented to the Doctrine and Worship Committee in 1981–1982. This draft subsequently underwent trial use by selected Anglican parishes and communities across Canada. In 1987 the Doctrine and Worship Committee established a Calendar Editorial Sub-committee and charged it with the task of reviewing, revising, and preparing the document for publication. The members of this Sub-committee were: Professor Tom Cain, the Reverend John W. B. Hill, the Reverend Professor David R. Holeton (chair), Mrs Maud McLean, the Reverend Dr Stephen Reynolds, the Reverend Dr A. H. Skirving, the Reverend M. Ansley Tucker, and the Reverend Keith Whittingham.

The Calendar Editorial Sub-committee clarified or developed a number of guidelines for the present work.

Proper Prayers. In the past, proper prayers for saints' days usually have been so generic in content that it often made little difference whose name was inserted. *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* established the principle that "each Collect be distinctive of the person commemorated, or of that aspect of the Church's life to which that person contributed most significantly." *For All the Saints* strives to continue this principle and to apply it not only to the Collects but also to the Prayers over the Gifts and the Prayers after Communion.

Biographical Information. True celebration of the saints requires informed remembrance of their lives. Therefore, following the example of *Lesser Feasts and Fasts*, the present work provides a biographical notice for each person commemorated. The Calendar Editorial Sub-committee has aimed at making these notices succinct enough to be contained on a single page, but with sufficient detail to give a real sense of why the Church commemorates that person. The Sub-committee has also been conscious that the notices may be read aloud, and heard, in the liturgical assembly. With this in mind, the short biographical notices have been carefully

edited so that they may be spoken easily, and readily understood by the listening ear.

Format. Celebration is encouraged if the chief resources for commemoration are immediately accessible. *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* places the propers of the day and the accompanying biographical notice on facing pages. This practice has been followed in *For All the Saints*.

Inclusivity. Special attention has been paid to inclusive language in the proper prayers and in the biographical materials. This policy has been applied to language about divinity as well as to language about humanity. The proper prayers, in particular, attempt to explore a wider, more inclusive range of images when addressing God. Traditional names and titles — for instance, “Almighty God,” “Lord,” “Father” — have certainly been retained. But other, more experimental styles have also been employed.

Non-Scriptural Readings. The persons commemorated in our Calendar had important things to say to the Church of their day, or prompted contemporaries and later generations to reflect upon the meaning of their lives in light of the gospel. To allow a closer acquaintance with individual saints, therefore, *For All the Saints* includes a section entitled, “Readings from the Writings of the Saints,” which offers non-scriptural Readings for most of the festivals in this book. These Readings are drawn either from the writings of the person commemorated or from some other relevant source. Not every festival has an entry in this section. In some cases no suitable Reading was available; in other cases such a Reading would only have repeated material already contained in the short notice accompanying the propers of the day.

It should be noted that the non-scriptural Readings are *selections*, not complete works. To make the texts easier and less distracting to read, ellipsis points have not been used to indicate omissions. This decision follows the usage of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy.

Sources. The Proper Prayers and Readings for the Principal Feasts and Holy Days are taken from *The Book of Alternative Services*, and are used here by permission. The Propers for the Memorials and Commemorations were either compiled from other sources or composed specially for this book. The non-scriptural Readings in the final section are drawn from sources as diverse as their original authors. The compiler and the Calendar Editorial Sub-committee wish to express their appreciation to those copyright holders who have given permission for a particular text or translation to be used in this work.

This book is offered to the people of the Anglican Church of Canada with thanksgiving to God for the lives of the saints, and with the hope that it will help to enrich our common life in Jesus Christ.

Toronto, The Conversion of Saint Paul, 1992

Introduction

Whenever we say the Apostles' Creed, we confess our belief in "the communion of saints." This term is rich in meaning and kaleidoscopic in its references. It can mean "the holy people of God," the community of all who have been baptized into Christ Jesus. It can refer to the activity which sustains the unity of God's people, sharing in the body and blood of Christ. And it can refer to the activity which this book is designed to help — the commemoration of those extraordinary Christians whom we call "saints."

The habit of remembering "the friends of God" has been one of the great delights of Christian people since the dawn of the Church. The reason for this is neither fancy theology nor sub-Christian superstition. It is simply that the history of God's mighty acts of salvation is always a *personal* history. The Church believes that the divine purpose of justice, mercy, and love is revealed in the stories of particular persons. Indeed, it is through the stories of individual saints that the Almighty renews and strengthens the witness of the whole community of "the holy people of God." Thus, the Calendar of Saints is meant to jog our memories, to remind us that today or tomorrow is the heavenly birthday of someone whose faith, holy life, and witness to Christ were so great in their own time that they continue to be a cause for celebration by us in our time.

The Witness of Scripture

In the Old Testament, the great story-cycles about Abraham and Jacob, Moses, Joshua, and King David are all acts of commemoration. Most of these stories are meant to generate wonder and awe; they celebrate the power, wiliness, wisdom, or military prowess of Israel's ancestors. The idea that the people should follow their examples — though certainly present — is very much in the background.

This began to change with the cycle of stories about the prophet Elijah (1 Kings 17–2 Kings 2). The Elijah cycle includes stories of the prophet's prowess in working mighty signs and wonders, but they are subordinate to stories which recognize Elijah as an example for the rest of God's people. He remained faithful even though, as he complained to God, "the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and slain your prophets with the sword" (1 Kgs 19.10). He bore witness to God's justice "against the odds," and so became a sign and model for Israel to do likewise. Commemorating Elijah was not only a matter of wonder and awe; it was also a call to imitate his faithfulness.

In a similar way, the story of the Maccabees (in the Apocrypha)

commemorates their fierce resistance to pagan overlords and recounts how whole families perished rather than break the covenant. Such stories were both a celebration of their wondrous faithfulness and a call for all Jews to go and do likewise.

The same sort of commemoration is present in the New Testament. After all, the gospels themselves are stories which celebrate the mighty acts of Jesus and call his disciples to follow the example of his great obedience. The pattern is continued in the book of Acts, especially in the dramatic story of Stephen's martyrdom (Acts 6–7). Stephen's faithfulness even at the cost of his life was recounted not only to excite wonder in the faithful who heard the book of Acts, but also to give them an example and a model to follow.

The Ancient Church

Persecution of the Church by the pagan Roman authorities reinforced this trend. Many thousands of Christians were put to death, often by very gruesome means, because they refused to renounce Jesus Christ. The Church felt that these martyrs had been given a unique gift — the power to imitate Christ's passion and death in their own bodies. For this reason, the early Christians came to believe that the souls of the martyrs must already have entered the joys of heaven.

A good example of what happened is the story told by the Christians of Smyrna, a city on the Mediterranean coast of Asia Minor, after their bishop Polycarp was martyred in A.D. 156. (We commemorate Polycarp on February 23.) The Roman authorities tried to cremate the bishop's corpse, because they feared that the local Christians might "abandon the Crucified and begin to worship this man." In their account of the episode, the Christians of Smyrna made it clear that such a fear was utterly groundless:

Little did they know that we could never abandon Christ, for it was he who suffered for the redemption of those who are saved in the entire world, the innocent one dying on behalf of sinners. Nor could we worship anyone else. For we reverence Christ as the Son of God, whereas we love the martyrs as the disciples and imitators of the Lord, and rightly so because of their unsurpassed loyalty towards their king and master. May we too share with them as fellow disciples!¹

To Christ alone they gave *worship*, but for the sake of Christ they desired to give *honour* to his great martyr Polycarp. This distinction led the Christians at Smyrna to an important decision. They not only collected Polycarp's bones and ashes and buried them "in a fitting spot" outside the city walls. They also resolved to gather at the grave every February 23, when

we will be allowed by the Lord to celebrate the anniversary day of Polycarp's martyrdom, both as a memorial for those who have already fought the contest and for the training and preparation of those who will do so one day.²

The Christians of Smyrna continued to have fellowship with Polycarp by celebrating their eucharistic fellowship with Christ. To eat and drink the eucharist was to share in the same banquet which Polycarp now enjoyed in glory; and to have eucharistic table-fellowship with Christ was to have table-fellowship with all Christ's true disciples in heaven and on earth.

The church of Smyrna was not alone in its commemorative instinct. About the same time, quite independently, other churches began to pay the same sort of honour to their own martyrs, often treating the anniversary of a martyr's death as a festival equal to Easter and Pentecost. It was the martyr's *dies natalis*, her or his birthday in heaven. And just as people held a party on the birthday of one of their family, so the Church held a party on a saint's *dies natalis*. They remembered the martyr by celebrating the eucharist, with prayers and scriptural readings appropriate to the occasion. This practice was the origin of the cycle of saints' days which we know today.

The Medieval Church

Early in the fourth century the Church was granted toleration, and well before the close of the century Christianity became the established religion of the Roman empire. The faithful certainly continued to celebrate the memory of those who had suffered during the time of persecution. But they also began to include others among the special "friends of God." Monks and nuns, bishops, teachers of the faith, and missionaries came to be honoured as saints.

At the same time the commemoration of saints began to acquire a narrower focus. Church-people came to judge holiness more and more by a person's reputation for working miracles. For the ability to perform miracles was a sign that the person in question was indeed a true "friend of God" — and therefore had influence in the heavenly court of the almighty Emperor of the universe. Thus, Christians asked a saint to offer prayer in heaven and intercede with God on their behalf — a practice known as "the invocation of the saints." The principle was the same as when Christians ask for one another's prayers — "I have an appointment with the doctor," one might say to another, "say a prayer for me, will you?" In the case of invoking the saints, there was of course one important difference. Because the saints were so highly favoured by God and already beheld the divine glory face-to-face, they had a far better chance of obtaining their requests

from God than one's next-door neighbour. One's neighbours rarely showed any evidence of miraculous powers — and miracles were precisely what a saint's intercession was supposed to obtain.

By the Middle Ages, then, the saints were venerated chiefly as workers of miracles; and miracles wrought at the tomb of a saint, or obtained by pleading for a saint's intercession with God, were the basic evidence necessary in the process of canonization. In the West, from the twelfth century onwards, this process was entirely in the hands of the Roman papacy. It came to involve several steps, in which the life and posthumous miracles of the proposed saint were subjected to trial-like scrutiny.³

The cult of the saints involved a number of assumptions about human life after death. First and foremost, it took for granted the distinction between body and soul. The souls of the saints entered glory, while their bodies remained buried on earth. But their earthly remains were still believed to have a potent connection with their souls in heaven. The horizon of glory lay along their graves, and their physical remains in shrines and under altars made the other world a next-door neighbour in this world. The relics of the saints, it was thought, continued to embody the power of their personalities even after death; they were the "real presence" of the souls of "the friends of God" in heaven.

Medieval theologians were well aware of the dangers which could attend upon the cult of the saints. As a safeguard they developed the distinction between *latría*, or the worship which is due to God alone, and *dulia*, the honour which may be given to humans who manifested, more fully than others, the image and likeness of God's power and dominion. Nevertheless, the medieval Church found it difficult to resist the pious conviction that the saints represented approachable power, whereas God's power was inaccessible *except* through the saints. This attitude led to a great irony. The emphasis on miracles tended to deprive the saints of power in another direction — the power to act as examples for other Christians to follow. The prayers appointed for their feast-days rarely asked that "we" might follow "their" example, and the stories told about them were not designed to elicit imitation by fellow disciples but the sort of awe that clients should feel in the presence of a mighty patron.

The Anglican Communion

In the sixteenth century the cult of the saints came under fierce attack by the Protestant reformers. In their view, it violated the scriptural principle: "There is *one* mediator between God and human-kind, Christ Jesus, himself human" (1 Tim 2.5). They also felt

that, regardless of the theologians, the ordinary folk of the Church were not just honouring the saints but worshipping them. So, wherever they gained power, the Protestant reformers suppressed the cult of the saints. In England, for example, shrines were ransacked and broken up, and the images of saints were systematically destroyed.

This did not mean that Protestants rejected the whole concept of sainthood — on the contrary. But they did have difficulty when they sought an appropriate way to commemorate particular saints. No reformed community struggled with this problem more than the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Church of England.

The first Prayer Book appeared in 1549, and its Calendar drastically pruned the number of observable feast-days. In general, the only festivals named and given proper collects and readings were those with warrant in the New Testament. The second version of the Prayer Book, which was published in 1552, relaxed the rule somewhat and included four non-biblical saints — George (April 23), Lammas Day (August 1), Laurence (August 10), and Clement of Rome (November 23). In the Calendar, the New Testament feasts were printed in red ink and provided with proper collects and readings; the four non-biblical feasts were printed in black ink. This was the origin of the Anglican distinction between “red letter days” and “black letter days.” In 1561 Queen Elizabeth I issued a royal decree which added fifty-eight more “black letter” feasts to the Prayer Book Calendar; still more were added in 1604 and in 1662. These commemorations, however, were never provided with propers or even commons to enable their observance.

The early Prayer Books of our tradition presented commemoration as a twofold event. Nowhere was this expressed more clearly than in the Eucharistic Prayer of the first Prayer Book (1549):

And here we do give unto thee [Almighty God] most high praise and hearty thanks, for the wonderful grace and virtue declared in all thy saints from the beginning of the world: And chiefly in the glorious and most blessed Virgin Mary, mother of thy Son Jesu Christ our Lord and God, and in the holy patriarchs, prophets, apostles and martyrs, whose examples, O Lord, and steadfastness in thy faith and keeping thy holy commandments, grant us to follow.

This petition balanced the two elements that we noticed in the second-century commemoration of Polycarp — a thanksgiving for God’s work in the lives of the saints, and a petition for grace to follow their examples and become similar vehicles of God’s working.

Early Anglicans did not confine sainthood to figures from the New Testament and the ancient Church. They also recognized saints among their own contemporaries. One of the most popular books in England, from its publication in 1563 well into the nineteenth century, was John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments of matters happening in the Church*, commonly called "Foxe's Book of Martyrs." In vivid prose and with a sure instinct for the dramatic, Foxe told the stories of those who had died for the Protestant faith during the reign of Queen Mary I (1553–1558). He considered them martyrs and saints in the strict sense and clearly wished them to be commemorated in some way. He even provided a Calendar in which each of the martyrs was assigned a day. The Church of England did not adopt this Calendar, nor did it provide for the liturgical commemoration of any of the Marian martyrs until this century. Nevertheless, their stories entered the common consciousness of succeeding generations and became a touchstone for what it meant to be Christian, Protestant, and English.

The tradition continued into the seventeenth century and bore fruit in a crop of edifying biographies. The most famous of these works is Izaak Walton's biographical quintet, published between 1640 and 1678, *The Lives of Dr John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Mr Richard Hooker, Mr George Herbert, and Dr Sanderson*. Walton and other seventeenth-century biographers presented their subjects as contemporary saints who had lived godly Christian lives and borne loyal witness to "the sober principles and old establishment of the Anglican Church."⁴ Their stories proved very popular and kindled among the faithful a genuine affection for their memories. But again, the Church of England had no procedure for acknowledging its saints and giving them liturgical commemoration. This meant that, over two or three generations, the intention of Walton and the other biographers was frustrated. It was not for want of devotion, but for want of appropriate means to express that devotion, that the active remembrance of many seventeenth-century saints eventually withered.

Only at the beginning of this century, in fact, did Anglicans begin to do something about the commemoration of saints. In the years between the two World Wars many churches of the communion enriched their Calendars and began, for the first time, to commemorate post-Reformation names. Those same churches usually supported their reform of the Calendar by providing a Common of Saints — sets of prayers and readings for "A Martyr," "A Confessor," "A Monk or Nun," and so forth. In addition, local communities — parishes, deaneries, dioceses, and religious orders — began to supplement the national Calendars with names of saints and heroes

of the faith who were of special importance to them. The Canadian Church was a leader in this respect. Its “draft proposed” Calendar of 1955 — subsequently included (with a few additions and deletions) in the 1962 Prayer Book — was hailed at the time as an outstanding contribution because its range of commemorations was both innovative and balanced. Calendar reform was endorsed at the Lambeth Conference of 1958, and the churches of the Anglican communion have not looked back since then. The Calendar of *The Book of Alternative Services* is one of the results of this communion-wide trend.

Living with Saints

When the Church enrolls a person on its Calendar and commemorates that person in its liturgy, it does not make a saint where no saint had existed before. Instead, it recognizes a singular truth: God showed Christ specially at work in and through this person’s life, and therefore this person really was a saint all along. The Church’s decision to commemorate a person is not a process of creation; it is a matter of acknowledging what God has done, a question of discerning the story of God as told in the story of a faithful human being. For this very reason, the saints are our examples on the way to the kingdom of heaven. Their stories are the signposts which Jesus, “the pioneer and perfecter of our faith” (Heb 12.2), has left to us who follow in faith.

The Church honours the memory of many diverse individuals, and it goes without saying that the story and example of each saint will not always speak to everyone’s condition on every occasion. A couple called to married life is not expected to duplicate the example of a monk like Bernard or a nun like Hilda; nor is a person called to the monastic life to be found lacking because their vocation differs from that of William Wilberforce or Roberta Tilton. Nevertheless, the sheer variety of the saints reminds us that the Church is a community. We ask grace to imitate them not just for our individual selves, but for the whole Church. It is good that Christians remember holy monks and nuns, holy pastors, holy missionaries, holy mothers and daughters, holy lawyers, holy martyrs, holy kings and queens, holy poets and holy reformers — because it is good that the Church include, and learn from, and nourish such different saints. That is part — a very basic part — of what we mean when we confess our faith in “the communion of saints.” Indeed, that is a very basic part of what we mean when we call the Church a communion, and when we celebrate the communion of the body and blood of Jesus Christ himself. God is magnified in the diversity of creation, and in the sheer variety of Christ’s disciples and friends.

This same God “is God not of the dead, but of the living” (Mt 22.32b); and we do not proclaim only that Jesus died on the cross, but that he was raised from the dead and glorified and will come again. This confession is the very foundation of Christian faith; and it has practical consequences for the commemoration of saints.

Since God is “God of the living,” since Jesus is risen from the dead, our commemoration of “the friends of God” always involves more than an historical exercise or a recollection of past figures now dead and gone. It also involves communion with people who, though they have indeed died, are in some sense no less truly alive. In what precise sense that might be, the Anglican tradition has not presumed to define. We have the assurance of Scripture that those who have followed Jesus in faith and justice will receive the inheritance of eternal life. “The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them” (Wisd 3.1). For that very reason, Scripture goes on to say, “we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses” that we stand even yet in the company of “the spirits of the righteous made perfect” (Heb 12.1, 23).

To say even that much is, of course, to say a great deal. But the same Scripture constrains us to acknowledge that the individuals we commemorate, “though well attested by their faith,” have not yet received the fullness of “what was promised” in Christ. For God has “provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect” (Heb 11.39). The souls of the saints may indeed enjoy perfection, but it is only their souls. Their humanity, which includes their bodies, still awaits the promise of resurrection for which our humanity also waits. They continue to share the hope of faith, and with us they await the great day of resurrection when all creation “will be full with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Isa 11.9).

Thus, the Anglican communion does not commend saints to our remembrance because of their present state or status beyond the grave. It is for the sake of their evident righteousness while they lived in our midst that we give thanks to God for them, call them “saints,” and pray for grace to follow their examples. By faith, however, we have the assurance that their spirits are in the hand of the living God, who is God of the living, not of the dead. For that reason they must continue to share our hope, with the same graciousness towards us in our concerns as we show towards them in our remembrance. Our memorials and commemorations are not only an exercise in Christian history; they are also acts of companionship with those extraordinary friends of God whose spirits rejoice while

their bodies rest in hope (Ps 16.9). The communion of saints is also communion with the saints.

Further Reading

Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Timea Szell, ed., *The Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, N. Y., 1991). A wide-ranging collection of essays by a group of medieval historians.

Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints. Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, 1981).

The Commemoration of Saints and Heroes of the Faith in the Anglican Communion (London, 1957). The Report of a Commission appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury in preparation for the Lambeth Conference of 1958.

Pierre-Yves Emery, *The Communion of Saints*, trans. J. and M. Watson (New York, 1966). A Brother of the Taizé Community, Emery addresses the question from a Reformed perspective.

Michael Perham, *The Communion of Saints. An Examination of the Place of the Christian Dead in the Belief, Worship, and Calendars of the Church* (London, 1980). An historical and theological overview by an Anglican liturgical scholar.

Notes

1. *The Martyrdom of Polycarp* 18.2–3; in Herbert Musurillo, ed. and trans., *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs*, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972) p. 17.
2. *Ibid.*, 17.2–3; in Musurillo 1972, pp. 15, 17.
3. The Eastern Church never developed an equivalent process for the recognition of saints. It follows a pattern which is still very close to the practice of the ancient Church. It is up to a local community — a parish, for instance — to initiate the commemoration of someone whom it knew to be holy. A parish priest, or the abbot of a monastery, may take it upon himself to include that person's name in the liturgy and to appoint a feast-day. A synod may also do so for a wider region. Synods may also review a local commemoration and either confirm or suppress it. But the initiative still lies with the local community. It is important to note that the Orthodox not only ask the saints to pray for them; they also offer their own prayers for the welfare of the saints.
4. John Fell, *The Life of Dr Henry Hammond* (1661); in *The Miscellaneous Theological Works of Henry Hammond*, ed. Nicholas Pocock, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1847–1850) vol. 1, p. lvii. Hammond was a leader of the Anglican underground in the years following the English Civil War, when the Church of England was an outlawed sect.

Suggestions for Using this Book

The Rules of Precedence are set forth on pages 15–21 of *The Book of Alternative Services* and should be consulted in the use of this companion volume.

Principal Feasts and Holy Days

On Principal Feasts and Holy Days, the full set of Proper Prayers and Readings should be used.

The liturgical colour of a Principal Feast or Holy Day takes precedence over the colour of the season.

Memorials

When a Memorial is observed, it is recommended that the full set of Propers be used.

During Advent, Lent, and Easter, it is appropriate that the colour of the season be retained. Following the Baptism of the Lord in Epiphanytide, and during the season following Pentecost, the colour of the Memorial may be used at the eucharist:

White: Teachers of the Faith, Spiritual Teachers, Pastors, Educators, Monastics, Feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Red: Martyrs, Missionaries.

Blue (or White): Old Testament Memorials.

At Morning and Evening Prayer, the Collect of the Memorial may be used to conclude the Intercessions.

Commemorations

When a Commemoration is observed, it is recommended that the Proper Prayers be used, but that the Readings and Psalm be either those appointed in the Weekday Eucharistic Lectionary (*BAS*, pp. 498–523) or those of the preceding Sunday.

The liturgical colour would be that of the season. Should the Commemoration be of local importance, it may be observed as a Memorial, with the Proper Readings and the colour of the Day (see section 2 above).

At Morning and Evening Prayer, unless the Commemoration is of local importance, the Collect of the preceding Sunday, or a Collect appropriate to the time of day, should be used to conclude the Intercessions.

Prayers of the People

If there is but one celebration of the eucharist during the week, at which the Propers of the preceding Sunday are normally used, a Memorial or Commemoration which occurs on that day may still be observed by using its Collect to conclude the Prayers of the People. In this case, it is appropriate that one or more of the petitions refer to the saint's name and distinctive example.

Sentences

The text of the Sentences normally follows the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). Occasionally other versions have been used: Revised Standard Version (RSV), Revised English Bible (REB), New Jerusalem Bible (NJB), an English translation of the Latin Vulgate (Vlg), and King James Version (KJV). Where a version other than the NRSV has been used, it is noted with the text.

The Proper Sentence may be used

Principal Feasts: as an Alleluia Verse between the Second Reading and the Gospel

Holy Days, Memorials, and Commemorations: as an Alleluia Verse between the Proper Psalm and the Gospel.

During Easter Season, one Alleluia should be added at the beginning, two Alleluias at the end of the Sentence.

At Morning and Evening Prayer, the Proper Sentence may be used either as Opening Sentence or else an Antiphon for one of the Canticles, except for Canticles 26 (*You are God*) and 27 (*Glory to God*).

Other Options

The Preface of the Season may be substituted for the Preface assigned as proper to a Memorial or Commemoration.

Any of the Readings may be lengthened or shortened at discretion. The selections from the Psalter may also be lengthened or shortened.

Appropriate Prayers, Readings, and Psalm from the Common of Saints may be substituted for those assigned to a Memorial or Commemoration.

Biographical Notices

Each Principal Feast, Holy Day, Memorial and Commemoration in this book is provided with a brief biographical notice, accompanying the proper prayers. If desired, it may be read out either at the beginning of the liturgy or in place of the homily.

A Note concerning Legendary Material

Every effort has been made to ensure the historical accuracy of the notices. However, certain Memorials and Commemorations involve the recounting of legends in order to explain their observance by the Church. No endorsement of the historical veracity of these legends is thereby implied or intended.

Readings from the Writings of the Saints

All Principal Feasts and Holy Days, and most Memorials and Commemorations, are supplemented by an entry in the section, Readings from the Writings of the Saints. These Appendix entries normally provide a non-scriptural Reading. Where deemed useful, further background information about the saint is presented in order to introduce the Reading.

The Readings themselves may be used as a spiritual resource in individual devotions; or as a resource for those who wish to construct and deliver a homily of their own in commemoration of the saint of the day. The Readings may also be used in place of the homily, either at the Daily Office or in the eucharist. On such occasions, it is recommended that the Reading be introduced by a very short summary of the reason for commemorating the saint.

A Note concerning Inclusive Language in Non-Scriptural Readings

Many of the Readings are by people who lived at a time when the language and thought of the Church was unthinkingly male in its bias.

In the case of ancient Latin and Greek texts, where it is clear that the author intended to address human beings, not just males, the translation has been revised (copyright permitting) to reflect this fact.

In the case of texts in pre-modern and modern languages, the problem of gender bias is far less easy to deal with. Once again, questions of copyright sometimes preclude the substitution of more inclusive terminology. There is also the question of respecting the integrity of an historical text. For this reason, even when a text is in the general domain, no attempt has been made to override terms which betray a gender bias. Such bias should be honestly admitted wherever it occurs, but it should also be considered in light of the whole message of the text.

The Calendar of the Church Year

January

1A	The Naming of Jesus	HD
2b	Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzus, Bishops and Teachers of the Faith, 379, 389	Mem
3c		
4d		
5e		
6f	The Epiphany of the Lord +	PF
7g		
8A		
9b		
10c	William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1645	Com
11d	The Holy Innocents (or 28 December)	HD
12e	Marguerite Bourgeoys, Educator in New France, 1700	Com
	John Horden, Bishop of Moosonee, Missionary, 1893	Com
13f	Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, Teacher of the Faith, 367	Mem
14g		
15A	Richard Meux Benson, Religious, Founder of the SSJE, 1915	Com
16b		
17c	Antony, Abbot in Egypt, 356	Mem
18d	The Confession of Saint Peter the Apostle	HD
19e		
20f		
21g	Agnes, Martyr at Rome, c. 304	Com
22A	Vincent, Deacon of Saragossa, Martyr, c. 304	Com
23b		
24c	Francis de Sales, Bishop of Geneva, Teacher of the Faith, 1622	Com
25d	The Conversion of Saint Paul	HD
26e	Timothy and Titus, Companions of Saint Paul	Mem
27f	John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, Teacher of the Faith, 407	Mem
28g	Thomas Aquinas, Teacher of the Faith, 1274	Mem
29A		
30b	Charles Stuart, King of England and Scotland, 1649	Com
31c		

+ The Sunday after the Epiphany is kept as the feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

February

1d		
2e	The Presentation of the Lord	HD
3f	Anskar, Apostle of Scandinavia, 865	Com
4g		
5A	Martyrs of Japan, 1597	Mem
6b		
7c		
8d		
9e	Hannah Grier Coome, Religious, Founder of the SSJD, 1921	Com
10f		
11g		
12A		
13b		
14c	Cyril and Methodius, Apostles to the Slavs, 869, 885	Mem
15d	Thomas Bray, Priest and Missionary, Founder of SPG and SPCK, 1730	Mem
16e		
17f		
18g		
19A		
20b		
21c		
22d		
23e	Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, Martyr, 156	Mem
24f	Philip Lindel Tsen, Bishop of Honan, 1954, and Paul Shinji Sasaki, Bishop of Mid-Japan and Tokyo, 1946	Com
25g		
26A	Florence Li Tim-Oi, first woman priested in the Anglican Communion, 1944 (see Appendix)	Com
27b	George Herbert, Priest and Poet, 1633	Com
28c		
29		

March

1d	David, Bishop of Menevia, Wales, c. 544	Mem
2e	Chad, Bishop of Lichfield, Missionary, 672	Com
3f	John and Charles Wesley, Priests and Evangelists, 1791, 1788	Com
4g		
5A		
6b		
7c	Perpetua and her Companions, Martyrs at Carthage, 202	Mem
8d	Edward King, Bishop of Lincoln, Educator and Pastor, 1910	Com
9e	Gregory of Nyssa, Bishop, Teacher of the Faith, c. 395	Mem
10f	Robert Machray, First Primate of Canada, 1904	Com
11g		
12A		
13b		
14c		
15d		
16e		
17f	Patrick, Missionary Bishop in Ireland, 461	Mem
18g	Cyril of Jerusalem, Bishop and Teacher of the Faith, 386	Com
19A	Saint Joseph of Nazareth	HD
20b	Cuthbert, Bishop of Lindisfarne, Missionary, 687	Com
21c	Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1556	Com
22d	Thomas Ken, Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1711	Com
23e	Gregory the Illuminator, Bishop of Armenia, c. 332	Com
24f		
25g	The Annunciation of the Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary	HD
26A		
27b	Charles Henry Brent, Bishop of the Philippines, and of Western New York, 1929	Com
28c		
29d	John Keble, Priest, 1866	Com
30e		
31f	John Donne, Priest and Poet, 1631	Com

April

1g	Frederick Denison Maurice, Priest, 1872	Com
2A	Henry Budd, First Canadian Native Priest, 1875	Com
3b	Richard, Bishop of Chichester, 1253	Com
4c	Reginald Heber, Bishop of Calcutta, 1826	Com
5d	Emily Ayckbowm, foundress of the Community of the Sisters of the Church, 1870 (see Appendix)	Mem
6e		
7f		
8g		
9A	William Law, Priest and Spiritual Leader, 1761	Com
10b		
11c	George Augustus Selwyn, First Missionary Bishop of New Zealand, 1878	Com
12d		
13e		
14f		
15g		
16A	Mollie Brant, Matron among the Mohawks, 1796	Com
17b		
18c		
19d		
20e		
21f	Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, Teacher of the Faith, 1109	Mem
22g		
23A	George, Patron of England, Martyr, 4th c.	Com
24b	Martyrs of the Twentieth Century	Mem
25c	Saint Mark the Evangelist	HD
26d		
27e		
28f		
29g	Catherine of Siena, Reformer and Spiritual Teacher, 1380	Mem
30A	Marie de l'Incarnation, Educator and Spiritual Teacher in New France, 1672	Com

May

1b	Saint Philip and Saint James, Apostles	HD
2c	Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, Teacher of the Faith, 373	Mem
3d		
4e		
5f		
6g	Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist (or 27 December)	HD
7A		
8b	Julian of Norwich, Spiritual Teacher, c. 1417	Com
9c		
10d		
11e		
12f	Florence Nightingale, Nurse, Social Reformer, 1910	Com
13g		
14A	Saint Matthias the Apostle	HD
15b		
16c		
17d		
18e		
19f	Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, 988	Com
20g		
21A		
22b		
23c		
24d		
25e	Bede, Priest, Monk of Jarrow, Historian and Educator, 735	Com
26f	Augustine, First Archbishop of Canterbury, 605	Mem
27g	John Charles Roper, Archbishop of Ottawa, 1940	Com
28A		
29b		
30c	Roberta Elizabeth Tilton, Founder of the Woman's Auxiliary of the Canadian Church, 1925	Com
31c	The Visit of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Elizabeth	HD

June

1e	Justin, Martyr at Rome, Teacher of the Faith, c. 167	Mem
2f	Martyrs of Lyons: Blandina and her Companions, 177	Com
3g	Martyrs of Uganda, 1886, and Janani Luwum, Archbishop of Uganda, 1977	Mem
4A	John XXIII, Bishop of Rome, Reformer, 1963	Com
5b	Boniface, Archbishop of Mainz, Missionary, Martyr, 754	Mem
6c	William Grant Broughton, First Anglican Bishop in Australia, 1853	Com
7d		
8e		
9f	Columba, Abbot of Iona, Missionary, 597	Mem
10g		
11A	Saint Barnabas the Apostle	HD
12b		
13c		
14d		
15e		
16f	Joseph Butler, Bishop of Durham, 1752	Com
17g		
18A	Bernard Mizeki, Catechist in Zimbabwe, Martyr, 1896	Mem
19b		
20c		
21d		
22e	Alban, First Martyr of Britain, c. 209	Mem
23f		
24g	The Birth of Saint John the Baptist	HD
25A		
26b		
27c		
28d	Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, Teacher of the Faith, c. 202	Mem
29e	Saint Peter and Saint Paul, Apostles	HD
30f		

July

1g		
2A		
3b	Saint Thomas the Apostle	HD
4c		
5d		
6e	Thomas More, Lawyer, 1535	Com
7f		
8g		
9A		
10b		
11c	Benedict of Nursia, Abbot, c. 547	Mem
12d		
13e	Henry, Missionary Bishop in Finland, 1156	Com
14f		
15g		
16A		
17b		
18c		
19d		
20e		
21f		
22g	Saint Mary Magdalene	HD
23A		
24b		
25c	Saint James the Apostle	HD
26d	Anne, Mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Com
27e		
28f		
29g	William Wilberforce, Social Reformer, 1833	Com
30A		
31b		

August

1c		
2d		
3e	Saint Stephen, Deacon and Martyr (or 26 December)	HD
4f		
5g		
6A	The Transfiguration of the Lord	HD
7b	John Mason Neale, Priest, 1866	Com
8c	Dominic, Priest and Friar, 1221	Mem
9d		
10e	Laurence, Deacon and Martyr at Rome, 258	Mem
11f	Clare of Assisi, Abbess, 1253	Mem
12g	Consecration of Charles Inglis, First Anglican Bishop in Canada, 1787	Com
13A	Jeremy Taylor, Bishop of Down and Connor, Spiritual Teacher, 1667	Mem
14b	Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Maximilien Kolbe, Martyrs, 1945, 1941	Com
15c	Saint Mary the Virgin	HD
16d	Holy Women of the Old Testament	Mem
17e	John Stuart, Priest, Missionary among the Mohawks, 1811	Com
18f		
19g		
20A	Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, 1153	Mem
21b		
22c		
23d		
24e	Saint Bartholomew the Apostle	HD
25f		
26g		
27A	Monnica, Mother of Augustine of Hippo, 387	Com
28b	Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, Teacher of the Faith, 430	Mem
29c	The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist	HD
30d	Robert McDonald, Priest in the Western Arctic, 1913	Com
31e	Aidan, Bishop of Lindisfarne, Missionary, 651	Com

September

1f		
2g	Martyrs of New Guinea, 1942	Mem
3A	Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome, 604	Mem
4b	First Anglican Eucharist in Canada, 1578	Com
5c		
6d		
7e		
8f	The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Mem
9g		
10A	Edmund James Peck, Priest, Missionary to the Inuit, 1924	Mem
11b		
12c		
13d	Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, Martyr, 258	Mem
14e	Holy Cross Day	HD
15f		
16g	Ninian, Bishop in Galloway, c. 430	Mem
17A		
18b	Founders, Benefactors, and Missionaries of the Anglican Church of Canada	Mem
19c	Theodore of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury, 690	Com
20d	John Coleridge Patteson, Bishop of Melanesia, Martyr, 1871	Com
21e	Saint Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist	HD
22f		
23g		
24A		
25b	Sergius, Abbot of Holy Trinity, Moscow, Spiritual Teacher, 1392	Com
26c	Lancelot Andrewes, Bishop of Winchester, 1626	Com
27d		
28e		
29f	Saint Michael and All Angels	HD
30g	Jerome, Teacher of the Faith, 420	Mem

October

1A		
2b		
3c		
4d	Francis of Assisi, Friar, 1226	Mem
5e		
6f		
7g		
8A		
9b		
10c	Paulinus, First Bishop of York, Missionary, 644	Com
11d		
12e		
13f	Edward the Confessor, King of England, 1066	Com
14g		
15A	Teresa of Avila, Spiritual Teacher and Reformer, 1582	Com
	John of the Cross, Priest, Spiritual Teacher, 1591	Com
16b		
17c	Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, Martyr, c. 115	Mem
18d	Saint Luke the Evangelist	HD
19e	Jean de Br]beuf, Isaac Jogues, and their Companions, Missionaries and Martyrs in New France, 1642-1649	Mem
20f		
21g		
22A		
23b	James of Jerusalem	Mem
24c		
25d		
26e	Alfred the Great, King of the West Saxons, 899	Com
27f		
28g	Saint Simon and Saint Jude, Apostles	HD
29A	James Hannington, Bishop of Eastern Equatorial Africa, and his Companions, Martyrs, 1885	Com
30b	John Wyclyf, Reformer, 1384	Com
	Jan Hus, Reformer, 1415	Com
31c	Saints of the Reformation Era	Com

November

1d	All Saints	PF
2e	All Souls — Commemoration of All Faithful Departed	Mem
3f	Richard Hooker, Priest and Teacher of the Faith, 1600	Com
4g	Saints of the Old Testament	Mem
5A		
6b		
7c	Willibrord, Archbishop of Utrecht, Missionary, 739	Com
8d		
9e		
10f	Leo the Great, Bishop of Rome, Teacher of the Faith, 461	Mem
11g	Martin, Bishop of Tours, 397	Mem
12A	Charles Simeon, Priest, 1836	Com
13b		
14c	Consecration of Samuel Seabury, First Anglican Bishop in North America, 1784	Com
15d		
16e	Margaret, Queen of Scotland, Helper of the Poor, 1093	Com
17f	Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln, 1200	Com
18g	Hilda, Abbess of Whitby, 680	Com
19A	Elizabeth, Princess of Hungary, 1231	Com
20b	Edmund, King of East Anglia, Martyr, 870	Com
21c		
22d		
23e	Clement, Bishop of Rome, c. 100	Com
24f		
25g		
26A		
27b		
28c		
29d		
30e	Saint Andrew the Apostle	HD

December

1f		
2g		
3A	Francis Xavier, Missionary to the Far East, 1552	Com
4b	Nicholas Ferrar, Deacon, 1637, and the Community of Little Gidding	Com
5c	Clement of Alexandria, Priest, c. 210	Com
6d	Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, c. 342	Com
7e	Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, 397	Mem
8f	The Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Mem
9g	Prophets of the Old Testament	Mem
10A		
11b		
12c		
13d		
14e		
15f	Simon Gibbons, First Priest from the Inuit, 1896	Com
16g		
17A		
18b		
19c		
20d		
21e		
22f		
23g		
24A		
25b	The Birth of the Lord: Christmas Day	PF
26c	(Saint Stephen, Deacon and Martyr, or 3 August,	HD)
27d	(Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist, or 6 May,	HD)
28e	(The Holy Innocents, or 11 January,	HD)
29f	Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1170	Com
30g		
31A	John West, Missionary in the Red River District, 1845	Com

The Propers for Saints' Days

with Biographical Notices

The Naming of Jesus

1 January

Holy Day

According to Saint Luke, Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day after his birth, as the Law of Moses required. This is an event of tremendous religious importance for Jews. Circumcision entitles the newborn male to share in “the promise of mercy” which God “made to Abraham and his children for ever.” For this reason, Jewish custom sees it as the most suitable occasion for giving the child his name and thus a distinct presence in the community of God’s people.

Luke the evangelist made nothing of these Jewish beliefs in his account. He mentioned the circumcision of Jesus for one reason only: it fulfilled the last word of the Annunciation, when the angel told the Virgin Mary that the son she would bear should be named Jesus. Therefore, instead of commemorating the Circumcision of Christ, the Church observes the Gospel’s emphasis and celebrates January first — the eighth day after Christmas Day — as the Naming of Jesus.

Jesus is the Greek form of a Hebrew name, *Yeshu’* (or Joshua), meaning “Yahweh saves.” And that fact has immense significance for the Church.

According to the Book of Exodus, God spoke to Moses out of the burning bush and called him to bring the Hebrew people out of Egypt. Moses asked the divine voice, “What is your name?” And God answered with the word “Yahweh,” which means “I am who I am.” Because this name was laden with all the holiness of the Almighty, the people of Israel developed the custom of never speaking it; whenever they met it in the text of Scripture, they spoke the Hebrew word for “Lord” instead.

But when Mary gave birth to her child, “I am who I am” entered human life as “I am the One who saves.” God’s name became speakable for humans, because all the saving power of the Almighty was embodied in “the name of Jesus.” To take this name upon our lips — and still more, to manifest this name in our lives — is to become what Jesus is, human life in intimate communion with God.

When 1 January is a Sunday these propers will be used instead of those for the First Sunday after Christmas, or those of the Epiphany may be used.

Sentence

God spoke of old by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son. *Hebrews 1.1–2*

Collect

Eternal Father,
we give thanks for your incarnate Son,
whose name is our salvation.
Plant in every heart, we pray,
the love of him who is the saviour of the world,
our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, in glory everlasting.

Readings

Numbers 6.22–27 Psalm 67

Refrain May God give us his blessing. *Or v. 1 or CR 4*

Galatians 4.4–7 *or* Philippians 2.9–13 Luke 2.15–21

Prayer over the Gifts

Gracious God,
the name of Jesus brings salvation to the world.
In all we offer you this day,
may we honour him,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Preface of Christmas

Prayer after Communion

Father,
you have fed us heavenly food
in the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ.
Grant that we, sharing in this mystery,
may turn always to that name which is above all others,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzus

2 January

Bishops, Teachers of the Faith, 379, 389 — Memorial

Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzus were holy bishops and influential teachers in the fourth-century Church. We remember them together because they were close friends from their youth, bound by a common desire for perfection as Christians and a firm commitment to orthodox teaching.

Their characters were very different: Basil had a forceful, outgoing personality which was nourished by the company of others, while Gregory was plagued by self-doubts and preferred to live in scholarly retirement. Basil eventually became the bishop of Caesarea, a large city in Asia Minor, and the leader of the orthodox party in his district. The opponents of orthodoxy pressed him on every side, so he began to push his friends into offices where they could support their common cause. He compelled Gregory to become the bishop of a small rural diocese, and his handling of the situation led to a breach between them, which lasted until Basil's death in the year 379. Nevertheless, twelve months later, Gregory came out of retirement to aid the Church in one of its most difficult times. He eventually served as the bishop of Constantinople.

Basil and Gregory were convinced that the Nicene Creed was the only solid basis for understanding the Christian faith. Many others questioned the Creed, especially its affirmation that "Jesus Christ, the only Son of God," is "of one being with the Father." They did not understand why the Church had to say that Christ is God. Basil and Gregory by their clear thinking and passionate eloquence showed that this one statement was the foundation of the Church's belief in Jesus as the fullness of salvation. Their labours paved the way for the triumph of orthodox teaching at the First Council of Constantinople; and this Council, held in the year 381, ratified the version of the Nicene Creed that we use to this day.

Sentence

I prayed, and understanding was given me; I called upon God,
and the spirit of wisdom came to me. *Wisdom 7.7*

Collect

Almighty God,
you raised up your servants Basil and Gregory
in the midst of a troubled Church,
and gave them the gift of holy eloquence
to defend the mystery of your triune life.
Unite us, we pray, in celebration of this mystery,
that we may be filled with your light
and led by your truth to behold in praise and adoration
your glorious majesty and perfect love,
O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
three Persons and one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Wisdom 7.7–10, 15–16 Psalm 27.1–6, 12–13

Refrain Your face, O Lord, will I seek.

John 5.19–24

Prayer over the Gifts

Source and Giver of the eternal Word,
grant that we who make ready this table
for the banquet of your grace
may honour the witness of Basil and Gregory,
and so follow their example
that our prayer may be instilled with the faith of your Church.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of Trinity Sunday

Prayer after Communion

God of immortal splendour,
you sustain us in our paschal journey
with the life of the Word made flesh.
Grant us, after the example of Basil and Gregory,
so to possess the wisdom of your love
that we may know the fulfillment of our nature
in the contemplation of your glory,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Epiphany of the Lord

6 January

Principal Feast

Today we commemorate an episode which is recorded in the Gospel according to Matthew — the epiphany or “manifestation” of Christ to “wise men from the East.”

Such “wise men” were the high priests of an occult religion whose chief centres lay in Mesopotamia. They were supposed to have special insight into the ways of nature, interpreting dreams and reading the stars in order to determine the will of their gods. But then the appearance of a strange star in the heavens manifested to them the birth of “the one who is born king of the Jews.” So much their learning in the ways of nature told them; but they needed to go to Jerusalem, to those who were learned in the Jewish Scriptures, in order to locate this king. In Matthew’s view, true knowledge of salvation was from the Jews, but it was a knowledge now available to the Gentiles as well. The star of Bethlehem was an evangelical symbol. Because it manifested Christ to the wise men and brought them to worship him, it represents the proclamation of the Gospel to the pagan nations outside Israel.

If the star of Bethlehem symbolizes the Gospel, the wise men symbolize something equally important — the obedience of the Gentiles, in contrast to the anxiety of the rulers and official teachers of Israel. The wise men started with nothing more than their learning in the ways of nature; and yet this same learning enabled them to respond to the light of divine revelation. The Christian tradition has seen in this story a sign of hope for everything that humans know and endeavour by the light of nature. For it means that no truth or wisdom in the created order is contrary to the revelation of God in Christ. On the contrary, so far as humans are obedient to the light they possess by nature, God will complete it and manifest its fulfillment with “the truth as it is in Jesus.”

When 6 January is a Sunday these propers will be used instead of those for the Second Sunday after Christmas.

Sentence

We have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him. *Matthew 2.2*

Collect

Eternal God,
who by a star
led wise men to the worship of your Son,
guide by your light the nations of the earth,
that the whole world may know your glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Isaiah 60.1–6 Psalm 72.1–14

Refrain All nations shall serve him. *Or v. 11 or CR 1*

Ephesians 3.1–12 Matthew 2.1–12

Prayer over the Gifts

Gracious God,
accept the offering of your Church,
the hearts of your people
joined in praise and thanksgiving,
in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of the Epiphany

Prayer after Communion

God of all the nations of the earth,
guide us with your light.
Help us to recognize Christ as he comes to us
in this eucharist and in our neighbours.
May we welcome him with love,
for he is Lord now and for ever.

William Laud

10 January

Archbishop of Canterbury, 1645 — Commemoration

William Laud became archbishop of Canterbury in 1633 and was executed twelve years later because of his programme of reform. He sought to restore discipline in the Church of England and revive a sense of beauty and dignity in its celebration of the liturgy.

Laud came to maturity when the established Church was hard-pressed by Puritanism, a reform-movement which offered individuals a spiritual discipline to sustain their experience of conversion. To counter this movement, he and his friends developed a rival discipline, a pattern of Christian practice which focused on the liturgy and outward acts of reverence. Laud himself once explained: "I take myself bound to worship with body as well as in soul, whenever I come where God is worshipped."

Even before he became archbishop of Canterbury, this discipline was hated by a broad cross-section of English society. But after he was made archbishop, he and his party became the scapegoats for everything else that seemed to be wrong in England. Laud did not relent, and the brutal punishment meted out to several of his critics only inflamed public opinion further. Parliament impeached him in 1640, and he languished in the Tower of London for over four years. When he was finally brought to trial, he defended himself so ably that Parliament decided to override the judicial process and passed a special act condemning him to death. He was beheaded on January tenth, 1645. Nevertheless, Laud's vision of the Church at prayer survived and became the standard of Anglican liturgical practice for the next two centuries. So we honour him today for giving our tradition a richer sense of worship and a fuller delight in "the beauty of holiness."

Sentence

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; let the whole earth tremble before him. *Psalm 96.9*

Collect

O God, the everlasting Sovereign,
you ordain the whole of our nature
for delight in the beauty of holiness,
that we may reverence you with our bodies
even as we worship you with our souls.
Lead us in the way of your servant William Laud,
and grant us so to be mindful of his service
that we may never grow weary in our earnest care
for the integrity and welfare of your Church;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

2 Chronicles 24.18–22 Psalm 73.23–29

Refrain God is the strength of my heart.

Matthew 10.34–39

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God, the Strength of our hearts,
you called your servant William Laud
to confirm the Church of England
in the way of apostolic order.
Fill your Church, we pray, with all truth,
in all truth with all peace,
that our offering may be grounded upon your mercy
and our worship may be governed by your love.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Loving Redeemer,
you join us to the priestly sacrifice of your Son
in company with your servant William Laud.
Turn our hands to deeds of justice,
that in all the changes and chances of everyday life
we may bear the signs of your mercy.
We ask this for the sake of Jesus Christ the Lord.

The Holy Innocents

January 11 (or December 28)

Holy Day

The story of the Holy Innocents is found in the Gospel according to Matthew, and it is the story of an atrocity.

Herod the Great was titled “king of the Jews,” but he held his throne at the pleasure of the Roman emperor. The precariousness of his power made him all the more ruthless in defending it. Thus, when he learned that the Christ, the true king of the Jews, had been born at Bethlehem, Herod wanted to do away with him. But he did not know the exact identity of the child, so he sent his troops to slaughter all the infants of Bethlehem on the chance that one of the victims would be the Christ-child.

The murdered infants never had an opportunity to know Jesus or to confess him in their own right. But they all died for the sake of Christ, and Herod’s atrocity sealed the name of Christ on each one of them. The Holy Innocents are therefore considered the prototype of all Christian martyrs.

The Holy Innocents may also be considered the patron saints of our own age. For we live in an age of atrocities, in a time infamous for the slaughter of innocent bystanders who never chose the causes for which they have been made to die. By celebrating this feast, we perform an office for the Holy Innocents and all other victims of massacre. We become their voice and cry out for God to remember the slaughtered — and to remember them for the sake of Christ, himself the great Innocent who was crucified by “the rulers of this age.”

Sentence

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. *Matthew 5.10*

Collect

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
whose children suffered at the hands of Herod,
receive, we pray, all innocent victims
into the arms of your mercy.
By your great might frustrate all evil designs
and establish your reign of justice, love, and peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Jeremiah 31.15–17 *or* Revelation 21.1–7 Psalm 124
Refrain We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowler.
Or v. 7 or CR 5
Matthew 2.13–18

Prayer over the Gifts

Merciful God,
accept all we offer you this day.
Preserve your people from cruelty
and indifference to violence,
that the weak may always be defended
from the tyranny of the strong.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Martyr

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God,
comfort of the afflicted and healer of the broken,
you have fed us this day at the table of life and hope.
Teach us the ways of gentleness and peace,
that all the world may acknowledge
the kingdom of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Either Marguerite Bourgeoys or John Horden (p. 50) may be commemorated on this date.

Marguerite Bourgeoys 12 January
Educator in New France, 1700 — Commemoration

Marguerite Bourgeoys was a Frenchwoman who came to Canada in 1653. She had experienced many disappointments in her effort to find a religious vocation until she was asked to cross the Atlantic and build a school in Montreal, where the children of the colonists could be taught reading, writing, and the Christian faith.

During her first decade in the colony Marguerite got her school built and gathered a small community of women to staff it. She then began to send her teachers on rounds of the French villages outside of Montreal. This work led to the foundation of the *Congrégation de Notre Dame de Montréal*. The sisters of the Congregation were sent forth two-by-two; each pair went from settlement to settlement, teaching the catechism and encouraging the faithful. They were expected to use whatever means of transportation they could find, and to provide for their own necessities on the way.

Her Congregation proved to be very successful and continues its work to this day, a testimony to the vision of Marguerite Bourgeoys, who developed in Canada what she had been unable to find in France — a truly apostolic vocation for herself and other women.

Sentence

Those who fear the Lord will form true judgements, and like a light they will kindle righteous deeds. *Sirach 32.16*

Collect

God of everlasting mercy,
you called your servant Marguerite
to the life of apostolic service in New France,
and so prepared her heart to do your will
that she never refused to be present
wherever love or necessity required.
Grant us, we pray,
the freedom always to live in obedience to you,
that our interior deeds of prayer and praise
may bear fruit in a ready love for all your children;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Jeremiah 1.4–12 Psalm 119.97–104

Refrain Your word makes me wiser than my elders.

Mark 6.6b–13

Prayer over the Gifts

Giver and goal of all that is,
you taught your servant Marguerite
to rule her life by the law of your grace.
Receive our gifts of love and praise
that we may become worthy bearers of your Word.
We ask this through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Lord God,
by this sacrament you make us one
in the eternal offering of your only Son.
Grant us so to follow your servant Marguerite,
that we may rejoice with her
in the work of upbuilding your Church.
This we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

John Horden 12 January
Missionary Bishop of Moosonee, 1893 — Commemoration

On this day we honour the memory of John Horden, first bishop of Moosonee and one of the most effective Anglican missionaries in nineteenth-century Canada.

He came to this country in 1851, when the Church Missionary Society assigned him the district of Moosonee — a vast area which included all of the territory surrounding James Bay. Besides English merchants and Norwegian settlers at Moose Factory, this district was peopled by scattered bands of three different First Nations — the Cree, the Ojibway, and the Chippewa.

Horden's yearly rounds of Moosonee were epic in their extent and remarkably successful in their purpose. He converted band after band to Christ, then took care to sustain his converts by developing a system of native Christian teachers. He also translated much of the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer into one of the dialects of the Cree tongue.

After twenty-two years the diocese of Moosonee was formed, and Horden was made its first bishop. Instead of retreating into administrative duties, he extended his missionary work to the Inuit people who lived in the northern reaches of James Bay, and before his death in 1893 he ensured that all the many peoples of his diocese would be able to hear God's Word in their own tongues.

Sentence

Blessed is that servant whom his master when he comes will find watching over his household, to give them their food at the proper time. *Matthew 24.46*

Collect

O God,
the Desire of all the nations,
you chose your servant John Horden
to open the treasury of your Word
among the native peoples of Canada.
Grant us, after his example,
to be constant in our purpose and care
for the enlargement of your kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Isaiah 49.1–9 Psalm 98

Refrain Rejoice in the Lord, all you peoples.

Matthew 28.16–20

Prayer over the Gifts

God of grace,
you prepare for us a table
and give us gifts to offer for your banquet.
Regard the love which guides our worship
and after the example of your servant John Horden,
make us true and effectual instruments
for the work of your Son our Redeemer,
who is Lord now and for ever.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God,
grant us so to abide in the strength of this sacrament,
that with ready minds and constant wills
we may follow the example of your servant John Horden
and show forth the light of your gospel;
through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Hilary 13 January
Bishop of Poitiers, Teacher of the Faith, 367 — Memorial

Today we honour Hilary, a bishop and hero of the Catholic faith in fourth-century Gaul. Born and raised in paganism, he inherited great wealth, married and had a daughter, and gained prestige as a public advocate in his native Poitiers, a city in what is now southwestern France. Around the age of thirty, he began to study Christian beliefs in private; his reading and reflection led him to seek baptism in the year 350. The Christians of Poitiers recognized his gifts of mind and character, and two or three years later they elected him as their bishop.

At that time two movements were locked in bitter contest for control of the Church. On one side, the Catholic movement upheld the Nicene Creed, with its affirmation that the Son of God is “of one being with the Father,” and insisted that this doctrine was the only possible basis for Christian life and practice. On the other side, the Arian movement accused the Nicene faith of violating the utter oneness of God. Hilary cast his lot with the Catholics and immediately became a serious irritation to the Arians. They happened to enjoy the favour of the Roman emperor, and their complaints about Hilary’s effectiveness in defending Nicene principles provoked the emperor into exiling him from his diocese.

Hilary spent three years in Asia Minor and during this banishment deepened his commitment to orthodox theology. His presence became such an embarrassment to the Arians in the East that they convinced the emperor to banish him again — back to his own diocese of Poitiers. Upon his return Hilary rallied the neighbouring bishops in opposition to Arianism, and before his death on January thirteenth in the year 367 he had turned his entire province into a bastion of the Nicene faith.

Sentence

Because I live, you will live also: you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. *John 14.19–20*

Collect

Lord our God,
you called your servant Hilary
to guard with compassion the good of your Church
and to preserve by his steadfast witness
the fulness of Catholic teaching.
Keep us firm in the faith professed at our baptism
that as your Son made his dwelling with us,
so we may always abide in him;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

2 Timothy 1.13–14, 2.1–3 Psalm 119.161–168

Refrain My heart stands in awe of your Word.

Luke 12.8–12

Prayer over the Gifts

Source and Partner of the eternal Word,
who gave to your Church
the teaching of your blessed servant Hilary,
spread your mercy over this table
and confer your grace upon our service,
that we may know the gladness of your salvation
and rejoice in the fulness of your truth.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of the Incarnation

Prayer after Communion

O God,
you feed us with the life of the Word made flesh,
and make us partakers of his divinity.
Grant us so to abide in the grace of this mystery
that we may do the works which you ordain
and love the truth which you reveal,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Richard Meux Benson

15 January

Religious, Founder of the Society of St. John the Evangelist, 1915

— Commemoration

Today we honour the memory of Richard Meux Benson, founder and first superior of the Society of St John the Evangelist, an Anglican religious community which began its life in 1866.

Benson belonged to the second generation of the Oxford Movement, and he shared one of its great hopes, which was the revival of monastic life in the Anglican communion. A number of Anglican sisterhoods were successfully established during the 1850s. A few attempts were made to found monastic brotherhoods, but they failed because the communities lacked any connection with the ordinary life of the Church of England. Benson was determined to avoid this mistake when he and two other priests began their experiment of a monastic community. The group tested its vocation by acting as a pastoral team in the parish of Cowley, a working-class suburb of Oxford, where Benson himself was the vicar. On December twenty-seventh, 1866, they knelt in the church of Cowley St John and took vows as mission priests of the Society of St John the Evangelist.

Benson remained vicar of Cowley for another twenty years, and he kept the Society firmly anchored in the life of the parish. But he was also quick to seize opportunities for work further afield, and when he resigned as superior in 1890 “the Cowley Fathers” had missions in the United States, India, and South Africa.

Benson himself was once described as having “a heart of steel towards self, a heart of flesh towards man, and a heart of flame towards God.” Many who encountered him at a distance felt that he was caught up in a higher dimension, far beyond the reach of ordinary folk. But those who encountered him in more intimate settings, during retreats or while seeking spiritual nurture, discovered a passion and a tenderness which communicated the true light of God’s glory. This light continued to shine in Benson even into his ninety-first year when, blind and crippled by rheumatism, he died in the Society’s Mission House at Cowley.

Sentence

Far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. *Galatians 6.14*

Collect

Blessed are you, eternal God,
for your servant Richard Meux Benson,
who heeded your call to holiness
and nurtured in others, far and near,
the vocation of constant union with Christ.
Heal our intentions and transfigure our wills,
that our lives may be filled
with the harmony of your life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Romans 10.14–17 Psalm 15
Refrain The Lord honours those who fear him.
Matthew 6.24–33

Prayer over the Gifts

God of peace,
who guided your servant Richard
in the works that give you glory,
grant that in all our offering this day
we may wait upon the riches of your grace
and be ready in truth for the abundance of your table,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Lord God,
who made your servant Richard
a sharer in the redemptive work of your Son,
grant us thankful hearts and a living faith,
that we may go forth in love
to minister the healing of your kingdom.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Antony 17 January
Abbot in Egypt, 356 — Memorial

Today we honour the memory of a holy man named Antony, who is often counted as the first true monk in the Christian tradition.

He was born around the year 250, the son of a prosperous farmer in the district of Middle Egypt. He probably never knew any but the Christian way, and grew up listening to the Gospels read out in the village church. But when he was twenty Antony suddenly heard with his heart these words of Christ: "Go, sell all you have, and give to the poor; and come, follow me." Antony went and did just that: he renounced his inheritance and retired into the desert beyond his village.

The desert remained Antony's home for the rest of his life. In his solitude he gave himself to prayer and fasting, to daily recitation of the Psalter, and most of all to waging war against the forces of spiritual darkness.

Antony did not dwell in the desert in order to avoid conflict, but to deal with his inner conflicts more effectively. He wished to teach his heart, as he himself said, "to hate all peace that comes from the flesh." He succeeded in this purpose by performing extraordinary deeds of physical self-discipline. But before he died in the year 356, well over a hundred years old, Antony learned something still greater — to love God. It is for his love of God, wondrous and simple, that we remember Antony today.

Sentence

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.

1 John 4.18

Collect

Almighty God,
you strengthened your servant Antony
to endure all trials of the spirit
and cleansed his heart of fear
to make him perfect in the discipline of love.
Give us grace to cherish his example,
that we may know your call
and walk in the paths of your righteousness
all the days of our lives;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Song of Solomon 8.6–7 Psalm 91.9–16

Refrain I will protect him because he knows my Name.

Mark 10.17–21

Prayer over the Gifts

Father of our Salvation,
who taught your servant Antony
to hate all peace that comes from sloth or self-will,
grant that we who set these gifts upon your table
may fix our hearts upon the riches of your kingdom.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Gracious God,
by these holy and life-giving mysteries
you set your love as a seal upon our hearts.
Grant us, after the example of your holy servant Antony,
so to abide under the cover of your wings
that we may sing of your mercy in times of prosperity
and rejoice in your strength in our seasons of trial.
We ask this for the sake of Jesus Christ the Lord.

The Confession of Saint Peter the Apostle

18 January

Holy Day

Today we commemorate the confession of Simon Peter as told in the Gospel according to Matthew. When Jesus asked, "Who do you say that I am?" Simon spoke up and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!" Jesus then responded: "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! It was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church."

In telling this story, the evangelist showed that every confession of Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God," is always a gift from God. It is not something that human beings can discover by their own powers, nor is it a truth obvious to anyone who looks at the historical Jesus without the help of the Holy Spirit. The natural power of sight needs to be fulfilled by God's merciful gift of insight.

Today's feast was instituted by the Episcopal Church of the United States to complement the feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul on January twenty-fifth. Together these two feasts provide a suitable beginning and end for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which all Churches now observe at this time of year. As Paul's conversion reminds Christians that they are united in a call to proclaim Jesus among the nations, so Peter's confession reminds Christians that they are united in the basis of this mission, which is the inspired knowledge of Jesus Christ, "the Son of the living God."

Sentence

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. *Matthew 16.16*

Collect

Almighty God,
you inspired Simon Peter, first among the apostles,
to confess Jesus as Messiah and Son of the living God.
Keep your Church steadfast upon the rock of this faith,
so that in unity and peace
we may proclaim the one truth
and follow the one Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Acts 4.8–13 or 1 Peter 5.1–4 Psalm 23

Refrain The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want. *Or CR 4*
Matthew 16.13–19

Prayer over the Gifts

Living God,
accept the offering of your holy Church.
As Peter confessed Jesus, the Messiah and your Son,
give us courage to follow him,
the Lord who reigns with you for ever.

Preface of Apostles

Prayer after Communion

Keep us, Father, in this fellowship of faith,
the Church of your Son Jesus Christ,
and help us to confess him as Messiah and Lord
in all we say and do.
We ask this in his name.

Agnes 21 January
Martyr at Rome, c. 304 — Commemoration

Today we honour St. Agnes, who was martyred at Rome around the year 304 and is said to have been only twelve years old when she suffered for her confession of the Lord Jesus Christ. The traditional accounts of her martyrdom agree that she was arrested and brought before a pagan judge, and when he tried to coax her into renouncing the Christian faith, she answered him with an assurance that was far above her years. Her boldness infuriated the judge and he sentenced her to death — some accounts say by being burned at the stake, others say by beheading. What truly matters to the Church is not the manner of her death, but the maturity of faith displayed in so young a child. Some eighty years after her death Ambrose of Milan wrote: “Everyone marvelled that Agnes was so spendthrift with her life, which she had hardly tasted, but was now giving up as though she had finished with it. All were astounded that she should come forward as a witness to God when she was still too young to be her own mistress. So she succeeded in convincing others of her testimony about God, though her testimony in human affairs could not yet be accepted. The onlookers believed that she had received from God what could not come from humans; for what is beyond the power of nature must come from its Creator.”

Sentence

Out of the mouths of infants and children, O Lord, your majesty is praised above the heavens. *Psalm 8.2*

Collect

Almighty, everlasting God,
you choose those whom the world deems powerless
to put the powerful to shame.
Grant us so to honour your holy martyr Agnes
that we may share her pure and steadfast faith in you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Esther 13.8–14, 17 Psalm 116.1–8

Refrain You rescue my life from death, O Lord.

Matthew 10.17–22

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord of all consolation,
by whose power your blessed martyr Agnes
confounded the wisdom of all her elders,
receive from our hands
the gifts which you yourself provide,
that we may be knit to the truth of your Word
and be found without fault
at the banquet of your table.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Martyr

Prayer after Communion

O God of the martyrs,
who strengthened your holy servant Agnes
to give a mighty witness above her years,
save us from our fears of worldly harm
and set your grace in our hearts,
that we may walk in your presence
and delight in your goodness for ever.
This we ask for the sake of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Vincent

22 January

Deacon of Saragossa, Martyr, c. 304 — Commemoration

Today we remember Vincent, a Spanish deacon who suffered for the faith around the year 304. He was arrested with the bishop of Saragossa, a man named Valerius. Because Valerius stammered, he often relied on Vincent to give the homily on his behalf. When the two were brought before the Roman governor, Vincent turned to Valerius and said, "Father, if you order me, I will speak." The bishop responded, "Son, as I committed you to dispense the word of God, so I now charge you to answer in vindication of the faith which we defend." Vincent spoke and held back nothing either in his defense of the faith or in his condemnation of paganism. The governor was enraged by the deacon's effrontery. He sentenced Valerius to exile, but ordered Vincent to the horrors of the torture chamber. For several hours Vincent endured the worst torments that the ancient world could devise. In the end his body surrendered its life because his spirit refused to surrender Christ.

Vincent's endurance caused the Church to stand in awe of him — and to recognize how he came by the strength that he needed. In the early fifth century Augustine of Hippo told his flock: "If you were to consider Vincent's martyrdom nothing more than human endurance, his act is unbelievable. But Vincent ceases to be a source of astonishment, once you recognize the power to be from God."

Sentence

The Lord knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold. *Job 23.10*

Collect

God of boundless compassion,
who made your holy deacon Vincent
a worthy partner in the sufferings of Christ,
strengthen us to endure all adversity
with invincible and steadfast faith,
that our assurance of your saving justice
may vanquish all dangers that assault our bodies
and all wounds that would harm our souls;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Colossians 1.24–29 Psalm 31.1–5

Refrain Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.
Luke 12.4–12

Prayer over the Gifts

O Lord our God,
your holy deacon Vincent
proclaimed your gospel in the midst of your people
and gladly bore witness before those who condemned it.
Regard your own gifts in us and on this table,
that we may be worthy to share in the one oblation
by which your Son redeemed the world from its sorrow.
We ask this through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Martyr

Prayer after Communion

Kindle in your Church, O God,
the Spirit that blessed Vincent served,
that we may love what he loved
and hasten to follow the example of his faithful daring.
We ask this for the sake of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Francis de Sales*24 January**Bishop of Geneva, Teacher of the Faith, 1622 — Commemoration*

Francis de Sales was the Roman Catholic bishop of Geneva from 1602 until his death twenty years later. Since Geneva was the home base of Calvinist protestantism, Francis never actually presided in the city itself. This left him free to carry out his true vocation, which was to guide and direct individual Christians in their longing to love God.

Francis's own desire to serve God had been severely tested in his youth. He wished to become a priest, while his father insisted that he study law. Francis obeyed his father's wishes and eventually became a full-fledged advocate. But the interior cost was tremendous, and he passed through a time of acute despair. His father finally relented and permitted him to begin training for the priesthood.

Francis never forgot his inner trial and even recognized that it had been necessary for him to find God in the midst of secular work before he could serve God as a priest. This made him sensitive to the despair that people sometimes felt when they tried to live the devout life in a world — and in a Church — which regarded religious discipline as a matter for cloistered experts. In his writing, in his preaching, and in his spiritual direction, he therefore strove to put the life of Christian prayer and meditation within the reach of all those who wished to love God in the midst of their day-to-day lives.

Sentence

You must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matthew 5.48

Collect

O God, our Creator and our Goal,
who guided many in the practice of your love
by the ministry of your servant Francis de Sales,
grant us so to live by the grace of Christ
that we may serve you with our prayers,
praise you with our minds,
and show forth your love by our readiness in mercy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Proverbs 3.13–18 Psalm 119.97–104

Refrain You yourself, O God, have been my teacher.

Matthew 5.13–16

Prayer over the Gifts

God of holiness,
the light of the minds that know you,
and the strength of the hearts that love you,
heal the wounds of strife and prejudice,
that our service may be bound up with your peace
and our offering may prosper with your grace.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Father,
you led your servant Francis de Sales
to teach many the sweet discipline of prayer.
Grant that, nourished by this holy banquet,
we may follow the paths of devotion
which are fitted to our various callings
and grow in the Spirit of holiness and love,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Conversion of Saint Paul the Apostle

January 25

Holy Day

When modern people speak of “conversion,” they usually mean some tremendous event which moves them from one way of life into its complete opposite. And so, on the feast of the Conversion of Paul, it might be thought that we are celebrating Paul’s change of religion, as if he ceased being a Jew and became a Christian. The Book of Acts, with its story of Paul’s overwhelming experience on the road to Damascus, has reinforced this view.

But Paul himself did not see the event in quite the same way. We have his own words in the Letter to the Galatians: “He who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles.” In using such language, Paul placed himself in the company of the prophets of ancient Israel; and when he tried to say what had happened to him, he spoke in terms of a prophetic calling. So, it was not the revelation of another religion that Paul experienced. Instead, he experienced something which revealed the meaning and purpose of his whole life; and by this revelation of Christ, God also manifested the meaning and purpose of Paul’s *Judaism*. Paul was not responding to a demand that he deny Judaism and change his religion. He was responding to a call that he share in the fulfillment of Judaism and make all other nations partners with Israel in the one salvation of God.

Sentence

This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses.
Acts 2.32

Collect

Almighty God,
by the preaching of your servant Paul
you caused the light of the gospel
to shine throughout the world.
May we who celebrate his wonderful conversion
follow him in bearing witness to your truth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Acts 26.9–23 or Galatians 1.11–24 Psalm 67

Refrain Let all the peoples praise you, O God. *Or v. 3 or CR 1*
Matthew 10.16–22

Prayer over the Gifts

Almighty God,
as we celebrate this holy eucharist,
may your Spirit fill us with the light of faith.
This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of Apostles

Prayer after Communion

Gracious God,
you filled your apostle Paul
with love for all the churches.
May the sacrament we have received
foster love and unity among your people.
This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Timothy and Titus 26 January
Companions of Saint Paul — Memorial

Today the Church remembers Timothy and Titus, two of the many people who assisted Saint Paul in his apostolic work.

According to the Book of Acts, Timothy was “the son of a Jewish mother who was a believer, but his father was a Greek.” Paul himself converted Timothy to faith in Jesus Christ and called him “my beloved and faithful child in the Lord.” Though a young man and relatively new to the faith, Timothy shared the Apostle’s trials and labours in Asia Minor, and served as his emissary to the church at Corinth.

The background of Titus is even more obscure, though we do know that he, too, was a Greek and a fairly young man. It seems that Titus became the permanent liaison between Paul and the church of Corinth. In his correspondence with the Corinthians Paul called Titus “my partner and fellow-worker in your service.” Paul went on to remark: “We have urged Titus that as he had already made a beginning, he should also complete among you this gracious work.”

So it is, on the day after the feast of Saint Paul’s conversion, we honour his companions and fellow-workers Timothy and Titus, not only for their service to Paul, but also for their own faithfulness in the love of Christ and in the building up of the Church.

Sentence

Continue in what you have learned and firmly believed,
knowing from whom you learned it. 2 *Timothy* 3.14

Collect

Almighty God,
by the preaching of your apostle Paul
you called your servants Timothy and Titus
and made them his trusted partners
in the work of spreading and establishing your gospel.
Strengthen us in this present time
to stand fast in all our adversities
and to live in true godliness,
that with confidence and gladness
we may look for the glorious appearing
of our Saviour Jesus Christ;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Acts 16.1–15 or 2 Corinthians 8.16–19, 23–24 Psalm 112
Refrain The just put their confidence in the Lord.
John 10.14–18

Prayer over the Gifts

Loving God,
who bestowed such gifts upon Timothy and Titus
that they rejoiced to offer you their lives,
behold us now in the remembrance of their service,
that we may have grace to render
the gifts of true and acceptable worship,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of Apostles

Prayer after Communion

Giver and Goal of all creation,
nurture in us the fruit of this sacrament,
that following the example of Timothy and Titus,
we may be kindled with an earnest care
for the good of all your children.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

John Chrysostom

27 January

Bishop of Constantinople, Teacher of the Faith, 407 — Memorial

On this day we remember John, an ancient bishop of Constantinople whose eloquence earned him the nickname Chrys-os'-tom, "John the golden mouth." But he was more than a brilliant preacher. He also led a life of true holiness, giving himself continually both to prayer and to the cause of justice.

Born at Antioch around the year 350 and raised by his widowed mother, John studied rhetoric under an eminent pagan teacher. Years later, when someone asked this teacher whom he wanted as his successor. "John would have been my choice," he answered, "if the Christians had not stolen him from us." Stolen or not, John gave his whole heart to the Christian way. While his mother lived, he stayed with her at home, but under a strict rule of life. When she died, he tried his vocation as a hermit. Ill health drove him back to Antioch, where he was ordained to the priesthood.

During the next twelve years John earned his reputation as a preacher who made the text of the New Testament come alive for his hearers. His fame quickly spread far beyond his home city, and in the year 398 the emperor decided that he should become bishop of the imperial capital, Constantinople.

John attempted to reform the moral character of his clergy and called upon the imperial court to heed the cries of the poor and the hungry. His innocence in ecclesiastical politics made him easy prey for his unscrupulous rivals, and they engineered a synod which tried John on trumped-up charges and deposed him. The emperor confirmed the synod's judgement and sent John into exile. Soon afterwards Constantinople was hit by an earthquake. This put the imperial court in fear of God's wrath, and John was recalled, only to be exiled again a few months later. He died in the year 407, a victim of brutal treatment and exposure.

Sentence

The Lord has given me the tongue of those who are taught,
that I may know how to sustain with a word him that is
weary. *Isaiah 50.4*

Collect

O God, you gave a golden eloquence to your servant John
that he might declare your justice
before the face of the proud and mighty.
Grant us, after his example,
such faithfulness to your word,
that we may strengthen the hearts of the weary
and sustain those who are afflicted by wrong;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Ezekiel 3.16–21 Psalm 41

Refrain The Lord is mindful of the upright.

Luke 21.12–15

Prayer over the Gifts

Day-spring of our salvation,
you make us bold with your grace
to offer gifts at the table of your kingdom.
In company with your servant John Chrysostom,
make us bold with your justice
that we like him may wield the weapons of your righteousness
for the sake of those who have no helper.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Maker and Healer of human life,
send us forth as ambassadors of your love,
after the example of your servant John Chrysostom,
so that, instructed and upheld by your Spirit,
we may bear witness to your reconciling power,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thomas Aquinas*28 January**Priest and Friar, Teacher of the Faith, 1274 — Memorial*

Thomas Aquinas was a thirteenth-century Dominican friar who spent most of his adult life teaching in universities. His powers of concentration were legendary. He once stood in front of three different scribes and dictated three separate works at the same time, without losing the train of his thought in any of them. Thomas was also a man of constant prayer: his students often found him kneeling beside his desk when he was working on a difficult theological question. He understood that he had his gifts to help the Church lay hold of “the truth as it is in Jesus.”

Unlike many other theologians at that time, Thomas saw no contradiction between human reason and God’s revelation. He once said that God gives grace not to destroy creation but to make it perfect — to raise it above itself, so that the whole human being, through its reason, might actively share in God’s own life. This insight has been gladly confirmed by the Church — and particularly by our own Anglican tradition.

Sentence

We have received the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts which are bestowed on us by God.

1 Corinthians 2.12

Collect

O God,
you blessed your servant Thomas Aquinas
with singular gifts of wisdom and insight,
that your people might love with their understanding
what you give them to know by faith.
Grant us the freedom to embrace your Church's teachings
and the obedience to deepen its faith,
that our knowledge may be perfected in worship
and our faith may be fulfilled in love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 Corinthians 13.8–13 Psalm 119.97–104

Refrain You yourself, O God, have taught me.

John 17.19–23

Prayer over the Gifts

Loving Creator,
who instructed the speech of your servant Thomas
and touched his lips with your graciousness,
bring us to stand in your presence
that all we offer you this day
may be fulfilled in the ministry of praise and adoration.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of Pentecost

Prayer after Communion

Father,
you bestow your grace in this sacrament
that we may taste the beginning of your glory.
Grant us, after the teaching of your servant Thomas,
so to love what you have revealed in this present time
that in the age to come we may behold you face to face,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Charles Stuart

30 January

King of England and Scotland, 1649 — Commemoration

Today we remember Charles I, who became King of England and Scotland in 1625. A shy man with refined tastes and a mild stutter, he was in private life a devoted husband and a loving father. As Supreme Governor of the Church of England, Charles's commitment to its life was whole-hearted. He usually began his day with two hours of private devotions, and he loved to attend the public liturgy, especially the Lord's Supper.

For eleven years Charles counted himself "the happiest king in Christendom" — and with good reason. Since England was at peace, he had no need to support a standing army or a large navy, and therefore no need to summon Parliament. His government was able to meet its needs by exploiting the customary prerogatives of the Crown. But behind the nation's apparent tranquillity, Charles's subjects seethed with grievances; and when he finally did call a Parliament, its members proved militant in their demands for redress and reform. In 1642 he felt he had no choice but to raise the royal standard against them. After three years of civil war Charles's armies were defeated in the field, and he was taken prisoner. Parliament wished to reform the Church of England according to a presbyterian model, but Charles refused to surrender episcopacy and the Book of Common Prayer. An attempt to renew the civil war led the House of Commons to set the King on trial. The tribunal's verdict was a foregone conclusion, and Charles was sentenced to death.

On January thirtieth, 1649, he stepped out on to a public scaffold. "I have a good cause," he said, "and I have a gracious God; I will say no more. But a little after I go from a corruptible to an incorruptible crown, where no disturbance can be, no disturbance in the world." The King knelt, said a brief prayer, then laid his head on the block. He died under one stroke of the axe.

Sentence

Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness,
which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me.

2 Timothy 4.8

Collect

O God, the Judge of all,
you anointed Charles Stuart
to be King of England and Scotland
and sustained him in prayer through all his troubles,
even to death at the hands of his enemies.
Grant that all rulers among the nations
may use the power entrusted to their care
to vindicate the cause of those who suffer wrong
and to rescue the needy among the people;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Wisdom 6.1–3, 10–11 Psalm 80

Refrain Preserve what your right hand has planted.

Matthew 10.16–22

Prayer over the Gifts

God of majesty and truth,
whose servant Charles Stuart
looked to you alone for vindication,
grant us faithfulness in your covenant
that our offering may proceed from love
and our worship may give you glory.
This we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

God of mercy,
who strengthened your servant Charles Stuart
to lay down his life for the rights of your Church,
grant that we may take up the cross
and bear it with gladness in the midst of the world;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Presentation of the Lord

2 February

Holy Day

Luke the evangelist tells us that Jesus was presented in the house of God, as the Law of Moses required. He also records how the Christ-child was greeted by Simeon and Anna, two figures who represented Israel's longing to see the Redeemer promised by God. The evangelist gave Simeon a song to sing, the *Nunc dimittis*, which acclaims Jesus as the saving Light of God. To symbolize the enlightening truth of Christ the western Church developed the custom of blessing candles on this feast — hence its other title, Candlemas.

The chief title of today's feast, "The Presentation," comes from the ancient Jewish law that every firstborn son had to be dedicated to God's service. But the Law of Moses allowed parents to redeem their child by offering something else in his stead. In Jesus's case, Mary and Joseph offered the redemptive substitute which the law appointed for the first-born of poor parents, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." Thus, paradoxically, the Redeemer himself was redeemed.

Many Christian writers have delighted to see the deepening of this paradox in the story of Simeon. In the fourth century, Ephrem of Edessa wrote: "When Simeon the priest received Christ into his arms and presented him to God, he understood that he was not offering Christ, but was himself being offered."

In celebrating the feast of the Presentation, the people of the Church become like Simeon, who cradled the infant Light of salvation in the crook of his arm and knew him to be as fragile as a candle-flame. In baptism, in meditating upon Scripture, and in the eucharist Christians cradle the same Light and take responsibility for the life of Christ in our world. And yet the paradox continues. Even as they hold Christ in their hands, they may discover that they are really in the crook of Christ's arms, being presented by him in the sanctuary of God's joy and glory.

Sentence

This is a light to reveal God to the nations and the glory of his people Israel. *Luke 2.32*

Collect

Blessed are you, O Lord our God,
for you have sent us your salvation.
Inspire us by your Holy Spirit
to recognize him who is the glory of Israel
and the light for all nations,
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Readings

Malachi 3.1–4 Psalm 84.1–7 *or* Psalm 24.7–10

Refrain How dear to me is your dwelling, O Lord of hosts! *Or CR 4*

Hebrews 2.14–18 Luke 2.22–40

Prayer over the Gifts

Almighty God,
accept the joyful offering of your Church,
and grant that your Son may shine in us
as the light that lightens every nation.
We ask this in the name of the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of the Incarnation

Prayer after Communion

God for whom we wait,
you fulfilled the hope of Simeon,
who did not die till he had welcomed the Messiah.
Complete in us your perfect will,
that we in Christ may share in your eternal kingdom;
for he is Lord for ever and ever.

Anskar 3 February
Apostle of Scandinavia, 865 — Commemoration

Today we remember Anskar, a ninth-century missionary who strove to bring the gospel of Christ to the people of Denmark and Sweden.

Anskar began his labours in the year 826, when the emperor of the Franks asked him to open a mission in southern Denmark. Even with the backing of the local king, his successes were modest. Nevertheless, after a couple of years in Denmark, he decided to cross the Baltic and launch a mission among the Swedes. When he returned he found that the Pope had appointed him archbishop of Hamburg, with jurisdiction over all the missions in Scandinavia.

From the moment of his appointment until his death over thirty years later, Anskar experienced very little except disappointment and frustration. Unable to find enough staff, his mission to Sweden soon withered. A rebellion in Denmark overthrew the king who had supported him, and the rebels quickly smothered the young Danish church. In the year 845 Hamburg itself was burned to the ground by Viking raiders, and he moved his missionary base to Bremen, which nearly suffered the same fate several times over. He laboured to end the Baltic slave-trade, and though he redeemed countless thousands from bondage, Viking slavers continued to operate with impunity.

Despite all these setbacks Anskar persevered in his mission, and whenever one opportunity was cut off, he sought another avenue for spreading the gospel. His persistence had one small return in 854, when a new king in southern Denmark allowed him to re-open his mission and begin rebuilding the Danish church. He died on this date eleven years later.

The Church honours Anskar as the Apostle of Scandinavia because his tenacious efforts in the face of disaster and discouragement were like the seed mentioned in the gospel itself. They were a small beginning which eventually bore a rich harvest two centuries later, when Christianity at last found a home among the children of the Vikings.

Sentence

The Lord has become my stronghold, and my God the rock of my trust. *Psalm 94.22*

Collect

Almighty God,
you sent forth your servant Anskar
and became his stronghold against despair
when prejudice was deaf to his preaching
and violence overthrew his labours.
Sustain your Church in days of discouragement,
that we may ever trust you to preserve
and bring to perfect fruition
what your own right hand has planted;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 Corinthians 4.9–13 Psalm 80.8–18

Refrain Preserve what your right hand has planted.

Mark 4.26–32

Prayer over the Gifts

God of grace,
who guided your servant Anskar
in the offering of his mission,
regard your own mercy in this service
and prepare us for the liberty of your banquet;
for the sake of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of Pentecost

Prayer after Communion

Grant us, eternal God,
so to abide in the strength of this sacrament,
that with ready minds and constant wills
we may follow the example of your servant Anskar,
and show forth the light of your gospel;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Martyrs of Japan

5 February

1597 — Memorial

On this day in 1597, twenty-six Christians were crucified near the Japanese city of Nagasaki. We remember their faithfulness under great suffering and honour them as the protomartyrs of Asia.

Jesuit missionaries had been active in Japan for over forty years, and they had converted large numbers from every class of Japanese society. The ruling Shogun eventually banned all missionary activity because he feared that the growth of the Christian Church among his people would prepare the way for an invasion by Europeans. The Jesuits took care not to offend the Shogun and were able to continue with their work by becoming as much like the Japanese in dress and habits as they could. But in 1593 a group of Franciscans arrived, who openly flaunted the decree against missionary activity. The Jesuits tried to warn the newcomers that they were endangering not only themselves but also the whole Christian enterprise in Japan. The warning went unheeded. Soon afterwards the Shogun ordered the arrest of six Franciscans and twenty Japanese Christians. The Jesuits quietly intervened in an effort to save the prisoners' lives, but the authorities turned a deaf ear to their appeals. The prisoners were subjected to torture, then marched from Osaka to Nagasaki. There, on a hill over-looking the city, they found twenty-six crosses planted in a row. Each prisoner was tied to his cross; then the executioner went down the row, piercing each one twice with a spear.

After the crucifixions at Nagasaki, the Shogun and his successors relented, and the Church enjoyed twenty years of peace. But persecution was renewed in waves during the first half of the seventeenth century and continued even after Japan's rulers closed their country to foreigners. Nevertheless, when Europeans once again entered Japan in the mid-nineteenth century, they found many pockets of Japanese who had preserved in secret some living vestiges of Christian faith and practice.

Sentence

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his servants.
Psalms 116.13

Collect

We bless you, Almighty God,
for the twenty-six martyrs of Japan
who were crucified on this day
because they would not renounce your Son.
Grant that your Church in Japan
and your people throughout the world
may dwell in peace with their neighbours
and continue in steadfast witness to your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Colossians 1.24–29 Psalm 69.5–18
Refrain Whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.
Mark 8.34–38

Prayer over the Gifts

O God,
make us partners with your holy martyrs of Japan
in the mystery of our Saviour's passion,
that he who was crucified for our sake
may be the source of all that we are
and all that we do.
We ask this through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Martyr

Prayer after Communion

God of righteousness and mercy,
who grafted your holy martyrs of Japan
on to the Tree of Life,
grant us courage to honour their example,
that when we are called to bear you witness,
we may not be ashamed of your gospel,
nor fail in the assurance of your promises;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Hannah Grier Coome

9 February

Religious, Founder of the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine, 1921 — Commemoration

The Sisterhood of St. John the Divine is an order of Anglican nuns founded in Canada in 1884 and dedicated (as its Rule states) to “personal sanctification and active charity.” Today we remember Hannah Grier Coome, who was its founder and first Mother Superior.

Born in Ontario, she married an Englishman and spent most of her married life in Britain. In 1877 her husband’s business sent him to Chicago, where he died of cancer the following year. Mrs Coome remained in Chicago for another three years, then decided to return to England and try her vocation as an Anglican nun. On her way back she visited her family in Toronto and discovered a group of Anglicans who wished to found a Canadian sisterhood. She accepted their invitation to take the first step and performed her novitiate in the United States.

Mother Hannah returned to Toronto in September, 1884, and launched the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine. She and her new community initially faced a good deal of harassment, but their work during the Riel Rebellion, serving in the government’s field hospitals, overcame these prejudices. The Sisters eventually founded a hospital of their own, where over half their patients received medical attention free of charge. Later they established a nursing home for the elderly, one of the first in Canada, and took charge of a school for girls.

Mother Hannah guided these enterprises, and the everyday life of the Sisters, with holiness, practical wisdom, and a sense of humour that pierced high-flying pretensions and unseasonable gloom. She retired from the office of Superior in 1916 and died on Ash Wednesday five years later. In her life she learned to be a light which kindled righteous deeds in others, and her community continues in the same work to this day.

Sentence

Those who fear the Lord will form true judgements, and like a light they will kindle righteous deeds. *Sirach 32.16*

Collect

Eternal God, you clothed your servant Hannah
with the habit of prayer and the robe of wisdom,
to guide her sisters in this nation
in the ways of holiness
and the works of mercy and love.
Deliver us, we pray,
from an inordinate love of this world,
that we may be freed
for the worship of your Name
and for deeds that reveal your grace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

2 Corinthians 5.6–15 Psalm 119.145–152

Refrain You, O Lord, are near at hand.

Matthew 6.19–21

Prayer over the Gifts

O Lord our God,
who taught your servant Hannah
to rule her life by the law of your grace,
grant us so to trust in your word,
that our hands may be lifted in thanks
to receive the salvation which you promise.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Merciful God,
teach us to find an example in your servant Hannah,
that we may set our hearts
on the knowledge of your Son our Saviour,
and inherit the riches laid up for us in him,
who is Lord of all creation.

Cyril and Methodius *14 February*
Apostles to the Slavs, 869, 885 — Memorial

On this day we honour the memory of Cyril and his older brother Methodius, who led a Byzantine mission to central Europe in the middle of the ninth century and for their labours have come to be known as “the apostles to the Slavs.”

The two brothers belonged to the nobility of the Byzantine empire. Methodius became a senior administrator before he renounced the world and entered the monastic life; while Cyril held several important posts in the household of the patriarch of Constantinople. Because the two brothers were as fluent in Slavic as in their native Greek, the Byzantine emperor chose them to head an embassy to Moravia, a kingdom in central Europe, in the year 863.

Moravia had been christianized by Frankish priests from across the Danube, but they insisted that the people accept Latin in worship and Frankish ways in everything else. By contrast, Cyril and Methodius began to build up a native, self-sustaining Church. Cyril invented a script so that the Slavs could write their own language, and he used it not only to translate large portions of Scripture for them but also to develop a distinctive Slavonic liturgy.

After three years of successful labour the two brothers left for home. On their way they paid a visit to Rome, where the Pope gave their work his enthusiastic endorsement. Cyril died there, after a long illness, on February fourteenth in the year 869. The Pope asked his brother to return to Moravia as archbishop, and Methodius accepted the post, fearful that the Franks would otherwise destroy Cyril’s work.

His fears were well-founded, and only the Pope’s firm support enabled him to continue his work. Even so, after his death in the year 885, the Franks wiped out all that he and his brother had accomplished in Moravia. Nevertheless, their followers found refuge in Bulgaria and from there managed to rebuild the heritage of the two brothers. This heritage has continued to nourish the Slavonic churches in the Balkans and in Central Europe to this day.

Sentence

What we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord,
with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

2 Corinthians 4.5

Collect

Eternal God,
by the power of your Holy Spirit
your bishops Cyril and Methodius
overcame all hazards and rebuffs
to bring the light of your gospel to the Slavic peoples.
Grant that the love of Christ
may vanquish every foe to your truth
and each barrier to your mercy,
that all nations may be united in the service of your glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

2 Corinthians 4.1–6 Psalm 96.1–7

Refrain Declare the wonders of the Lord.

Matthew 28.16–20

Prayer over the Gifts

God of all nations,
who kindled the hearts of Cyril and Methodius
with zeal for the building of your Church,
let your purpose now rule our service
that our offering may receive your mercy
and our obedience may know your love,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of Apostles

Prayer after Communion

Remember, O God,
the service of Cyril and Methodius,
and make us faithful heralds of your gospel,
that all the world may see and declare
the wonders of your saving love.
This we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thomas Bray 15 February
Priest and Missionary, 1730 — Memorial

Today we honour Thomas Bray, an English parish priest who founded two great missionary organizations at the turn of the seventeenth century: the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

Bray's love of knowledge was first recognized and nurtured by his parish priest, who enabled him to attend Oxford University. He was ordained in the Church of England and appointed vicar of a rural parish, where he developed a comprehensive programme of Christian instruction. In 1695 he became the bishop of London's commissary for Maryland. Throwing himself completely into the work, he quickly realized that Anglican clergy in the colonies were too few and too poorly supported to meet the pastoral needs of the people. Over the next five years he increased the number of Anglican clergy in Maryland by more than a hundred; he also raised funds to enable thirty parishes to set up libraries. To consolidate and broaden his projects — many of which he had funded out of his own small stipend — he organized the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in 1698. This Society had three practical objects: to establish lending libraries in England and in the American colonies; to encourage the building of charity schools in England and Wales; and to distribute Bibles, Prayer Books, and religious tracts, especially among Anglican parishes overseas. The S.P.C.K. proved so successful that, three years later, Bray founded the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in order to recruit and support Anglican missionaries and missionary work in America.

In 1708 he became rector of a London parish and turned his energies to the needs of the urban poor, schooling for the children of black slaves, and the plight of unemployed people who were imprisoned for debt. He died twenty-two years later, filled to the very end with a zeal for the communication of knowledge, a love for the Anglican way, and missionary concern.

Sentence

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings, who publishes peace. *Isaiah 52.7*

Collect

Eternal God,
you gave to your servant Thomas Bray
both zeal in lifting the yoke of oppression
from the lives of the poor
and skill in equipping your Church
for mission in many lands.
Make us at all times diligent
to propagate your gospel
and to promote the spread of Christian knowledge
among those who hunger for your truth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Isaiah 55.6–11 Psalm 102.15–22

Refrain My word shall accomplish what I purpose.

Matthew 9.35–38

Prayer over the Gifts

Father,
you taught your servant Thomas Bray
how to labour in the harvest of your kingdom.
Grant that our offering this day
may be sown with the power of your word
and enlarged with the yield of your Spirit.
We ask this for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of Pentecost

Prayer after Communion

O Lord, God of all creation,
who filled your servant Thomas Bray
with care for the nurture of your Church,
grant that we may bear the fruit of this sacrament
and make known the riches of your kingdom.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Polycarp *February 23*
Bishop of Smyrna, Martyr, 156 — Memorial

The whole Church joins in honouring Polycarp, a bishop who was martyred on this date in the year 156. For over forty years he guided the Christians of Smyrna, a city on the western coast of Asia Minor, and brought healing wisdom to issues which divided the churches at that time.

When the Roman authorities suddenly launched a campaign of terror against the Church, Polycarp went into hiding, but was soon discovered and brought back to face the pagan governor before a large crowd in the public arena. The governor urged him to renounce the Christian faith and to curse Jesus Christ. Polycarp answered: "For eighty-six years I have been his servant, and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme against my King and Saviour?" At this he was bound to a stake and, as he prayed, the wood at his feet was set ablaze. Eyewitnesses reported that the flames did not touch him, but formed a kind of vault around his body, so that a gladiator had to be sent into the fire to kill him.

Afterwards his people gathered his remains and buried them in a cemetery outside the city. Every year, on the anniversary of his martyrdom, they celebrated the eucharist at Polycarp's grave, "both as a memorial for those who have already fought the contest and for the training and preparation of those who will do so in the future."

Sentence

I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. *Philippians 3.8*

Collect

Maker of heaven and earth,
your love blazed so strongly
in the heart of your servant Polycarp
that he won eternal life
out of the devouring flames of persecution.
By this memorial of his courage,
grant us such confidence in your promises,
that we may share in the surpassing joy
of knowing Jesus Christ our Lord;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

2 Maccabees 6.18–28, 31 Psalm 116.10–17

Refrain I will lift the cup of salvation.

Matthew 20.20–23

Prayer over the Gifts

O God,
who bestowed the honour of martyrdom
on your holy servant Polycarp,
make us so truly prepared
to offer this service of thanks and praise,
that we may bear witness to your power
and share in the fullness of your love.
We ask this through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Martyr

Prayer after Communion

Merciful God,
grant us so to reverence Christ
as your only and eternal Son,
and to love the martyrs who followed him unto death,
that we may share with them
as fellow disciples in his paschal mystery.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Either Philip Lindel Tsen or Paul Shinji Sasaki (p. 92) may be commemorated on this day.

Philip Lindel Tsen 24 February
Bishop of Honan, 1954 — Commemoration

“To me Christianity means a Person, Jesus Christ, who is my Saviour, my Companion, and my Lord.” These were the words of Philip Lindel Tsen, who was ordained bishop of Honan on this date in the year 1929 and helped to sustain the Anglican Church in China through the years of crisis that followed.

He spent his childhood and youth with American missionaries, but after his ordination to the priesthood he became closely associated with the work of Canadian Anglicans in Honan, and their influence helped him to be elected as the first Chinese bishop of that diocese. Nationalists and Communists were already engaged in a bitter civil war, and the situation was made worse when the Japanese invaded China in 1937. In that year Bishop Tsen visited Canada and stood before General Synod with Paul Sasaki, bishop of Mid-Japan, to bear witness to the unity of Chinese and Japanese Christians, despite the war between their two nations.

Tsen returned to Honan, where daily Japanese air-raids and the collapse of civil authority tested his authority to the utmost. He proved an effective pastor, sustaining his hard-pressed clergy through all their common trials, and at the end of the second World War he emerged as the leader of the Chinese Anglican Church. He managed to attend the Lambeth Conference of 1948, but on his return he was placed under house arrest by the Communists, who had just taken over China. He died at Shanghai on June 6th, 1954.

Sentence

A covenant of peace was established with him, that he should be a leader of the sanctuary and of his people. *Sirach 45.24*

Collect

O God,
you made your servant Lindel Tsen
a true shepherd of your people in China
and upheld him with the staff of your wisdom
through times of crisis and great peril.
Grant us to know the presence of your Son
as our Saviour and Companion,
that we may have courage in the works of peace
and strength in the path to your kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Ezekiel 34.11–16 Psalm 16.5–11
Refrain I have set the Lord always before me.
Mark 4.26–32

Prayer over the Gifts

Eternal Shepherd,
we bless you for your servant Lindel Tsen
and pray that your peace may rest
upon the gifts and praises we offer this day
and bind us more closely to one another
in the mystery of Jesus Christ our Saviour,
who dwells in glory with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Remember, O God,
the needs of your Church in every land
and sustain us with your Word of life,
that we may honour the example of your servant Lindel Tsen
and labour to proclaim your peace.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul Shinji Sasaki

24 February

Bishop of Mid-Japan and Tokyo, 1946 — Commemoration

Today we give thanks for the life and witness of Paul Shinji Sasaki, a bishop of the *Nippon Seikokai*, the Holy Catholic Church of Japan, which is a member of the Anglican communion. Sasaki was primate of this Church during the second World War and suffered for his efforts to preserve its independence under government persecution.

He was born in 1885, the son of a devoutly Christian mother. Ordained to the Anglican priesthood at thirty-two, he taught liturgical studies and ascetical theology at St Andrew's Theological College in Tokyo. In 1935, at the age of fifty, he was ordained bishop of Mid-Japan, which until then had been a missionary district under the control of the Church of England in Canada. Seven years later, in the midst of the Second World War, the Japanese government tried to force all non-Roman Catholic churches into one organization, for the sake of the national war effort. As many as half of the Anglican parishes in Japan submitted to the government programme, but Sasaki's strong and conscientious leadership ensured that not a single congregation in his diocese joined the new body.

This made Sasaki a marked man. Shortly after he was translated to the see of Tokyo in 1944 he was arrested by the military police and interrogated under torture. He endured unspeakable pains, and when he was released five months later his health was shattered. Nevertheless, before his death in December, 1946, he launched a programme of reconciliation which allowed the separated congregations to return to communion with the *Seikokai*. To this day, the Holy Catholic Church of Japan bears enduring witness to Paul Sasaki's courage, vision, and reconciling wisdom; and we join with that Church in honouring one of its true founders.

Sentence

Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's. *Mark 12.17*

Collect

God our Shepherd,
you gave to your servant Paul Sasaki
a steadfast spirit in times of trial,
to maintain the liberty of your Church
and preserve the integrity of its witness.
Grant us courage when rulers imperil your truth,
that we may discern the way of Christ
and bear his standard before the nations;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 Thessalonians 2.2b–8 Psalm 16.5–11
Refrain I have set the Lord always before me.
Mark 4.26–32

Prayer over the Gifts

O God,
who gave power to your servant Paul Sasaki
to tend your people in the midst of oppression,
receive the gifts we offer this day,
that our praise of your Name
may know the pulse of your love.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Eternal Shepherd,
who moved your servant Paul Sasaki
to uphold the freedom of your Church,
grant us zeal in the cause of Christ
and patience in the image of his sufferings;
for his sake,
who is Lord now and for ever.

George Herbert 27 February
Priest and Poet, 1633 — Commemoration

Today we honour George Herbert, an English priest of the early seventeenth century — and a poet who taught his verse to “rise harmoniously” on the wings of prayer.

Born in 1593, he became a young man of brilliant promise, high-minded and proud — especially in his religion. He was convinced that God had chosen him for a great purpose, to instruct kings and princes in godly rule. But in a hard inner struggle, in prayers full of lament and anger, Herbert learned to question his ambitions. He came to realize, “Perhaps great places and [God’s] praise/ Do not so well agree.” At the age of thirty-three he was ordained a deacon; four years later he accepted the rural parish of Bemerton, where he was made a priest and found peace in the service of God and his flock. But his ministry was cut off all too soon, for he died of tuberculosis in early 1633, just short of his fortieth birthday.

Herbert left a collection of poems which was later published as *The Temple*. These poems have nourished the spiritual life of untold generations; several have been set to music, and two have become very popular as hymns — “Let all the world in ev’ry corner sing” and “Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life.” Herbert especially loved to sing about the eucharist, which he saw as a banquet where the masterful courtesy of Christ bids us sit down and taste his meat, to acquire with Herbert himself “such a heart, whose pulse may be/ [God’s] praise.”

Sentence

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life," says the Lord;
"no one comes to the Father, but by me." *John 14.6*

Collect

Heavenly Father,
by the working of your love
you made your servant George Herbert
to sing of your mercies and to stand as priest and pastor
at the table of the Paschal Lamb.
Grant us to hear your call
and lay hold of the gifts you have given us,
that we also may come to share
in the fellowship of your heavenly banquet;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Sirach 32.1–13 Psalm 42.1–7

Refrain My soul shall sing of your mercies, O Lord.
John 21.15–17

Prayer over the Gifts

We bless you, O God,
for your servant George Herbert and bring you these gifts
in token of the life we have received from your hands.
Renew them with the gift of your new creation,
that we, receiving them by faith,
may be strengthened to accomplish your praises.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God, whose Son gave his life
that we might feast with you in joy,
teach us to love what you accomplished
in the life of George Herbert,
that we may discover your mercy in all that we are
and sing of your grace by all that we do.
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.

David

1 March

Bishop of Menevia in Wales, c. 544 — Memorial

Today we remember David, the patron saint of the Welsh people. He lived in the early sixth century and held the dual office of abbot and bishop in southwestern Wales. Like many other British saints, he was an athlete of the spiritual life who pressed himself to the limits of human endurance. But he was also famous for his compassion, and legends tell how he worked many wonders to relieve the poor and the sick. In later centuries, when the Welsh people were oppressed under English rule, these stories made them believe that they had a patron and protector of their own race before God's throne in heaven. But devotion to David spread far beyond Wales, and in time he became the only Welsh saint ever to be honoured on the Calendar of the whole western Church.

Sentence

The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, and shall spread abroad like a cedar in Lebanon. *Psalm 92.11*

Collect

Everlasting God,
who stored in the hearts of your people
a fragrant memory of your servant David,
grant us wisdom in the care of your Church
and zeal in the proclamation of your gospel,
that we may show forth your abiding love
in a dark and anxious world;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 Thessalonians 2.9–12 Psalm 112.4–7
Refrain Happy are they who fear the Lord!
Matthew 5.13–16

Prayer over the Gifts

Eternal Shepherd,
whose care is over all your flock,
gather our gifts to your altar in heaven
and make them new again,
that we, receiving them from your gracious hand,
may have strength to work your will.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Almighty Host of this gracious banquet,
grant us fellowship with your holy servant David
that we may walk in the light of your mercy
and shine with the works that give you glory,
through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Chad 2 March

Bishop of Lichfield, Missionary, 672 — Commemoration

Today we honour the memory of Chad, an Anglo-Saxon bishop and a saint beloved by his people, who died on this date in the year 672.

Chad grew up in a devout Christian family, at a time when a great many of the English people still followed the pagan ways of their ancestors. He and three of his brothers entered the monastic life on the isle of Lindisfarne, then a vibrant centre of Celtic Christianity in northern England. He eventually settled at Lastingham, a monastery in Northumbria founded by his older brother Cedd. Chad expected to spend the rest of his life there, but in the year 664 the king of Northumbria asked him to become bishop of York. Somebody else had already been appointed to the diocese and had gone to France for ordination, but the king hated this person and used his absence overseas to exclude him. Chad accepted the post in good faith, but three years later he was deposed by Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury, because his appointment and consecration had been irregular. He decided that the unity of the Church was more important than his rights as a bishop, and quietly returned to the monastic life that he loved.

Chad's humility in making this decision impressed Archbishop Theodore so much that he renewed Chad's consecration and appointed him bishop of Mercia, a kingdom in central England which until then had resisted the Christian mission. Making Lichfield his headquarters, Chad crisscrossed his new diocese on foot, so that he might speak of the gospel with anyone he met on the way and meet his people at eye level, as Christ had done.

He had served the people of Mercia for only three years when a sudden virus, combined with old age and physical exertion, brought about his death. Almost at once his tomb became a focus of popular veneration, and people from all over England journeyed there in order to give thanks for this holy bishop, who had preferred the peace of the Church over the dignity of office, and had laboured to serve Christ in each person committed to his care.

Sentence

Happy are the people whose hearts are set on the pilgrims' way; they will climb from height to height. *Psalm 84.4b, 6a*

Collect

Almighty God,
you gave to your servant Chad
both humility in the office of a bishop
and patience in the pursuit of unity and peace;
and so you confirmed his calling
to manifest among among the English
the gracious rule of Christ.
Give to all your people a true sense of their worth,
and the simplicity of heart to seek your glory,
and so advance the cause of Christ;
for his sake,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Romans 12.1–13 Psalm 84.1–6

Refrain My heart and flesh rejoice in the living God.

Matthew 24.42–47

Prayer over the Gifts

God of peace,
grant us fellowship with your holy servant Chad
in the singing of your praises,
that we who have set these gifts upon your table
may know the liberty of your household
in the gracious communion of your Son,
who lives with you, in the unity of the Spirit,
now and for ever.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Merciful Father,
whose goodness abounds at this table,
grant us, after the example of your holy servant Chad,
such faithfulness in proclaiming your justice
that the world may turn and rejoice in your love.
We ask this through Jesus Christ the Lord.

John and Charles Wesley *March 3*
Priests and Evangelists, 1791, 1788 — Commemoration

Today we honour John and Charles Wesley, who launched the Methodist revival in the eighteenth century Church of England.

Brought up in a strict Anglican parsonage, the two brothers both became priests with a demanding sense of purpose. In the year 1738, they each experienced “conversion of the heart” and went forth to help others know the same assurance of God’s love. In one of their later writings they described themselves “as messengers of God to those who are Christians in name but heathens in heart, to call them back. . . to real, genuine Christianity.”

Wherever they went their mission drew immense crowds, who often responded with uncontrollable fervour. But the Wesleys did more than preach to the crowds; they also developed a network of support-groups in order to sustain the revival. Hymn-singing became a prominent feature of these Methodist meetings, because the Wesleys understood the power of good hymns to teach sound doctrine and heartfelt religion. Charles alone wrote nearly 6,000, and a good many are still cherished by all English-speaking Christians — for instance, “Hark, the herald angels sing,” “Christ, whose glory fills the skies,” and “Love divine, all loves excelling.”

In time, much to the grief of the Wesley brothers, a large section of the Methodist movement separated from the Church of England and organized its own family of churches. But the brothers’ work also endured in Anglicanism itself and gave it a new vitality, so that our whole tradition is in debt to their evangelical witness.

Sentence

We are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. *2 Corinthians 5.20*

Collect

Lord God,
you inspired John and Charles Wesley
to thirst after true righteousness,
and endowed them with eloquence in speech and song
that the hearts and voices of many
might testify to the work of Christ.
Grant us, we pray,
the power of your Spirit,
to kindle anew in hearts grown cold
the ardent love of Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Hosea 6.1–6 Psalm 103.1–5

Refrain All that is within me, bless the Lord.

Luke 10.17–20, 23–24

Prayer over the Gifts

Searcher of every human heart,
behold in your mercy
the offering which we now prepare,
and conform our lives
to the sacrifice of your Son,
who dwells with you and the Holy Spirit
in the habitations of eternal light.

Preface of Pentecost

Prayer after Communion

Grant us, Eternal God,
in company with John and Charles Wesley,
so to be quickened by the mystery of this table
that we may be true ministers of your love
and faithful stewards of your justice.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Perpetua and Her Companions

7 March

Martyrs at Carthage, 202 — Memorial

We honour the memory of Perpetua, a young woman of Carthage who was martyred for the faith on this date in the year 202. We also remember four other Christians who suffered with her — a slave-woman named Felicitas, a priest, Saturus, a man named Saturninus, and a slave, Revocatus.

These people were denounced to the pagan Roman authorities and condemned to death. When the appointed day came, they were led into the public arena and a number of wild animals were loosed upon them. All managed to survive this ordeal — as it was intended they should. After a short interval they were again led into the arena, so that the crowd could see them dispatched with the sword. Perpetua and her companions exchanged the kiss of peace, then mounted the platform one by one to die. Perpetua herself was the last to be executed.

Soon afterwards a Christian eyewitness wrote an account of their sufferings, and this document captured the imagination of the whole Church, so that Perpetua and her companions came to be venerated throughout the Christian world.

Sentence

I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. *Acts 7.56*

Collect

O God, our Hope and Redeemer,
your holy martyr Perpetua and her companions
renounced all loves that bound them to earth
and embraced your heavenly promises
through the shedding of their blood.
Grant us so to cherish their memory
that in every trial of our faith
we may neither fear nor doubt
but know you as our guide;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

2 Esdras 16.68–75 *or* Hebrews 10.32–39 Psalm 124

Refrain Our help is in the Name of the Lord.

Matthew 24.9–14

Prayer over the Gifts

Loving Deliverer,
who gathered the prayers of your blessed martyrs
in the cup of the sufferings of Christ,
guide us by the hand of your mercy
that we may offer no other service
but that which is pleasing in your sight.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Martyr

Prayer after Communion

Gracious God,
whose blessed martyr Perpetua
passed in triumph through the great tribulation,
deliver your people from oppression and shame,
and grant us a share in the wondrous power
which you are pleased to bestow upon your martyrs.
We ask this for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Edward King

March 8

Bishop of Lincoln, Educator and Pastor, 1910 — Commemoration

Today we celebrate the ministry of Edward King, a pastor, educator, and bishop in the Church of England who died in 1910.

King spent most of his priesthood teaching in institutions of higher learning. For fifteen years he worked at Cuddesdon College, one of the first places in the Anglican communion to offer professional training to those who were called to holy orders. He then moved to Oxford, where he taught pastoral theology and came to have great personal influence among the undergraduates of the University.

In 1885 King was appointed bishop of Lincoln, where he remained until his death twenty-five years later. During these years the Church of England went through one of the worst periods of partisan strife in its history. King gave his allegiance to the Anglo-catholic movement and believed that all of human life was open to conversion through vigilant prayer and celebration of the eucharist. But he had little interest in ritual and always conformed to the customs of the parish he was visiting — whatever they might be, “low” or “high.” So it was ironic that he became the only English bishop to be charged under an Act of Parliament which outlawed Anglo-catholic ritual customs. A long trial ensued, which resulted in a judgement substantially in King’s favour.

Throughout his trial King had the complete support of his people, for his personal holiness and sensitivity as a pastor had won him the affection and loyalty of all parties within his rural diocese. This remained true to the end of his life. Clergy, children presented for confirmation, mourning parents, and those under sentence of death in Lincoln gaol — all found him approachable, willing to share in their concerns and joys, and to help them deepen their spiritual lives.

Sentence

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; let the whole earth tremble before him. *Psalm 96.9*

Collect

O God, the everlasting Shepherd,
whose servant Edward King
cared for your people
with surpassing tenderness and love,
grant us so to practise the love
that you have poured into our hearts,
that we may nurture one another
in the works of your truth and justice;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Ezekiel 34.11–16 Psalm 111.1–4, 9–10

Refrain The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Matthew 5.13–16

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
who taught your servant Edward King
to know the path of true wisdom,
give to us who offer these gifts
a spirit of mutual forbearance,
that our worship may be kindled
with the beauty that you desire.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

God of all creation,
who made your servant Edward King
a faithful steward of your mysteries,
grant us so to dwell in Christ
that in our several callings
we may be vested with his mercy;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Gregory of Nyssa *March 9*
Bishop, Teacher of the Faith, c. 395 — Memorial

In the fourth century, a Greek-speaking family in Asia Minor produced a whole clan of saints. One member of this family was Basil the Great, whom we commemorate on January second. Today we commemorate his younger brother Gregory, who became bishop of Nyssa.

Gregory did not start out by following in his brother's footsteps. On the contrary, he seems to have felt oppressed by the sanctity which surrounded him at home and chose to pursue a career as a lawyer and teacher of rhetoric. But in the year 371 his older brother pushed him into becoming the bishop of a small town called Nyssa. Before long Gregory's enemies trumped up a charge of embezzlement against him, and he fled from his diocese. Their perjury was eventually exposed, and he returned to Nyssa in triumph.

In the meantime, he had suffered two bereavements. His brother Basil died, leaving Gregory regretful over the history of their strained relations. Soon afterwards, his older sister Macrina also died. But before her death, while Gregory was nursing her, brother and sister had long conversations about the Christian faith and how Christians should live. These conversations had such an influence upon Gregory that ever afterwards he called Macrina "my teacher."

Gregory came out of these experiences with a new sense of purpose. He took up his pen to continue the theological work which his brother had left unfinished, and he began to emerge as a spiritual teacher in his own right.

Gregory lived in a mountainous part of Asia Minor, and he envisaged the Christian's life with God as if it were a journey up one of these crags. In his view, however, the ascent never ended, because the human movement towards God must be as infinite as the divine goodness which made it possible. This vision, expressed in Greek prose of remarkable beauty, has nourished the spirituality of Eastern Orthodoxy ever since.

Sentence

And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the Lord stood above it. *Genesis 28.12–13 (RSV)*

Collect

Eternal God,
you formed your servant Gregory of Nyssa
according to the knowledge of your goodness
so that he taught your faithful people
the way of ascent into your glory.
Give us grace to love his doctrine,
that in holiness we may approach your throne
and in glad thanksgiving embrace your mercy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Wisdom 7.24–28 Psalm 40.9–14
Refrain Your law, O God, is deep in my heart.
John 14.1–11

Prayer over the Gifts

O Father, Womb of the eternal Word,
who guided the steps of your servant Gregory
upon the ladder of true understanding,
receive the gifts we offer this day
that our service may be laden with your goodness.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of Trinity Sunday

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God,
you led your servant Gregory in the way of truth
and overcame his fears and hesitations.
Grant us so to study the ways of your goodness
that we may possess the true dignity of our nature,
through the Word made flesh, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Robert Machray 10 March
First Primate of All Canada, 1904 — Commemoration

Robert Machray became the first primate of the Anglican Church of Canada in 1893, and as we honour his life and service we also commemorate the formation of our Church as a united and independent member in the Anglican communion.

Machray was a Scot, born and raised as a Presbyterian. From an early age he showed great talent as a mathematician, and after studies in the university of his native Aberdeen he went south on a scholarship to Cambridge University. It was there that he became an Anglican. Granted a fellowship, then ordained priest, he seemed to be slated for the career of an academic clergyman. But in 1865, much to his surprise, he was chosen to become the second bishop of Rupert's Land. He arrived at Winnipeg in August of the same year.

Machray's diocese included much of the Arctic as well as the Canadian prairies. He set himself two long-range goals: first, to nurture higher education in Manitoba; and second, to divide Rupert's Land into smaller diocesan units which would be better able to serve Anglican settlers and carry out missionary work. One of his first acts as bishop was to call a clergy conference, which he patiently developed into a full-fledged synod; in time, as Machray's wider plans matured, this body became the basis for a provincial synod. Under his leadership, the western synods led the way in calling for unification of the Anglican Church in Canada.

This movement bore fruit in 1893, when the first General Synod of our Church met at Toronto. Machray was elected primate at this seminal gathering. He remained primate, as well as archbishop of Rupert's Land, until his death in 1904.

Machray was a tireless worker with a genius for organization; it may be no surprise that he liked to relax by solving mathematical puzzles. But he also possessed a generous heart and was able to work well with a wide variety of people. His vision, integrity, and practical wisdom make him one of the true founders of our Church in this nation.

Sentence

No one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. *1 Corinthians 3.11*

Collect

Almighty God,
you instructed the heart of Robert Machray
to guide the Anglicans of this nation
in the counsels of peace and unity.
Preserve us in wisdom
and lead us in truth,
that we may build upon the one foundation,
which is Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 Corinthians 3.5–11 Psalm 26.1–8

Refrain I love the place where your glory abides.

Matthew 7.24–27

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
the strength of your servant Robert Machray,
we pray that as you gather us to this table,
so you will receive the gifts we offer
and make us glad in the riches of your house.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of Saint

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God,
may we who have received these holy mysteries
build upon the one foundation of Christ
and become the living temple of your Spirit.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Patrick 17 March
Missionary Bishop in Ireland, 461 — Memorial

Today we honour Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, who brought Christianity to the northern tribes of that country in the early fifth century.

A native of Cornwall or Devon, he was kidnapped by Irish pirates who sold him into slavery in their homeland. Six years later he fled his Irish masters, returned to Britain, and was eventually ordained to the priesthood. He had a vision that he would return to the land of his former captivity, and around the year 438 the vision came true. He was made a bishop and given charge over the mission to the Irish.

Despite his chronic sense of personal unworthiness, Patrick proved to be an effective organizer, and his mission quickly evolved into a vibrant institution. He also encouraged the growth of Irish monasticism, and within a few generations of his death monks and nuns had replaced warriors as the heroes of the Irish people.

The great hymn called “St. Patrick’s Breastplate” was probably not composed by him, but it does reflect the kind of Christian spirituality which he planted in the heart of the Irish nation — a spirituality deeply penitential, but still more deeply alive to the sustaining presence of Jesus Christ.

Sentence

Christ came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. *Ephesians 2.17–18*

Collect

O God, we thank you for Patrick,
whom you took into your service,
to bring within the freedom of your household
those who once enslaved him.
Encourage us through his example,
that we may know your power made perfect in our weakness,
and delight in serving others
for the sake of him who became servant of all,
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

2 Corinthians 12.14–16, 19 Psalm 131

Refrain O Israel, wait upon the Lord.

Matthew 5.43–48

Prayer over the Gifts

Heavenly Father,
who surrounded your servant Patrick
with the life and power of Christ,
grant that our offering this day
may be cleansed by your mercy and crowned with your love;
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of Apostles

Prayer after Communion

O God,
who gave your servant Patrick
to proclaim your glory to the people of Ireland,
grant us by these holy mysteries
so to glory in the name of Christian,
that we may continually proclaim to all people
the wonders of your salvation,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Cyril of Jerusalem

18 March

Bishop, Teacher of the Faith, 386 — Commemoration

The fourth century was a time of strife in the Church, and those who tried to walk a middle way between the rival factions often found themselves assailed by both sides. One of these moderates was Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem from about the year 350 until his death thirty-six years later.

He was the special target of many intrigues, because his office made him guardian of the Holy Places, which in the fourth century were drawing pilgrims from all over Christendom. Cyril managed to hold on to his office without compromising his integrity and came to be venerated for his holy life and sound pastoral teaching.

In fact, Cyril's pastoral teaching is the chief reason why the Church has continued to honour him. Around the year 348 he delivered a course of nineteen *Catechetical Lectures* to a group of people preparing to be baptized at Easter.

These lectures reveal his commitment to handing on the faith just as he and the Church had received it. But they also reveal his commitment to a still greater task. Cyril did more than simply provide his listeners with information about Christian doctrines. He sought to instill them with a passion for Christ which would enable them to develop in the new life which they were about to begin by their baptism. In so doing, he bore witness to the pastoral nature of all Christian teaching — its duty not only to communicate the faith but also to nurture the faithful.

Sentence

Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.

John 6.27

Collect

O God,
you called your holy bishop Cyril
to preside at the altars of the earthly Jerusalem
that he might guide your people
towards the banquet of your heavenly city.
Grant us so to confess your Son
that we may abound with his life
and share in the fulness of his paschal victory;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Wisdom 7.7, 11–14 Psalm 119.33–40

Refrain Fulfil your promise to your servant.

John 6.26–35

Prayer over the Gifts

Eternal God,
who guided the vision of Cyril
to enrich the worship of your people,
receive with your mercy our offerings this day
that all our life may be conformed
to the mystery of your Son Jesus Christ,
the true Bread from heaven.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

God of mercy,
heal our divisions
by the peace of this sacrament,
that we may be filled with your compassion
and rejoice in the abundance of your love,
through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Saint Joseph of Nazareth

19 March

Holy Day

Today we honour Saint Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth who was husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the foster-father of Jesus Christ.

The little we know about Joseph comes to us in the opening chapters of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Both evangelists present him as a truly righteous man who observed the Law of Moses in all his dealings. According to Matthew, Joseph's godliness in keeping the Law made him hesitate to take Mary as his wife, when he learned that she was already pregnant. His reluctance was overcome by the vision of an angel, who told him that the child in the womb of his betrothed was to be the Saviour of Israel. This episode suggested that righteousness under the Law of Moses was to be fulfilled and surpassed by the coming of Christ; and Joseph's obedience to the angelic vision revealed the true fulfillment of his own godliness as a Jew.

Both evangelists make Joseph a descendent of the royal house of David, though in his day the fact that he followed a trade meant that his branch of the family had become impoverished. Still, Joseph's genealogy entitled Jesus to be considered heir of David and rightful bearer of the title, "King of the Jews."

In the popular literature of the Middle Ages, Joseph was often portrayed as a comical old man befuddled by God and the Blessed Virgin. A number of influential spiritual leaders reacted against this portrayal, and well before the sixteenth century the figure of Joseph had regained both dignity and the serious devotion of the faithful. The Roman Catholic Church has consistently fostered this trend ever since, and in this century even appointed the First of May as the feast of Joseph the Worker. He is considered the patron saint not only of carpenters but also of all who make their living and provide for their families by means of manual labour.

Sentence

Happy are they who dwell in your house! They will always
be praising you. *Psalm 84.3*

Collect

O God,
from the family of your servant David
you raised up Joseph
to be the guardian of your incarnate Son.
Give us grace to follow him
in faithful obedience to your commands;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

2 Samuel 7.4, 8–16 *or* Romans 4.13–18 Psalm 89.1–4, 26–29

Refrain I will establish his line for ever. *Or v. 29 or CR 1*

Luke 2.41–52

Prayer over the Gifts

Almighty God,
accept all we offer you this day,
and give us generous hearts
to serve you in all who claim our help.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of the Incarnation

Prayer after Communion

Heavenly Father,
your Son Jesus Christ grew in wisdom and stature
in his home at Nazareth.
May we, nourished by this sacrament,
grow into the fullness of his new humanity,
who is Lord now and for ever.

Cuthbert

20 March

Bishop of Lindisfarne, Missionary, 687 — Commemoration

Today we honour the memory of Cuthbert, a monk and bishop who worked as a pastoral missionary in seventh-century Northumbria.

He entered Melrose abbey around the year 651 and from there began his evangelistic work in the surrounding countryside. After several years in the field he retired to Lindisfarne, an island off the northeastern coast of England, in order to practise the silence and secrecy of the hermit's life of contemplation. But he still visited the mainland in regular missionary pilgrimages, often spending up to a month at a time away from his island cell. The Venerable Bede later noted that Cuthbert "used especially to make for those places and preach in those villages that were far away on steep and rugged mountains, which others dreaded to visit and whose poverty and ignorance kept other teachers away."

Even after he was made bishop of Lindisfarne in the year 684, he continued to alternate between the hidden labours of prayer on his island retreat and the strenuous work of missionary journeys on the mainland. He died three years later, and his body was eventually laid to rest in Durham cathedral, where vast numbers of pilgrims visited his shrine throughout the Middle Ages.

Sentence

It is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost. *Matthew 18.14*

Collect

Eternal God,
by the holy life and preaching
of your blessed servant Cuthbert
you sought a straying people
and restored them to your fold.
Grant us so to follow his example
that we may obey your heavenly summons
and shape our deeds and devotion
for the salvation of all who seek our aid;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Habakkuk 2.1–4 Psalm 85.8–13

Refrain I will listen to what the Lord God is saying.

Mark 6.30–34

Prayer over the Gifts

God of truth,
grant us in our service this day
so to honour blessed Cuthbert
that we may be glad to follow your leading
and have peace in your promise of heaven.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of Pentecost

Prayer after Communion

Grant, O merciful God,
by this mystery of bread and wine,
that we may take up the staff of prayer
and walk with your servant Cuthbert
in the way of those who rejoice to speak your gospel;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thomas Cranmer 21 March
Archbishop of Canterbury, 1556 — Commemoration

Thomas Cranmer was a Cambridge scholar who became archbishop of Canterbury in 1533 and guided the Church of England through its first two decades of independence from the Papacy.

When he assumed his office he was already committed to protestant views, but political conditions forced him to keep his sympathies a secret. For over a decade he studied the issues which divided not only protestants from Catholics, but also the protestant movement itself. His studies bore fruit when the political situation allowed him to begin serious reformation of the liturgy. He had a large hand in drafting *The Book of Common Prayer*, which was authorized in 1549. Three years later he oversaw a second edition of this Book, which he revised in such a way as to make its protestant doctrine unmistakable.

Soon afterwards he and his Prayer Book were overtaken by events when Queen Mary I came to the throne and restored England to communion with the Pope. Cranmer was imprisoned and endured a long, humiliating trial for heresy, at the end of which he recanted his protestant opinions in hopes of clemency. The Queen refused to hear his pleas, and he was burned at the stake on this day in the year 1556. As the flames licked around him, he thrust out his right hand — the hand which had signed his earlier recantations — so that it might be the first to be burned; and that was the posture in which the onlookers last saw him, as the fire engulfed his body.

Sentence

We can never ransom ourselves, or deliver to God the price of our life. But God will ransom my life, and snatch me from the grasp of death. *Psalm 49.7, 15*

Collect

O God,
you endued your servant Thomas Cranmer
with zeal for the purity of your Church
and gave him singular ability
in reforming the common prayer of your people.
Grant us such courage in our witness to your grace
that in our families, communities, and nation
we may become the leaven of your justice and truth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 Kings 22.8–10, 23.1–3 Psalm 143
Refrain Show me the path that I must walk in.
John 6.51–58

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God of the prophets,
fill your Church with the light of your Spirit,
that we who come to the table of your Son
may be established in the joy of your salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of the Reign of Christ

Prayer after Communion

Almighty God,
by this banquet of most heavenly food
you grant us the pledge of eternal life.
Assist us with your grace
that we may bear the fruits of this holy mystery
and do all such good works
as you have prepared for us to walk in.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Thomas Ken 22 March
Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1711 — Commemoration

Today we remember Thomas Ken, a spiritual leader in the seventeenth-century Church of England, who became bishop of Bath and Wells and suffered both deprivation and ostracism because he chose conscience over political expedience.

Ordained priest in 1662, he spent most of the next twenty years in the diocese of Winchester. He served two times as pastor in the slum of St John's in the Soke, where his earnest care for the whole life of his parishioners, physical as well as spiritual, brought many who had been abandoned by the Church back to the life of prayer and sacraments.

In 1685 he was appointed to the see of Bath and Wells, where he took special care to issue booklets designed to help the widest number of his flock in forming a daily discipline of prayer and Christian action. He also gave a living example — as his first biographer wrote, “When he was at home on Sundays he would have twelve poor men or women to dine with him in his hall, always endeavouring while he fed their bodies to comfort their spirits by some cheerful discourse. . . . And when they had dined, the remainder was divided among them to carry home to their families.”

Ken had only three years in this ministry before the Revolution of 1688 overtook him. He joined six other bishops in refusing to take the oath of allegiance to the new regime. When Parliament passed an Act depriving them of their jurisdictions, Ken and the others refused to resign their canonical titles — thus creating a schism in the Church of England. He himself did nothing to further the schism, but spent the last twenty-one years of his life in retirement. Just before his death he sought to do what he could to heal the breach of unity: he renounced his claims upon the see of Bath and Wells, and once again received communion in the established Church of England. Thus, the final act of his life was for the welfare and peace of the Church he loved.

Sentence

Rulers have persecuted me without a cause, but my heart stands in awe of your word, O Lord. *Psalm 119.161*

Collect

Almighty God,
we bless you for your servant Thomas Ken
who offered to you his unceasing prayer,
to the poor his compassion and wealth,
and to his Church and nation
the witness of a steadfast conscience.
Grant us so to rejoice in his holy example
that we may have courage to rebuke the sins of our age
and grace to provide for the outcast in their need;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

2 Samuel 12.1–9a Psalm 145.8–15

Refrain The Lord preserves those who love him.

Luke 6.20–31

Prayer over the Gifts

God of all creation,
receive the gifts we offer this day
and make us partners with your servant Thomas Ken
in the eternal oblation of Christ in glory.
We ask this in the Name of our great high priest,
Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Heavenly Father,
by whose grace we share the meat and drink of heaven
with your servant Thomas Ken,
make us ready in the works of mercy
and obedient to the claims of conscience,
that we may be united in the mystery of your love
and constant in the way to your kingdom.
We ask this through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Gregory the Illuminator *March 23*

Bishop of Armenia, c. 332 — Commemoration

Today we honour Gregory the Illuminator, the Apostle of the Armenians, who illumined his nation with the light of the gospel. In fact, it was through his ministry that Armenia became the first kingdom in the ancient world to make Christianity its official religion.

He was born in Armenia in the middle of the third century, but spent his childhood and youth in a neighbouring, Greek-speaking country, where he was raised a Christian. Around the year 280 he returned to Armenia and after many adversities succeeded in converting King Ti-ri-da'-tes, who then gave him every assistance in rooting out paganism and establishing Christianity among the Armenian people. Twenty years or so after the beginning of his mission Gregory was ordained bishop; he spent the next three decades consolidating his work until his death around the year 332.

Despite horrible persecutions in this century, when millions of Armenians were done to death by the Turks, the Church that Gregory founded remains strong and vital. Let us therefore give thanks for his life, and for the grace which God gave to him for bringing a whole nation to new birth in Christ.

Sentence

From the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts. *Malachi 1.11*

Collect

Almighty God,
who raised up your servant Gregory the Illuminator
to kindle the people of Armenia
with the light of your gospel,
shine in our hearts, we pray,
that we also in our generation
may show forth your praise,
who called us out of darkness
into your marvellous light;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Acts 17.22–31 Psalm 33.6–11

Refrain The Lord spoke, and it came to pass.

Matthew 5.11–16

Prayer over the Gifts

O Lord our God,
kindle our service with the light of your truth,
that we may present to you a pure oblation
and the sacrifice of our lives.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of Apostles

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God,
by the ministry of Gregory the Illuminator
you made the Armenian people to be a nation of your own.
Raise up in every land
such heralds of your kingdom,
that your justice may flow like a mighty river,
and your peace may be established
as an everlasting mountain;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Annunciation of the Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary

25 March
Holy Day

The story of the Annunciation is told by Saint Luke, who used it to introduce some major themes in his version of the Gospel.

The angel Gabriel visited Mary, greeting her as the one who was favoured by God to be the mother of Jesus, “the Son of the Most High.” It was not Mary’s virtues or merit that won her this favour; it was simply that God “remembered to be gracious” and bestowed such a gift of power on Mary so that the whole human race might know the still greater gift of salvation. Thus empowered, Mary was able to respond, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” By the grace of God which filled her, she was able to practise a graciousness of her own towards God; for it gave her a unique freedom to make God’s will the very thing that she herself willed.

In this gracious response to God’s gift, Mary may be seen as a forerunner of Christ himself. For her consent to God’s saving purpose foreshadowed her son’s consent to the fulfillment of that purpose, even at the cost of his own life. To the Annunciation Mary responded, “Be it unto me according to your word.” In a similar way, on the eve of his passion, Jesus prayed to God, “Not my will but yours be done.” The feast of the Annunciation, which celebrates the conception of Jesus, comes to full term on Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter, when we celebrate the birth of the new creation in his paschal victory.

All of God’s grace is imparted to our lives so that we might share in this one mystery, not all at once, but through the changes and chances of our daily living. The life of grace often leaves us puzzling, as the message of the angel puzzled Mary; and Scripture suggests that Mary herself did not understand the mystery she had borne until her son was raised from the dead. Her whole life was a discipline in grace for the revelation of glory; and so it may be for all who by baptism and the eucharist bear Christ in their own lives.

Sentence

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory. *John 1.14*

Collect

Pour your grace into our hearts, O Lord,
that we who have known the incarnation
of your Son Jesus Christ,
announced by an angel to the Virgin Mary,
may by his cross and passion
be brought to the glory of his resurrection;
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Isaiah 7.10–14 Psalm 40.5–10 or Psalm 45

Refrain I love to do your will, O my God.

Hebrews 10.4–10 Luke 1.26–38

Prayer over the Gifts

Almighty God,
so fill us with your grace,
that we in all things may accept your holy will
and with the Virgin Mary, full of grace,
rejoice in your salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of the Incarnation

Prayer after Communion

Almighty God,
your word proclaims our salvation;
your table gives us life.
Grant us the humble obedience we see in Mary,
that we too may respond as willing servants.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Charles Henry Brent

27 March

*Bishop of the Philippines, and of Western New York, 1929 —
Commemoration*

The modern ecumenical movement got under way in the early years of the twentieth century, when Christians began to seek the reconciliation of their divided churches. One of the great early leaders of this movement was Charles Henry Brent, a bishop in the Episcopal Church of the United States.

He was born and educated in Ontario, and ordained in the diocese of Toronto, but a lack of openings led him to move to the United States, where he served parishes in Buffalo and Boston. In the year 1901, at the age of thirty-nine, he was appointed bishop of the Philippines, which the Americans had just seized from Spain, and for seventeen years laboured to bring Christianity to the pagan tribes in the northern part of that country. He also worked hard to end the opium traffic throughout Southeast Asia. After the First World War he returned to the continental United States as bishop of Western New York.

In the meantime Brent had also become fired with the passion for Christian unity. He believed that the divided churches would return to communion with one another only if they honestly discussed the theological issues and principles of church-government which kept them apart. His quiet energy in this cause eventually resulted in the first Faith and Order Conference, held under his presidency at Lausanne, Switzerland, in the year 1925. He died of a heart-attack at Lausanne four years later, but the Faith and Order movement continued and eventually helped to create the World Council of Churches.

Sentence

God is a God not of disorder but of peace. *1 Corinthians 14.33*

Collect

God of truth and peace,
you kindled the will of Charles Henry Brent
with a desire for the unity of your Church
and gave him perseverance
for the fulfilling of your design.
Deliver us from arrogance of heart
and the falsehoods bred by prejudice,
that we may find one heart in prayer
and one voice in confessing your truth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Zechariah 8.9–13 Psalm 133
Refrain There shall be a sowing of peace.
John 17.20–25

Prayer over the Gifts

Heavenly Father,
as wheat scattered over many plains
was gathered and made into this one bread,
so may your Church be gathered
and made perfectly one
in the true Bread who came down from heaven,
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Lord God,
you make us sharers in the life of your Son
and give us drink from the fount of his love.
Send us forth in the way of your servant Charles
that we may sow peace in your Church
and reap the harvest of your mercy.
We ask this for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

John Keble *March 29*
Priest, 1866 — Commemoration

Today we honour John Keble, an English priest who helped to inspire the nineteenth century revival of Anglicanism known as the Oxford Movement.

Born in 1792, the dutiful son of a country parson, Keble bore steadfast witness to the “high church” tradition, which looked back through the spiritual leaders of seventeenth century Anglicanism to the faith and order of Christian antiquity. This outlook made him distrust the modern world and bear stern witness against rationalism in studying the mysteries of faith.

Keble was also a man of deep and constant prayer, and his spiritual strength brought to his door a number of younger Oxford dons who sought direction. They picked up on his other concerns, and gave them contemporary force in the Oxford Movement, which began in 1833.

Keble supported the work of his disciples, but remained somewhat distant from its early success. In the end several of the Movement’s leaders went over to Rome and, though grieved by the separation of his friends, he was not shaken in his commitment to the Anglican way. He later came to believe that the Movement had lost its spiritual bearings when its leaders focussed on winning power and influence, and let popularity become the standard by which they judged the righteousness of their cause. For himself, he wrote: “I had always been taught that the truth must be unpopular and despised, and to make confession of it was all one could do.” This sense of bearing witness against the world in its power remained with him until his death on this date, Maundy Thursday in 1866.

Sentence

Whatever is born of God conquers the world; and this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. 1 John 5.4

Collect

O God our Hope and Strength,
grant us in all time of our testing
to know your presence and to obey your will;
that following the example of your servant John Keble,
we may accomplish with integrity what you give us to do
and endure with the courage of love
what you give us to bear;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Jeremiah 3.11–15 Psalm 125

Refrain Show your goodness to the true of heart.

John 21.15–17

Prayer over the Gifts

God of our forebears,
who quickened your servant John Keble
with the pulse of faithfulness,
grant that in our service this day
we may speak with the voice of thanksgiving
and gather at this table
with your loving-kindness before our eyes.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

O God,
who kept your servant John Keble
in the paths of righteousness,
grant us by these holy mysteries
such strength in our earthly pilgrimage
that we may come to dwell in your tabernacle
and rest upon your holy hill;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

John Donne *March 31*
Priest and Poet, 1631 — Commemoration

John Donne is numbered among the great poets of the English Renaissance, but we remember him today chiefly as someone who learned the deeper poetry of God's grace and gave it voice both in his verse and through his ministry as priest and preacher.

Born into a prominent Roman catholic family in 1573, he passed through a dark period of riotous living and scepticism about all religion before he conformed to the Church of England. Gifted with high spirits and a brilliant mind, he looked forward to a great career in service to the Crown. But his secret marriage to the niece of a powerful politician caused scandal, and for several years he struggled to support his wife and growing family. In the year 1615, as the best hope in a bad situation, he accepted ordination as a priest of the Church of England.

Seven years later Donne became Dean of St Paul's Cathedral in London, where he remained until his death in the year 1631. He slowly learned that the priesthood was indeed his true vocation, and his original half-hearted resignation to the office was changed into a wholehearted embrace of the crucified Christ who had embraced him. This self-discovery showed in his preaching, which drew great throngs to St Paul's, and even after three centuries his sermons still have power to move the heart. They reflect his wide learning as a scholar, his passionate intensity as a poet — and above all, the profound devotion of someone who struggled to relate the word of God's grace to all the sorrows and joys of human life.

Sentence

Christ set us free, so that we should remain free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be fastened again to the yoke of slavery. *Galatians 5.1 (NJB)*

Collect

Merciful God,
you pierced the heart of your servant John Donne
with the mercy of your crucified Son
and gave him power in sermon and song
to tell of the beauty in redemption.
Purge our wills of false ambition
and reform our tangled desires,
that we may speak the truth in love
and apply the healing of your gospel;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Proverbs 8.1–11 Psalm 19.9–14
Refrain All occasions invite God's mercies.
John 12.20–26

Prayer over the Gifts

Desire of all creation,
accept the service we offer you this day
and come to us as the sun at noon
to illumine all the shadows of our condition.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Source and Giver of all that is good,
you spread this table with your mercies
and fill the poverty of our nature
with the wealth of your new creation.
Keep us, we pray, so awake in the duties of our callings
that we may rise in the image of our Saviour
and enter with joy into the gate and household of heaven;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Frederick Denison Maurice

1 April

Priest, 1872 — Commemoration

Frederick Denison Maurice was a restless prophet in mid-Victorian England, whose views have had great influence on modern Anglicanism. Born into a Unitarian family, he converted to the Church of England in his youth and eventually became a priest. He worked in various parishes, but devoted most of his energy to teaching and journalism, offering theological commentary on the issues of his day.

At a time when the industrial working-class was beginning to agitate for better wages and living conditions, Maurice argued that the gospel was on their side and urged the Church to use its authority on their behalf. Moreover, when the Church of England was being torn apart by partisan strife, he maintained that the true mission of Anglicanism was to reconcile opposites, as God and humanity had been reconciled in Jesus Christ, without denying the integrity of either side.

Maurice's work and witness had a very mixed reception among his contemporaries — a core of disciples acclaimed him as a genius, while Anglo-catholics and agnostics joined in dismissing him as a fuzzy thinker. He died in the year 1872, puzzled and disappointed by his failure to reach his critics. But his vision of a reconciling Church, active in the cause of social justice, has come to have great influence on the way Anglicans think, and today Frederick Denison Maurice is counted as one of the great prophets of our tradition.

Sentence

For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world,
to testify to the truth. *John 18.37*

Collect

Almighty God,
who restored the dignity of our nature
through the perfect obedience of your Son,
quicken in your Church a passion for justice and truth,
that like your servant Frederick Denison Maurice,
we may continually work and pray
for the triumph of the kingdom of Christ;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

Readings

Micah 4.1–4 Psalm 72.11–17

Refrain Christ our King shall deliver the oppressed.
Matthew 25.31–40

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
who raised up your servant Frederick
to speak the word of prophecy to his age,
purge from our hearts every thought of strife
and all indifference to justice,
that you may be glad with the bread of our offering
and the wine of our fellowship.
We ask this for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God,
who brought your servant Frederick
to walk in your Name for ever,
grant us to behold your world
with the eyes of your compassion,
that we may labour for peace in your Church
and deliver those who cry out in distress.
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Henry Budd 2 April
First Canadian Native Priest, 1875 — Commemoration

Today we remember Henry Budd, who in 1853 became the first person of the First Nations in Canada to be ordained as an Anglican priest.

He was born to a father from the Swampy Cree and a Metis mother, and was named Sa-ka-chu-wes'cum, which in the Cree language means "Going up the hill." After his father's death he was put into the care of an English missionary named John West, who baptized him and gave him the English name "Henry Budd." Brought up to act like an Englishman, he eventually became a catechist for the Church Missionary Society and began to work among the Cree in northern Rupert's Land. He proved so effective in teaching the faith and managing his isolated mission that the Society recommended his ordination to the priesthood, which took place in 1853. Budd spent the next fourteen years running a mission in Saskatchewan, then was assigned to The Pas.

He possessed a striking presence and was a superb speaker both in English and in his native Cree. But just because he was Cree, the Church Missionary Society allowed him only half the annual stipend that a married white missionary got — even though he supported his own wife and children, his mother, and his brother's family. But he did not stint his labours in preaching the gospel, or in seeing to the needs of his aboriginal congregations. When he died in 1875, one of his people said that he had not known what it was to lose a father until the death of Mr. Budd.

Sentence

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake
I will not rest. *Isaiah 62.1*

Collect

Creator of light,
you called your servant Henry Budd
to labour as a father in the Spirit
among the people who gave him birth.
Make your Church, we pray,
a place of justice and dignity for all peoples,
that around the fire of your gospel
we may raise true songs of praise
in the communion of your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Isaiah 61.1–3 Psalm 23

Refrain I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Luke 10.1–9

Prayer over the Gifts

Great Father,
from every family, language, people, and nation
you have made us a kingdom of priests
to serve you night and day.
Teach us so to remember your servant Henry Budd,
that we may share in the one sacrifice
of Jesus Christ our Saviour,
who stands at your right hand, now and for ever.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Great Spirit,
grant us such faithfulness in our callings,
that we may follow the example of your servant Henry Budd,
and show forth your righteousness
in the mystery of Jesus Christ our Saviour.
We ask this for his sake.

Richard 3 April
Bishop of Chichester, 1253 — Commemoration

In the thirteenth century the English church struggled long and hard to maintain its independence from royal power. One of the heroes of this struggle was a scholar named Richard, who became bishop of Chichester in 1244.

As chief legal advisor to the archbishop of Canterbury he had already earned the abiding hatred of King Henry III, and the King did everything to prevent him from assuming jurisdiction over his see. For more than a year Richard was forced to wander from parish to parish, depending on the loyal hospitality of priests and people to carry out his episcopal ministry. He learned how ordinary folk lived and what their problems were, and he walked with beggars and outlaws. When he finally gained legal jurisdiction over his diocese he initiated a wide range of reforms, all designed to bring the ministry of the Church closer to the people.

He died in the year 1253, much mourned by his people, who saw not only his great learning and political courage, but also his humble simplicity of faith — a quality reflected in “The Prayer of St. Richard of Chichester,” which is the basis of today’s collect.

Sentence

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. *Philippians 4.13*

Collect

We thank you, Lord God,
for all the benefits you have given us
in your Son Jesus Christ,
our most merciful Redeemer, Friend, and Brother,
and for all the pains and insults
which he has borne for us;
and like your holy bishop Richard,
we pray that day by day we may see Christ more clearly,
love him more dearly, and follow him more nearly;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Philippians 4.10–13 Psalm 84.7–12
Refrain God will give grace and glory.
Luke 22.24–30

Prayer over the Gifts

O God, the giver of redemption,
who made your servant Richard
to walk with integrity,
look upon the face of your Son
that our service may be found in him
and lifted on high by the arms of his love,
who dwells in glory now and for ever.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Heavenly Father,
whose Son has nourished us
with heavenly food at this earthly table,
teach us so to honour your holy bishop Richard,
that in days of want as in times of abundance
we may put our whole trust in you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Reginald Heber 4 April
Bishop of Calcutta, 1826 — Commemoration

Reginald Heber was an English cleric of the early nineteenth century, who became bishop of Calcutta in 1822. We join the Church of South India in honouring him for his decision to break the racist “colour bar” and ordain the first indigenous clergy for ministry on the Indian subcontinent.

Born to privilege and power, Heber spent almost twenty years as the rector of a rural Shropshire parish, where his earnest pastoral care brought about a quiet revolution in its worship, with daily prayer, Bible study, and regular celebrations of the eucharist. He also found time to do scholarly work and to write the hymns for which he is best remembered by Anglicans.

In 1822 he was made bishop of Calcutta, with jurisdiction over all of British India. Though he accepted the office reluctantly, Heber took his episcopal duties seriously, travelling almost continuously and gaining the trust of the hard-pressed missionaries under his charge. He pushed himself so hard that his health collapsed within three years of his arrival in India, and he died at Trichono’poly on April 3rd, 1826. Over the next few generations, the story of his energy and sacrifice inspired many English youth to seek missionary work, and helped to establish his hymns in the worship of English-speaking Christians.

Sentence

God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and self-control. 2 Timothy 1.7

Collect

Almighty God,
you granted to Reginald Heber
a manifold life of service,
to shepherd a rural parish in England
and to preach in the cities of India.
Give to your people such faithfulness,
that in every place and circumstance
they may sing of your power
and minister your gifts
for the glory of your Name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 Timothy 3.1–7 Psalm 68.33–36
Refrain The Lord sends forth his mighty voice.
Luke 10.1–9

Prayer over the Gifts

Grant us, eternal God,
such faithfulness in our offering
that like your servant Reginald Heber,
we may show forth your praise
and partake of your gracious mercy.
This we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Lord God,
who strengthened for service
the hands of Reginald Heber,
grant that we may honour these mysteries
by lives of devotion
in the work of building up your Church;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

William Law

9 April

Priest and Spiritual Leader, 1761 — Commemoration

Today we commemorate William Law, an eighteenth-century English mystic whose writings offered spiritual guidance to people of many different classes.

Soon after ordination as a deacon in 1711 he broke away from the Church of England on a matter of conscience and joined a group known as the Non-jurors. But he continued to be interested in the life of the established Church and made a name for himself as a defender of orthodox teachings against rationalism.

He had a gift for clean, readable prose, and his pen-portraits were both witty and full of insight. These talents were revealed at their best in a book entitled *A Serious Call to the Devout and Holy Life*, which was not a controversial work but a spiritual guide. Published in 1728, it became his most popular work and nourished many generations of Anglicans in their practice of Christian piety.

The proceeds from this work enabled Law to retire to his family estate in Northamptonshire, where he devoted the last twenty-five years of his life to the study of mysticism and good works among his neighbours. Though he never renounced his orders as a Non-juring priest, he returned to the Church of England after his retirement and attended its services until his death in the year 1761.

Sentence

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. *Philippians 3.14*

Collect

O God,
you kindled the flame of your love
in the heart of William Law
and made him a shining light and sure guide
in calling many to the devout and holy life.
Grant us so to practise
the rule and discipline of faith,
that we walk in the ways of your love
as children of the light;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Philippians 3.7–14 Psalm 103.1–5

Refrain Bless the Lord, O my soul.

Matthew 6.1–6, 16–21

Prayer over the Gifts

We pray you, gracious God,
accept these gifts of praise and thanksgiving
and keep us mindful of your servant William Law,
that we may have strength of heart
and courage of mind,
ever to rejoice in you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Eternal Sovereign,
who ruled your servant William Law
in the way of your Spirit,
grant that we who partake of this table
may shine with that perfect light
which draws the world to confess your power.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

George Augustus Selwyn 11 April
First Missionary Bishop of New Zealand, 1878 — Commemoration

George Augustus Selwyn became the first bishop of New Zealand in 1841, and over the next twenty-six years built up a self-governing Church in which Europeans and Maori natives had an equal say. He worked very hard to make the English colonists recognize the rights and human dignity of the Maoris, but his pleas and warnings were largely ignored, and three Maori uprisings were the result.

In 1867 Selwyn retired from New Zealand and became bishop of Lichfield, a diocese in the industrial Midlands of England. He organized local synods, so that lay people might have a share in making diocesan policies, and started a special ministry to miners, itinerant workers, and the homeless poor. He died at Lichfield on this day in the year 1878.

Selwyn possessed wide human sympathies and a gift for getting things done in a way that included as many people as possible. This was reflected in his constant conviction that the Church was best governed through synods, and his example, both in New Zealand and in Lichfield, has had great influence throughout the Anglican communion.

Sentence

In Christ you also are joined together and grow into a holy temple, for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Cf. Ephesians 2.21–22

Collect

Almighty God,
hear our prayers and supplications
as we remember your servant George Augustus Selwyn,
and enrich your Church in every land
with the manifold gifts of service,
that by constant witness and selfless devotion
we may share with one another, and with all the world,
the immeasurable wealth of your salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 Corinthians 12.4–13 Psalm 96.1–7

Refrain Sing to the Lord, all the whole earth!

Matthew 10.7–16

Prayer over the Gifts

Father in heaven,
we thank you for your servant George Selwyn
and bring you these gifts from the good things you have given,
that we may testify to your love
and be dedicated to your service,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

O Lord our God,
grant us the wisdom and the will
to follow the example of your servant George Selwyn,
that together we may build up your Church
in the works of truth and love,
serving not ourselves but one another
for the sake of him who died for us and rose again,
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Mollie Brant (Konwatsijayenni) *April 16*

Matron among the Mohawks, 1796 — Commemoration

Today we recall Mollie Brant, an eighteenth-century Mohawk woman known among her own people as Kon-wat'si-ja-yen'ni, who sustained them with her example of loyalty to the British Crown and the Anglican Church when they were forced to make a new homeland in Canada.

She was born into a family of chieftains and attended an Anglican mission school where she learned to speak English as fluently as her native tongue. In 1759 she became the companion of Sir William Johnson, the British agent for Indian affairs, and soon afterwards they were married according to Mohawk rites. Though the union was not recognized by English law, the white community admired her dignity and wisdom in the ways of two cultures, and continued to treat her with immense respect even after Sir William's death in 1774.

Mohawk matrons have an influential voice in the councils of their nation, and Mollie Brant played a decisive role in convincing her people to remain loyal to the British Crown during the American Revolution. But she and her family paid a terrible price for their loyalty, because the rebels destroyed her home and forced her to take her clan into exile. She eventually settled at Kingston, where the British government built her a new house and gave her a generous pension. She became a founding member of St. George's Anglican parish and died at Kingston on this date in 1796, sincerely mourned by United Empire Loyalists as well as her own people.

Sentence

Where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge;
your people shall be my people, and your God my God.

Ruth 1.16

Collect

Lord our God,
you endued your servant Mollie Brant
with the gifts of justice and loyalty,
and made her a wise and prudent mother
in the household of the Mohawk nation.
May we ever give thanks to you, our Maker,
and nurture one another
in the knowledge of your power;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Ruth 1.6–18 Psalm 80.1–7

Refrain Restore us, O God of hosts.

Matthew 12.46–50

Prayer over the Gifts

Eternal God, who made your servant Mollie Brant
a leader among her own people,
cast from this household all works of strife
and keep every harm from this table,
that our worship may accord with your will
and our gifts may befit your purpose;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Maker and Lover of all creation,
who strengthened Mollie Brant
to gather and guide an exiled people,
draw us towards the goal of our faith,
that we may attain the full dignity of our nature
in our true native land on high.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Anselm 21 April

Archbishop of Canterbury, Teacher of the Faith, 1109 — Memorial

Today we remember Anselm, a brilliant theologian who was archbishop of Canterbury from the year 1093 until his death sixteen years later.

He started his career as a wandering scholar and eventually became a monk at the Norman abbey of Bec, where he established his reputation as a teacher. He had a lively and inquiring mind, and was restless until he had discovered the inner coherence of basic Christian doctrines. He summed up his attitude in a philosophical meditation entitled, *Faith Seeking Understanding*.

Anselm's fame as a teacher, and his gifts as a spiritual director, brought him the highest positions in his abbey and eventually led to his election as archbishop of Canterbury. The demands of his new office soon overwhelmed his calling as a theologian. The King of England, William II, was determined to make the Church submissive to his will — and Anselm felt that he had to be just as inflexible in maintaining its independent rights. He endured two periods of exile in France and Italy in order to make his point. In the end a compromise was negotiated, and Anselm returned to Canterbury, where he died in 1109.

Sentence

You speak in my heart and say, "Seek my face." Your face,
Lord, will I seek. *Psalm 27.11*

Collect

O God,
who raised up your servant Anselm
to be a guide and teacher of faith
in its quest for understanding,
provide your Church in every age
with godliness and sound learning,
that we may have power to speak
the reason for the hope that is in us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Romans 5.1–11 Psalm 37.32–39
Refrain The Lord teaches the righteous his counsel.
Matthew 11.25–30

Prayer over the Gifts

Eternal God,
who schooled your servant Anselm
in the treasury of holy wisdom,
grant us in all our offering this day
such purity of heart and singleness of mind,
that we may be heirs of your mercy.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of the Epiphany

Prayer after Communion

Source and Goal of these mysteries,
whose holy bishop Anselm
suffered exile for the liberty of your Church,
grant us so to hold firm in faith,
that we may know the infinite wealth of redemption
in your Son Jesus Christ our Saviour,
who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

George

23 April

Patron Saint of England, Martyr, 4th century — Commemoration

Few saints have been as widely popular as the martyr named George, a Roman soldier who suffered for the faith in the early fourth century.

The circumstances of his martyrdom are obscure, but we know that the Roman authorities were worried by the number of soldiers who were secret Christians and took harsh measures against them. The situation was all the more remarkable because at that time soldiering was still one of the careers which the Church did not allow its members to follow — so that George was not baptized when he died. It was not unusual for people in his circumstances to delay baptism until they had retired from active service. But the Church believed that, by his martyrdom, George had (if anything) a better kind of baptism, because he shared in the suffering and death of Christ himself.

In later centuries, as his cult spread westwards, George became the model of a perfect Christian warrior — just the sort of figure that appealed to medieval English kings when they placed their wars of conquest under his protection. That is how St. George came to be invoked as the patron saint of England. But another and far more widespread tradition has seen him as the pattern of what it means to be a Christian in the world — as an image of every Christian's daily warfare against the forces of sin, ignorance, fear, and injustice.

Sentence

Draw the sword, O God, and bar the way against those who pursue me; say to my soul, "I am your salvation." *Psalm 35.3*

Collect

Almighty God,
who called your holy martyr George
to bear before the rulers of this world
the banner of the cross,
grant that we may be strong
in every battle against sin,
and attain to the crown of eternal life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Ephesians 6.10–20 Psalm 18.1–7
Refrain God is my shield and my refuge.
Mark 8.34–38

Prayer over the Gifts

O God,
behold the needs of your Church
and give aid to our weakness,
that your mercy may attend our praise
and our hearts may render you thanks.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Martyr

Prayer after Communion

Lord God,
who gave to your martyr George
the reward of service under Christ,
grant us by this holy banquet
so to persist in the way of baptism,
that we may vanquish the works of sin
and enter the gates of victory.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Martyrs of the Twentieth Century *24 April* *Memorial*

Martyrs are Christians who have been put to death because they chose to remain faithful to the gospel and counted “the truth as it is in Jesus” dearer than life itself. In the twentieth century more Christians suffered for this reason than at any other time in the Church’s history — there are the three million Armenian Christians who died under Turkish brutality during the first World War; the million Orthodox who perished in the Soviet Union in the 1920’s and 30’s; the unknown number of Albanians who disappeared in their government’s efforts to suppress Christianity; the hundreds of Germans, both Protestants and Catholics, who died because they resisted Hitler and his Nazi regime; the Burmese Christians who were killed simply because they believed in Christ; the hundreds of African Christians who suffered because they condemned the terrorism of colonial authorities and black nationalists alike; and the many who were killed because their Christian witness made them oppose racism or social and economic injustices.

If we were not careful, the sheer number of martyrs might stagger our efforts to remember them, and why and how they died. So, today’s memorial is meant to be a small act of resistance, a refusal to be silent in the face of terror and injustice. We collect our intentions around a thankful remembrance of the Christian Martyrs of the Twentieth Century and learn anew the ancient truth, that “the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.”

Sentence

If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed,
because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting
on you. 1 Peter 4.14

Collect

Almighty God,
who chose what is weak in the world
to shame the strong,
teach us to honour
your Martyrs of the Twentieth Century,
that we may stand fast in your truth,
proclaim your salvation in the world,
and fulfil your commandments in love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 Peter 4.12–19 Psalm 69.31–36
Refrain The afflicted shall see and be glad.
Mark 10.34–39

Prayer over the Gifts

Righteous God,
whose Son did not come to bring peace
but a sword that cleaves us from the world,
grant to us who offer these gifts,
that we may surrender our lives to him
whose passion has made us a new creation.
We ask this through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Martyr

Prayer after Communion

Merciful God,
break the bonds of complacency
and strengthen our hearts and hands,
that we may advance your justice
and show forth your power,
in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Saint Mark the Evangelist

25 April

Holy Day

References to a person named Mark — or John Mark — appear quite frequently in the New Testament. Saint Paul mentioned him among his companions in the Letter to Philemon. In the Book of Acts Mark is described as the cousin of Barnabas the Apostle and the son of a wealthy woman of Jerusalem, whose house was a meeting-place for the disciples of Jesus. The Book of Acts also says that Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, but then decided to turn back. Paul and Barnabas fell out over Mark's decision; they parted, and Barnabas took Mark with him when he went to preach the gospel in Cyprus. In the First Letter of Peter, the author called Mark "my son"; and even if this letter was not written by Peter himself, it bears witness to a close association between the Apostle and Mark. Tradition identifies the Mark mentioned in these New Testament passages with the author of the Gospel.

It is generally agreed that Mark's is the earliest of the four gospels; scholars say that it was written around the year 68, probably at Rome. It was contemporary with the Church's first experience of persecution by the pagan authorities of the Roman empire.

This may explain why, of the four Gospels, Mark's version has the sharpest edge and offers the least comfort. He was addressing a Church confused by the gap between the promise of "the good news" and the reality of persecution. In his account, the disciples are just as blind and uncomprehending about Jesus as the pharisees and rulers; they confess that he is "the Son of God" but refuse to understand the still greater truth, that the Son of God must suffer and die. Mark therefore takes great pains to let his readers in on the secret, so that Christians experiencing persecution would not make the same mistake. His "good news" is demanding news. It is designed to show that Christians can only share in the glory of the resurrection by imitating the same heroic obedience to God which led Jesus to accept death on the cross.

Sentence

We proclaim Christ crucified, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. *1 Corinthians 1.23, 24*

Collect

Almighty God,
by the hand of Mark the evangelist
you gave to your Church
the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
We thank you for his witness,
and pray that we may be grounded firmly in its truth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Isaiah 52.7–10 *or* Ephesians 4.7–8, 11–16 Psalm 2.7–13

Refrain You are my Son; this day have I begotten you.

Or v.7 or Alleluia!

Mark 1.1–15 *or* Mark 16.15–20

Prayer over the Gifts

God of our salvation,
accept all we offer you this day.
May we learn to bear witness to the gospel of your Son
both in word and deed.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Gracious God,
may the gifts we have received at your table
strengthen us in the faith of the gospel preached by Mark.
This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Catherine of Siena 29 April
Reformer and Spiritual Teacher, 1380 — Memorial

Today we honour Catherine Benincasa, who was a reformer and spiritual teacher in fourteenth century Italy.

Born at Siena in the year 1347, she devoted herself to prayer and meditation from a very early age. Her family opposed and harassed her, until her steadfast purpose wore them down and they let her become a postulant in the order of Dominican nuns. For several years she underwent a series of terrible visions and at times felt utterly abandoned by the Lord. This lonely struggle ended at nineteen, when she experienced a vision of the Saviour, with Mary and all the heavenly host, in which Christ espoused her to himself. Catherine became a nurse, caring for patients whom other nurses hated to treat, people with leprosy and cancer. In time she gathered a mixed group of disciples, and together with them she went on extensive tours to preach the gospel.

Soon afterwards she began another mission — this time, to heal a schism which had split the Church between two rival Popes, one at Rome and the other at the French city of Avignon. She went to Rome and publicly fasted, attending the eucharist every day in order to pray for the unity of the Church. The strain of this last campaign proved too much for her and, felled by a stroke, she died on this date in 1380, at the age of thirty-three.

Sentence

To you I lift up my eyes, to you enthroned in the heavens, until
you show us your mercy. *Cf. Psalm 123.1, 4b*

Collect

Everlasting God,
you kindled such holy love
in the heart of your servant Catherine
that she devoted her life to the poor and the sick
and to the peace and unity of your Church.
Grant us strength to meditate
upon the passion of your Son,
that we may work in the image of his compassion
until we rejoice in the revelation of his glory;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 John 1.5–2.2 Psalm 36.5–10

Refrain In your light, O God, we see light.

Luke 12.22–24, 29–32

Prayer over the Gifts

Loving Father,
who taught your servant Catherine
to pray for the healing of your Church,
keep all malice far from this table,
that we may share the bread of sincerity and truth
and drink from the river of your delights;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God,
who poured the light of your love
into the heart and mind of your servant Catherine,
may this wondrous mystery give us strength
to cast away all selfish love and hesitation,
that we may gladly embrace the wounded
and bring freedom to those who suffer oppression.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Marie de L'Incarnation

30 April

Educator and Spiritual Teacher in New France, 1672 — Commemoration

Marie de l'Incarnation was a member of the Ursuline Order who arrived at Quebec City in 1639. She had come in obedience to a vision which told her "to go to Canada to build a house for Jesus and Mary." Over the next thirty years she fulfilled this task by setting up a school for young women of all races, and by establishing the first self-governing congregation of nuns in Canada.

Marie possessed many practical talents, and they were put to the test many times — when the Iroquois war reached the very walls of her convent; when the convent itself was completely destroyed by fire; when merchants tried to cheat her; and when the first bishop in New France tried to tell her that he knew better than she did what was best for nuns living in the wilderness. In all these trials Marie displayed courage, intelligence, an unshakable sense of divine purpose, and even a sense of humour.

But she was more than a good administrator. She was also gifted with mystical visions which revealed to her the loving relations within the most holy Trinity; and all her life she struggled to translate her interior experiences into care for others, so that they might share in the same love to which her visions pointed.

Marie knew the cost of loving Christ above all else. As a young widow in France, she had given up her only child, an eleven-year-old boy, in order to follow her vocation as a nun. The pain of that separation remained with her, though she was certain that she had acted in obedience to God's will for her. Her son eventually became a monk himself, and they kept in touch by writing to one another back and forth across the Atlantic. Marie came to feel that she had been given back to her son on a level which would not have been possible if she had not followed her vocation.

And so we honour Marie de l'Incarnation not only as a founder of the Church in Canada, but also as a mystic who possessed the gifts of a true spiritual mother, able to nurture her own son and the children of New France in the ways of the love of Christ.

Sentence

Mary has chosen the better part, which shall not be taken away from her. *Luke 10.42*

Collect

God of mercy,
who called and strengthened your servant Marie
in visions and the mystery of prayer
to nurture your people in New France,
grant us so to cherish her example
that we may not rest until we have done your will,
and never cease from prayer
until this age passes over to your kingdom
and we behold your glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Jeremiah 1.2–12 Psalm 66.7–12
Refrain You brought us into a place of refreshment.
John 15.14–17

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord of splendour,
who spoke your word of promise
in the life of your servant Marie,
behold our preparation of this table
and grant that our obedience
may have fulfilment in your love.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Lord God,
who gave to your servant Marie
the abiding knowledge of your love,
fill us with the harvest of this mystery
that we may live by the riches of faith
and be established in the works of justice.
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Saint Philip and Saint James

1 May

Apostles — Holy Day

Philip is named in the first three Gospels whenever they list the twelve apostles, but he plays no active role and has no voice in their accounts. This changes in the Fourth Gospel, which presents Philip as a leading figure in the circle of disciples. He was the third person to be specially called by Jesus, and he in turn brought his friend Nathanael into the company of the Lord. In John's account of the feeding of the five thousand, Philip voices doubts felt by the other disciples, and his questions set the stage for Jesus to demonstrate his power. Likewise at the Last Supper, Philip's remarks help to make the Farewell Discourses a teaching dialogue between Master and disciples. A later tradition of the Church says that Philip eventually settled in Asia Minor, where he lived to a ripe old age.

James, the other apostle we commemorate today, is an even more shadowy figure. The Gospels list him as the son of Alphaeus, but he is usually known as James "the Less," to distinguish him from two other disciples of the same name. Mark's Gospel also mentions James "the Younger," who watched the crucifixion with his mother Mary and the other women; he is traditionally identified with the apostle we honour today.

Philip and James are remembered together because of an accident of ecclesiastical history. In the sixth century the Church of Rome acquired some relics of James and placed them in a reliquary which already held some remains of Philip. This reliquary was placed in a new church, which was dedicated jointly to the two Apostles on May first in the year 560.

Sentence

I will do whatever you ask in my name, says the Lord, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. *John 14.13*

Collect

Almighty God,
you gave to your apostles Philip and James
grace and strength to bear witness to the truth.
Grant that we, mindful of their victory of faith,
may glorify in life and death the name of Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Isaiah 30.18–21 *or* 2 Corinthians 4.1–6 Psalm 119.33–40

Refrain Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes.

Or v. 33 or CR 4

John 14.6–14

Prayer over the Gifts

Almighty God,
to know you is to have eternal life.
Grant us to know your Son
as the way, the truth, and the life;
and guide our footsteps
along the way of Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Preface of Apostles

Prayer after Communion

Holy God,
in Jesus Christ we find the way to you.
May we who have met him in this banquet
be kept in your unending love,
and see you working through your Son,
for he is Lord for ever and ever.

Athanasius

2 May

Bishop of Alexandria, Teacher of the Faith, 373 — Memorial

Athanasius is one of the great heroes of the Christian tradition. As bishop of Alexandria from the year 328 until his death forty-five years later, he defended the faith of the Church against a heresy known as Arianism.

The Arians taught that God's only Son, the Word who became flesh as Jesus Christ, was not truly divine. Athanasius realized that this doctrine undercut the Christian assurance of salvation, because it meant that humans had no way of sharing in the very life and glory of God. But because the Word who became flesh was indeed true God, "one in Being with the Father," all may enter into his own eternal union with the Father and the Holy Spirit. That is why Athanasius was so harsh against the Arians — he was fighting for the reality and the fullness of our salvation.

But the Arians had the support of several Roman emperors, and many other bishops saw nothing wrong in trying to reach a compromise which the Arians could accept. Athanasius stood firm — at times he even seemed to stand alone, and "Athanasius against the world" became a by-word of the age. He endured five periods of exile, yet his popularity among the citizens of Alexandria was so great that the Emperor once had to recall him in order to avoid insurrection in the city. The Church itself finally vindicated his stalwart witness, and it is due to him, more than to any other teacher, that we still have the Nicene Creed.

Sentence

The Word was with God, and the Word was God; and the Word became flesh and lived among us. *John 1.1, 14*

Collect

O God,
by the grace of your wisdom
your blessed servant Athanasius
stood fast against all error and false compromise
in defense of the true divinity
of our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Stir our hearts to ponder your Word,
and grant us never to faint or fear
in our proclamation of your saving mystery;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is one with you and the Holy Spirit,
true God, now and for ever.

Readings

Sirach 51.13–22 Psalm 71.1–8

Refrain You have been my confidence since I was young.
John 1.1–18

Prayer over the Gifts

Father,
accept our offering this day
and grant us to share in that gracious power
by which you upheld your servant Athanasius,
that we, confessing our faith in the Word made flesh,
may know his presence at this table.
We ask this through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of the Incarnation

Prayer after Communion

Source and Giver of the eternal Word,
by whose grace we share the meat and drink of heaven,
grant us so to conform our deeds and affections
to the humanity of Christ our Saviour,
that we may be perfectly united
in the communion of his glorious divinity.
This we ask through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist

6 May

(or 27 December) — Holy Day

Today we honour Saint John the Apostle, a Galilean fisherman who was called with his brother James and followed Jesus to become “a fisher for people.”

John and his brother were so impetuous in their behaviour that Jesus nicknamed them “Bo-aner’ges” or “Sons of thunder.” Nevertheless, with Peter and James, he was one of the three disciples that Jesus chose to have with him on those occasions when he wanted people he could trust. This side of John’s character is heightened if he was “the beloved disciple” mentioned in the Fourth Gospel — the disciple who lay closest to Jesus at the Last Supper and into whose care the crucified Lord entrusted his mother. According to the Book of Acts, John later became a pillar of the church at Jerusalem and shared the leadership with Peter.

A reliable tradition says that John eventually settled at Ephesus, a city on the Mediterranean coast of Asia Minor. There he superintended the Church and gathered a lively circle of students, who had great influence on Christian life and thought throughout the region. Out of this “community of the beloved disciple” came the Gospel and the three Letters which are attributed to John in the New Testament. These writings display a side of John which we would not expect from the other accounts of him. Instead of the impulsive “Son of thunder,” the Gospel and Letters of John reflect the mind of a fine theologian who meditated deeply on the mystery of Christ and expressed his understanding in a poetical manner.

Many scholars have argued that John the fisherman-apostle and John the theologian-evangelist were really two different people. It has even been shown that the text of John’s Gospel passed through the hands of several editors before it reached the form in which we now know it. But scholars have also recognized that “the Johannine tradition” gives independent information about events in Jesus’ life which may be more accurate than some of the information available in the other three gospels. This suggests that the recollections and teachings of John, the fisherman turned apostle, did indeed provide the basis for the New Testament writings which bear his name.

Sentence

The word of the cross is the power of God to us who are being saved. *See 1 Corinthians 1.18*

Collect

Shed upon your Church, O Lord,
the brightness of your light,
that we being illumined by the teaching
of your apostle and evangelist John,
may walk in the light of your truth,
and come at last to the fullness of eternal life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Genesis 1.1–5, 12–19 *or* 1 John 1.1–9 Psalm 92.1–2, 11–14

Refrain The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree.

Or v 11 or CR 1

John 20.1–8

Prayer over the Gifts

Eternal Light,
receive all we offer you this day,
that we may share in the wisdom of your eternal Word
revealed at this eucharistic table.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word.

Preface of Apostles

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God,
your apostle and evangelist John proclaimed the Christ,
your Word made flesh among us.
May we who have shared the bread of life
remain for ever your children,
born according to your will;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Julian of Norwich 8 May
Spiritual Teacher, c. 1417 — Commemoration

Julian (or Juliana) was a fourteenth-century Englishwoman who is known for one book, *The Revelations of Divine Love*. This work records sixteen visions which were granted to her on May eighth and ninth in 1373, with the fruit of twenty years' reflection on their meaning. Written in the English dialect of fourteenth-century Norfolk, her book is one of the undisputed masterpieces of mystical theology.

Little is known about Julian herself. From hints in her work, it is possible that she was once married, and she may also have been a mother. There is nothing to suggest that she was a professed nun or ever lived in a convent. In *The Revelations of Divine Love* she tells us that she experienced her visions when she was thirty years old and they came to her during an illness which brought her to the brink of death. Sometime after that, she took up the life of a recluse, living alone in a hovel attached to the parish church of St. Julian and St. Edward, Coniston. It was from the title of this church that she took the name Julian; and other contemporary documents attest that she was still living there in the second decade of the fifteenth century.

The heart of Julian's visions was the knowledge of God in the crucified Christ. Because the Saviour bore and nurtured a new humanity on the cross, she took up an image often employed by other spiritual teachers in the Middle Ages and likened him to a mother. This image of Christ, and all else in her book, found fulfillment in the divine love. For in everything that God showed her, Julian wrote, "Love was our Lord's meaning. And I saw for certain, both here and elsewhere, that before ever he made us, God loved us, and that his love has never slackened, nor ever shall."

Sentence

Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.

1 John 4.8

Collect

Source and Partner of the eternal Word,
who brought to birth in the Lady Julian
many visions of your nurturing and sustaining love,
move our hearts, we pray,
to seek your will above all things,
that we may know the joy of your gifts
and embrace the gift that is simply yourself;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
our Saviour, Brother, and Mother,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Wisdom 7.21–30 Psalm 103.1–4, 13–18

Refrain The goodness of the Lord endures for ever.

John 14.8–11

Prayer over the Gifts

God of mercy,
whose love has never slackened
nor ever shall,
heal our sight with the gift of faith,
that we may behold your Son
in the mystery of this table.
We ask this through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God,
whose blessings overflow at this Table,
grant us the knowledge of your beloved Julian,
that we may keep the watch of prayer
and proclaim your marvellous wisdom
made manifest in our Saviour Jesus Christ,
whose love is sovereign over all creation.

Florence Nightingale 12 May
Nurse, Social Reformer, 1910 — Commemoration

We remember Florence Nightingale chiefly for her work during the Crimean War, which took place between 1854 and 1856. Hearing the voice of God and animated by the spirit of service, she organized the first modern nursing service in the British field hospitals at Scutari and Balaclava. In the midst of appalling conditions she was tireless in her efforts to relieve the sufferings of wounded and dying soldiers. Her solitary vigils in the hospital wards led the popular press to call her “the Lady of the Lamp” and “the Angel of Scutari.”

Within four years of her return from the Crimea, Nightingale’s health broke down, and she eventually became a house-bound invalid. But she continued to influence public policy, and her labours helped to disperse the age-old prejudice against nurses, giving their profession high respectability. Her example also helped to liberate middle-class women from their subordinate and passive role in society. By the time of her death at the age of ninety, her reputation had assumed mythical proportions, and to this day she is still honoured as the founder of the modern profession of nursing.

Sentence

Thus says the Lord God: I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak; I will feed them with justice.

Ezekiel 34.11, 16

Collect

Life-giving God,
you alone have power over life and death,
over health and sickness.
Give power, wisdom, and gentleness
to those who follow the lead of Florence Nightingale,
that they, bearing with them your presence,
may not only heal but bless,
and shine as lanterns of hope
in the darkest hours of pain and fear;
through Jesus Christ, the healer of body and soul,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Micah 6.6–8 Psalm 73.23–29

Refrain You will guide me by your counsel, O Lord.

Matthew 25.31–40

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
grant us such faithfulness
in offering the service of these gifts
that this table may bear your glory
and our lives may receive your healing.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

God of eternal compassion,
you fill our lives with your plenteousness
and gladden our hearts with the new wine of your kingdom.
Grant us so to behold your Son
in every friend and stranger, that we may minister to him
as he first ministered to us;
for his sake, who is Lord now and for ever.

Saint Matthias the Apostle

14 May

Holy Day

Today we commemorate Matthias, who was chosen to take the place of Judas Iscariot in the company of the twelve apostles.

We know nothing about his life and ministry beyond the first chapter of the Book of Acts. The eleven apostles wanted a twelfth to complete their number, and the lot fell to Matthias. We never find out what made him the better candidate, nor do we ever hear of him again in all the New Testament. We are left with the impression that he was important only because there needed to be *twelve* apostles.

According to the Book of Acts, the Apostles were appointed for the sake of proclaiming Jesus to the children of Israel. "Israel" was originally the name of a person, and that person was Jacob, the grandson of Abraham. He had twelve sons, and they became the patriarchs of the twelve Hebrew tribes that Moses led out of Egypt into freedom. That was the reason for having twelve apostles. They were meant to be the twelve patriarchs of the new Israel, who would lead all Jews out of this present age into the glorious liberty of the kingdom of heaven.

Matthias was chosen to fill up the ancient number of twelve and thus fulfill Israel's heritage by helping to beget the new Israel "in the Spirit." By honouring him today, we commit ourselves to a similar task, by enabling others to become children of the new Israel, begotten in the Spirit through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Sentence

I chose you and appointed you, says the Lord, that you should go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. *John 15.16*

Collect

Almighty God,
who in the place of Judas
chose Matthias to be numbered in the twelve,
preserve your Church from false apostles,
and by the ministry of faithful pastors and teachers
keep us steadfast in your truth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Acts 1.15–26 *or* Philippians 3.13b–22 Psalm 15

Refrain The just shall dwell on your holy mountain. *Or v. 1 or CR 3*
John 15.1, 6–16

Prayer over the Gifts

Father,
receive our offering of praise this day,
and when our faith is weak,
show us the light of your truth,
that we may continue in the way of righteousness,
revealed to us in Jesus Christ our Lord:

Preface of Apostles

Prayer after Communion

Gracious God,
you constantly give life to your people.
May we who receive these holy things
remain faithful to your call.
This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Dunstan *19 May*
Archbishop of Canterbury, 988 — Commemoration

Today we honour the memory of Dunstan, who was the greatest archbishop of Canterbury in the century before the Norman Conquest.

Born into a powerful family, he entered the royal service as a youth and seemed to be on his way to a career of secular power, when he quite suddenly took the vows of a monk and was ordained priest. He became a hermit in Glastonbury and devoted himself to prayer as well to crafts which beautified the liturgical life of the Church. He eventually became abbot of Glastonbury and over the next twenty years reformed its whole life, reviving a spirit of discipline among its monks and expanding its buildings.

Dunstan served as bishop of Worcester, then as bishop of London, before he was appointed archbishop of Canterbury in the year 960. In this office he extended his reform of monastic life over all of England, enriching the monastic liturgy and giving special prominence to the role of crafts in the life of each monastery. He also set about reforming the administration of the English church at large, to ensure a better standard of discipline among the parish-clergy. Towards the end of his life, he acquired a reputation for visions and miraculous powers. He died on May nineteenth, two days after Ascension Day, in the year 988.

Sentence

He was honoured in his generation, and was the pride of his time. *Cf. Sirach 44.7*

Collect

O God,
you raised up your servant Dunstan
to renew the Church of the English
in the manifold beauty of holiness.
Teach us to follow his example
that we, finding our order and beauty in you,
may enrich the life of your people
in their loving worship of your Name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Sirach 44.1–7 Psalm 27.5–12
Refrain Your face, Lord, will I seek.
Matthew 7.24–29

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
the portion of those who serve you
and the inheritance of those who love you,
grant us the joy of your holy servant Dunstan,
that we may fashion our praise
according to the boundless measure of your gifts.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

O God,
whose faithfulness is the ground of our lives,
grant that we may grow
into the life we have here received
and be joined with your servant Dunstan
in the glory of your eternal presence.
This we ask through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Bede 25 May

Priest, Monk of Jarrow, Historian and Educator, 735 — Commemoration

Bede was an Anglo-Saxon monk who lived in Northumbria and died in the year 735. He is chiefly remembered as the author of *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* — a wonderful account of the Church in England from the arrival of the Roman mission through to his own day.

When he was seven years old Bede entered the Northumbrian monastery of Wearmouth as his parents' free-will offering to the Church; he was later transferred to the new monastery at Jarrow. He became a deacon when he was nineteen and a priest twenty-one years later. These two events were the high points of his life. For the rest, as he said of himself at the age of fifty-nine: "I have spent all my life in this monastery [of Jarrow], applying myself entirely to the study of the Scriptures; and amid the observance of the discipline of the Rule and the daily task of singing the Divine Office in the church, it has been my delight to learn or to teach or to write."

This quiet, happy monk became ill shortly after Easter in the year 735. Though in considerable physical pain, he kept his mind clear; and as he contemplated going to be with the Lord, his spirit became cheerful. He died on the eve of Ascension Day, May twenty-fifth, as he gently sang these words to himself: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be"

Sentence

A book of remembrance was written before the Lord of those who revered the Lord and thought on his name. *Malachi 3.16*

Collect

O God,
you guided the hand and heart of your servant Bede
to teach the Church of his day and after
the delight of recounting your saving works.
Grant us so to labour in the Spirit,
that Christ may stamp us with his likeness
and fulfill in us the image of your glory;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Malachi 3.16–18 Psalm 78.1–4

Refrain We will recount the wonderful works of the Lord.

Matthew 13.44–46, 51–52

Prayer over the Gifts

God our Redeemer,
who raised your servant Bede
in the school of your praises,
cleanse this house of all injustice
and surround this table with your truth,
that we may be glad in our celebration of your mercy
and fitted for the knowledge of your glory.
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Giver of this wondrous banquet,
keep us mindful of your holy servant Bede,
that we may love to recount your mighty deeds
and delight in the study of your Word.
This we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Augustine *26 May*
First Archbishop of Canterbury, 605 — Memorial

Today we remember Augustine, the first archbishop of Canterbury. He enters history in the year 596, when he was deputy-abbot of a monastery in the city of Rome. He would have been quite happy to remain in that position, but Pope Gregory the Great chose him to lead a mission to the Anglo-Saxons of England. Augustine was to convert them to Christianity and to organize an English Church.

With a company of thirty or forty monks, Augustine landed on the coast of Kent in the spring of 597. The local king had married a Christian wife from France, and she convinced him to let the missionaries enter Canterbury and occupy a small, dilapidated church, abandoned by British Christians when they fled from the invading Anglo-Saxons. The pagan king also permitted the Roman missionaries to preach the gospel without hindrance.

Augustine was a reluctant missionary. Instead of actively proclaiming the gospel, he and his companions tried to become a normal part of the landscape, performing the liturgy and making processions much as if they were still in Rome. Those Anglo-Saxons who wished to join them were welcome, but the monks did not go looking for converts. This strategy worked — within four years the king of Kent and his chief retainers accepted baptism. Augustine was made an archbishop by the Pope and by the time he died, on May twenty-sixth in the year 605, the foundations of the English church were truly laid.

Sentence

I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. *2 Corinthians 12.9b*

Collect

Everliving God,
you strengthened your servant Augustine,
though he was fearful and laden with doubt,
to lay the foundations of your Church
among the English people.
Grant us always to show forth the reason
for all your gifts so freely bestowed upon us,
by sharing with all peoples and races
your infinite gift of salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

2 Corinthians 10.7–18 Psalm 66.1–8
Refrain The Lord holds our souls in life.
Matthew 13.31–33

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
who gave to your servant Augustine
a heart to persevere in obedience,
grant that as we gather at this table,
we may find our shelter and strength
under the boughs of the tree of life.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of Pentecost

Prayer after Communion

O God,
the only strength of your servant Augustine,
guide us through all our tribulations,
that we may never doubt your loving purpose
nor ever withhold our hands from your service.
We ask this through Jesus Christ the Lord.

John Charles Roper 27 May
Archbishop of Ottawa, 1940 — Commemoration

Today we commemorate John Charles Roper, who was archbishop of Ottawa in the early years of the twentieth century and a servant of Christ whose leadership was honoured by Anglicans in Canada and around the world.

He was an Englishman who came to this country in 1886 as the first Keble Professor of Divinity at Trinity College in Toronto. Two years later he was appointed Vicar of St. Thomas's Church in that city and began his long association with the Sisters of St. John the Divine as their chaplain. He moved to New York, where he taught at the General Theological Seminary for over a decade, but returned to Canada in 1911 when he was elected bishop of British Columbia. Four years later he was elected bishop of Ottawa, where he was installed on this date in 1915. He eventually became Metropolitan of the ecclesiastical province of Ontario, an office which gave him the title of archbishop.

Roper possessed not only a keen mind and sound scholarship but also an ability to translate ideas into practical action. This gift gave him unique influence in the counsels of the Canadian Church as it dealt with its revision of the Prayer Book in 1918 and felt the social impact of the Great Depression in the 1930s. He also had an important role at international gatherings of Anglican bishops and played a distinguished part at the Lausanne Conference on Faith and Order in 1927, which was a step towards the foundation of the World Council of Churches.

But most of all, Archbishop Roper was a man of deep and constant prayer who placed his spiritual resources at the disposal of all the people in his diocese, that they might be strengthened in their own service of Christ and one another — and it is for this faithful stewardship of God's gifts, as much as for his great public influence, that we honour him today.

Sentence

We do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake.

2 Corinthians 4.5

Collect

Eternal God,
who laid your hand upon John Roper
and made him a bishop and servant of your people
to give them true nurture in Christ,
grant us unity in faith, steadfastness in hope,
and constancy in love,
that by word and deed
we may show ourselves true members
in the body of your Son Jesus Christ;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Ezekiel 34.11–16 Psalm 40.5–11

Refrain I love to do your will, O my God.

Luke 12.42–48

Prayer over the Gifts

God of our forebears,
who quickened your servant John Roper
with the pulse of faithfulness,
grant that we may gather at this table
with your loving-kindness before our eyes.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

O God,
who nurtured your people
through the service of John Roper,
grant us by these holy mysteries
such strength in our earthly pilgrimage
that we may come to dwell in your tabernacle
and rest upon your holy hill;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Roberta Elizabeth Tilton

30 May

*Founder of the Women's Auxiliary of the Canadian Church, 1925 —
Commemoration*

Today we remember Roberta Elizabeth Tilton, a worthy Anglican of Ottawa, who in 1885 founded the Women's Auxiliary — an organization which later became the Anglican Church Women.

She was born in Maine and raised as a Unitarian, but married a New Brunswicker named John Tilton and, after several years of thought and prayer, became a convinced Anglican. In 1868 she and her husband moved to Ottawa and joined St. John's parish. Sustained by a constant habit of prayer, she involved herself in a wide range of activities, teaching Sunday School and Bible Classes and working in the Orphan's Home and the Young Women's Christian Association.

In 1885 she developed the idea of a national organization for Anglican women in support of the Board of Foreign and Domestic Missions. With six other women she presented her proposal to the bishops of the Canadian Church and with their approval launched the Women's Auxiliary. Under her wise and prayerful guidance the new organization prospered and at her retirement from its General Board twenty-three years later there were diocesan and parochial branches right across Canada.

She died in 1925, and at her funeral on May thirtieth Archbishop John Roper summed up her life in this way: "God gave to his servant Roberta Elizabeth Tilton great light of spiritual vision, wide sympathies with wisdom and strength of character, to enable her to use them for the extension of his kingdom in all our mission fields The secret of her life — and of its influence and power — was the personal service of our Saviour Christ."

Sentence

What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? *Micah 6.8*

Collect

O God,
who revealed to Roberta Tilton
the secret of your kingdom
in a life of service,
grant us such faithfulness
in receiving your Word and sacraments,
that we may seek to nurture one another
in the works which give you glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Micah 6.6–8 Psalm 73.23–29

Refrain You will guide me by your counsel, O Lord.

Matthew 25.31–40

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
grant us your peace and strength
in offering the service of these gifts,
that this table may bear your glory
and our lives may receive your healing.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

God of eternal compassion,
you fill our lives with your plenteousness
and gladden our hearts
with the new wine of your kingdom.
Grant us so to behold your Son
in every friend and stranger,
that we may minister to him
as he first ministered to us;
for his sake, who is Lord now and for ever.

The Visit of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Elizabeth

31 May

Holy Day

The visit of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Elizabeth is recounted only in Luke's Gospel, where it serves as the link between two earlier episodes. The first episode had to do with the birth of a son to Zechariah the priest and his wife Elizabeth. His birth was specially heralded because, as John the Baptist, he would be the forerunner of the Messiah. The second episode is the Annunciation, when an angel brought tidings to Mary that she would conceive and give birth to Jesus, the Messiah himself. Luke tied these two episodes together through the story of Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth, who was already six months pregnant.

As soon as Mary greeted her cousin, the child leaped in Elizabeth's womb, and Elizabeth herself was filled with the Holy Spirit. Thus, even before his own birth, John the Baptist bore witness to Christ; and his testimony was received by his own mother, a woman of true righteousness under the Law of Moses. She blessed Mary as the mother of Israel's salvation, and Mary responded to her cousin by blessing and praising God, saying, "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour."

Luke meant this story to serve a still greater purpose. It dramatizes the encounter between the covenant which God made with Abraham and Moses and the new covenant which God has made in Christ. In Luke's eyes, there is no conflict between these two covenants because, truly understood, the old covenant points to Christ; indeed, it leaps to life at the presence of Christ, just as John the Baptist did when his mother heard Mary's greeting. By the same token, Christians cannot dispense with the witness of the old covenant, because it is the very thing which Christ came to fulfill; and though Elizabeth needed the Holy Spirit to interpret what the child's moving in her womb truly signified, she still would not have understood its meaning or had joy in it except for her faithfulness to the Law and the Prophets.

Sentence

Blessed is she who believed that the Lord's promise would be fulfilled. *Luke 1.45*

Collect

Almighty God,
who looked with favour on your servant Mary
and called her to be the mother of your Son,
nurture in us the humility and gentleness
that found favour in your sight,
that with her we may proclaim the greatness of your name
and find the mercy you show to those who fear you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 Samuel 2.1–10 Psalm 113

Refrain Let the name of the Lord be blessed for evermore.

Or v. 2 or Alleluia!

Romans 12.9–16b Luke 1.39–57

Prayer over the Gifts

God of mercy,
accept all we offer you this day
as you accepted the love of Mary,
the mother of your Son Jesus Christ,
who is Lord now and for ever.

Preface of the Incarnation

Prayer after Communion

God of steadfast love,
may we who have been nourished
by your gifts in this sacrament,
always give you praise
for the great things you have done for us.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Justin 1 June

Martyr at Rome, Teacher of the Faith, c. 167 — Memorial

Today we honour the memory of Justin, a Christian teacher who was martyred at Rome around the year 167.

Born in Palestine, Justin received the finest education that money could buy and was steeped in Greek culture. But his mind thirsted for something more, so he began a search for the true philosophy. In his quest, he passed through a variety of teachers and sects before he settled on Platonism, a pagan system of thought which seemed to promise him mystical union with the source of all existence.

Justin was satisfied with Platonic teaching until one day, quite by chance, he encountered a mysterious old man. In the discussion which followed, this stranger showed Justin the contradictions of his philosophy. Greatly impressed with the old man's wisdom, Justin asked him how he had come by it. In response, the stranger told him about the prophets and apostles who, "far above all logical demonstration, were worthy witnesses to the truth." The old man who spoke these words proved to be a Christian, and his testimony convinced Justin that Christianity was "the only sure and profitable philosophy."

After his baptism Justin continued to wear the garb of a philosopher and made his living by teaching "the Christian philosophy" to anyone who wished to study with him. He also made a name for himself by challenging pagan philosophers to public debates and by writing several treatises in defense of the Christian religion.

At some point — it is unknown just when — Justin moved to Rome. There he continued his work as a teacher and public advocate of Christianity. Around the year 167 he held a disputation with a pagan philosopher, whose supporters revenged his defeat by denouncing Justin to the authorities. He and his students were brought before the chief magistrate of Rome and interrogated. All stood firm for the Christian faith, and the magistrate condemned them to summary execution. Thus, like the prophets of old, Justin proved to be "a worthy witness to the truth," even at the cost of his life.

Sentence

If anybody wanted to, he came to my place and I shared with him the words of truth. *The Martyrdom of Justin*

Collect

Almighty God,
you found your servant Justin
seeking the path of true wisdom
and made him a worthy witness
to the truth of your eternal Word.
Guide those who are wearied in their quest for peace
to the fount and spring of your mercy,
that their sorrows and doubts may be washed away
in the joy of knowing your Son Jesus Christ;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 Corinthians 1.18–25 Psalm 31.1–5

Refrain Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.
John 12.44–50

Prayer over the Gifts

God of all truth,
who gave such wisdom to your servant Justin
that he discovered the rule of your Word
in all that you have made,
prepare our hearts for the service of this table,
that we may commit our lives into your hands
and receive the food of our redemption.
This we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Martyr

Prayer after Communion

O God,
who made your blessed martyr Justin
a worthy witness to your truth,
grant us so to shine with your Word and Wisdom
that we may be your friends and prophets
in the midst of this vexed and anxious world.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

The Martyrs of Lyons 2 June *Blandina and her Companions, 177 — Commemoration*

Lyons is a city on the river Rhone in south-central France. In Roman times it was one of the administrative centres of the province of Gaul, and a large number of Christians lived there, under the holy guidance of a bishop named Po-thi'-nus.

In the summer of 177 the church of Lyons became the target of a frightful massacre. The pagan majority of the city went on a rampage against the Christians, and the authorities made the violence official by arresting Po-thi'-nus and other leading members of the Church. The bishop died of brutal mistreatment, and others were beheaded on orders of the emperor. The remaining Christian prisoners were reserved for the arena, where they suffered horrible atrocities over several days.

All persevered in their confession of Christ until death gave them release from their pains, but the Church specially remembers a slave-girl named Blan'-dina, who suffered on the final day of the martyrdoms. The surviving Christians of Lyons wrote an account of their trials and had this to say about her: "The blessed Blandina was last of all, and like a noble mother encouraging her children she sent them before her in triumph to the King. Then, after duplicating in her own body all her children's sufferings, she hastened to rejoin them, rejoicing and glorying in her death as though she had been invited to a wedding banquet instead of being a victim of the beasts. She no longer perceived what was happening because of the hope and possession of all she believed in and because of her intimacy with Christ. Thus she too was offered in sacrifice, while the pagans themselves admitted that no woman had ever suffered so much in their experience."

Sentence

The King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life, because we have died for his laws.

2 Maccabees 7.9b

Collect

O God, our Hope and Strength,
by your gracious power
the holy martyr Blandina and her companions
so gloried in the name and truth of Christ
that they gladly suffered at the hands of his enemies.
Grant that we who keep their feast
may be so rooted in the ground of your love
that we may bear the wondrous fruit of redemption
upon the only Tree of Life, your Son Jesus Christ our Saviour,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

2 Maccabees 7.1–14 Psalm 61.1–5

Refrain Set me upon the Rock that is higher than I.

Matthew 16.24–27

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord our God,
whose blessed martyrs passed from earthly shame
to the vindication of your presence,
accept, we pray, the service of these gifts
and forgive us our doubts and hesitations,
that your love may make us now partakers
in the heritage of those who fear your Name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Martyr

Prayer after Communion

Guardian of the outcast,
who established your holy martyrs of Lyons
in the gladness of your salvation,
be our tower of strength, we pray,
in the face of all the enemies of Christ,
that we may dwell in your household for ever
and rejoice under the cover of your wings.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Martyrs of Uganda

3 June

1886

Janani Luwum

Archbishop of Uganda, 1977 — Memorial

The nation of Uganda lies in equatorial Africa; its south-eastern border runs along the shores of Lake Victoria. European explorers and missionaries first came upon the peoples of the area in the 1860's. Especially along Lake Victoria, in the region known as Buganda, they found a highly sophisticated society, a federation of kindred tribes under an hereditary monarch called the *kabaka*. Christian missionaries, both Anglican and Roman Catholic, found a ready hearing among small but important groups of the Bugandan nation. The growing strength and influence of the Christian presence led the *kabaka*, Mwanga, to launch a vicious persecution in 1885. This persecution culminated in a holocaust of Anglican and Roman Catholic converts at Namugongo on June 3, 1886. All told, some forty-five Ugandans suffered death for the sake of Christ. Their witness proved to be the seed of the Ugandan church, and by the time Uganda gained independence, it was the most Christian nation in Africa. Indeed, there were more Anglicans in Uganda than in any other church of the Anglican communion.

But history has a way of repeating itself. In 1972 Colonel Idi Amin overthrew the elected government of Uganda, and his regime soon became infamous throughout the world for its atrocities. But there was one structure which Amin could not control by means of terror — the Church of Uganda. The Anglican archbishop was Janani Luwum — a gentle, cheerful man, whose instincts were all toward loyalty and political non-involvement. But Amin's injustices finally moved Luwum to protest. On February sixteenth, 1977, he was ordered to meet Amin in a personal interview. That same night, after presenting a formal protest on behalf of the Church and in the name of Christ, Luwum was murdered. So we remember Janani Luwum with the Martyrs of Uganda who perished in 1886, for he shared in their witness to the love and inviolable justice of God in Christ Jesus.

Sentence

You need endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what is promised. *Hebrews 10.36*

Collect

O God,
by the blood of Christian martyrs
you planted in the heart of Uganda
the seed of a strong and living Church,
and you confirmed its growth under the hand of tyranny
by the witness of your servant Janani Luwum.
May we who cherish their remembrance before you
be valiant in our witness against the terrors of unjust rulers
and remain steadfast in the love by which you bind us to yourself;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Hebrews 10.32–39 Psalm 116.10–17

Refrain I will lift up the cup of salvation.

Matthew 24.9–14

Prayer over the Gifts

Eternal God,
make this table the place
where you are pleased to remember your covenant,
that in company with your holy martyrs of Uganda
we may know the wondrous victory
of him who conquered death and lives for ever.

Preface of a Martyr

Prayer after Communion

Holy God,
who grieved at the sufferings of your martyrs in Uganda
and rewarded their faithfulness with the crown of life,
grant us to make no compromise with injustice
and to seek no peace with oppression
that we may bear fearless witness in the world
to your promise of a better inheritance.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

John XXIII

4 June

Bishop of Rome, Reformer, 1963 — Commemoration

John XXIII convened the second Vatican Council in 1962 and thereby launched Roman Catholics into the modern renewal of their Church. We specially remember him because of his ecumenical concerns. He himself once remarked to an Anglican priest: "Whenever I see a wall between Christians, I try to pull out a brick."

Born as Angelo Roncalli in 1885, he entered seminary at the age of ten. Ordained priest in 1904, he spent the next decade as secretary to the bishop of Bergamo, one of the most enlightened prelates of his time and place.

After the end of the first World War, Roncalli's career in the Church developed rapidly. In 1934 he was appointed Apostolic Delegate in Turkey and Greece. His predecessors in the post had confined their dealings with the Orthodox to official business; Roncalli went out of his way to develop cordial relations with the Oecumenical Patriarch himself.

During the second World War, Roncalli used his office as Apostolic Delegate to help Jews escape from German control, and towards the end of the war he arranged relief supplies for the starving Greeks. In 1944 he was appointed Papal Nuncio to the newly liberated France, and nine years later was made Patriarch of Venice.

Roncalli was elected Pope in 1958, and took the name John XXIII. At the age of seventy-three, he had been chosen as a "caretaker" Pope. But John quickly made it clear that he did not intend to doze in the Chair of Peter. He inaugurated a series of administrative reforms and established the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. Then, on October 11, 1962, he opened the second Vatican Council.

At about this time John was told that he had an inoperable cancer. He replied: "Don't worry about me, because my bags are packed. I'm ready to go." Undeterred by his illness, he spent the last months of his life mediating between American and Soviet leaders in order to broaden the scope of their nuclear-disarmament talks. He died in early June, 1963.

Sentence

Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. *John 17.11*

Collect

Lord of all truth and peace,
you named your bishop John
the servant of the servants of God
and gave him wisdom to begin
the work of renewing your Church.
Grant that, after his example,
we may extend our hands to other Christians
to clasp them with the love of your Son,
and labour among the nations of the world
to kindle their desire for justice and peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Galatians 2.1–10 Psalm 122

Refrain Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

John 17.9b–11, 14–19

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God, grant us to be so consecrated in your truth
that we who offer these gifts
may have a spirit like that of your servant John,
to tear down the walls of inherited fear
which separate Christian from Christian.
We ask this through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

God of mercy,
quicken us by the power of this sacrament
to take up the staff of faith,
to go our pilgrim-way with hope
and to support one another in the self-same love
whereby you draw us to yourself.
This we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Boniface

5 June

Archbishop of Mainz, Missionary, Martyr, 754 — Memorial

Boniface was an English monk who went to the continent of Europe in the year 716 and spent the next four decades preaching the Gospel and building up the Church among the tribes who inhabited the Black Forest and the valley of the Rhine. He enjoyed the generous and wise support of Pope Gregory II; and from his native land he received a steady stream of English monks, the best and brightest of their generation, who joined in his missionary pilgrimage.

He founded a network of monasteries throughout southern Germany and was careful to equip them with good libraries. These monasteries ensured the continuing evangelization of the people, and with their libraries the monks themselves had the resources to make their German converts true sharers in the heritage of Christian culture.

Boniface was made archbishop of Mainz in the year 732, but spent the better part of the next two decades away from the mission field supervising a programme of reform in the Frankish church. Frustrated by the opposition of vested interests, he decided to resume his work as a missionary and set out for the Low Countries in order to evangelize the Frisians, who were a militantly pagan people. He seems to have expected martyrdom, and this is indeed what happened on June fifth in the year 754. His company was ambushed by pagan warriors, and Boniface perished under their swords.

Sentence

Let all the trees of the wood shout for joy before the Lord.

Psalm 96.12

Collect

Almighty God,
for the sake of your gospel you made your servant Boniface
a pilgrim among the German people
to form by his preaching and gifts of administration
a people for your own possession.
Pour out upon your Church in every land
the measureless gifts of your Holy Spirit,
that by the willing and loving service of many
your holy Name may be glorified
and your kingdom may embrace all nations;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Acts 20.17–28 Psalm 94.12–19

Refrain Your love, O Lord, upholds me.

Matthew 28.16–20

Prayer over the Gifts

Merciful God,
who upheld your holy servant Boniface
and sealed his pilgrimage of witness
with the glorious crown of a martyr,
grant that we who now set forth these gifts
may possess the joy of our baptism
and be glad with the assurance of your love.
We ask this through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Martyr

Prayer after Communion

Grant to us, Lord God,
such joy in the example of Boniface,
that we may be faithful in the tasks to which you call us
and steadfast in all the trials through which we pass,
for the sake of Jesus Christ the Lord.

William Grant Broughton

6 June

First Anglican Bishop in Australia, 1853 — Commemoration

Today we honour William Grant Broughton, who in 1836 became the first bishop of the Anglican Church in Australia.

When he first arrived from England, Broughton endorsed the supremacy of the Crown over the Church. His experience as bishop of Australia made him realize that the Church is a universal body which must claim its independence of the State, and he guided the Australian church from colonial status towards responsible self-government. His work led to the formation of four new dioceses in 1847, when Broughton himself became bishop of Sydney and the first metropolitan of the Province of Australasia. But he looked further, seeking to form an autonomous synod of bishops and set up a truly independent Province within the Anglican communion. Towards this end he convened a conference of the provincial bishops in 1850. His larger plan was frustrated by opposition from many quarters, but his foresight set the pace for other churches in the Anglican communion. As a result, synodical government has become one of the great hallmarks of modern Anglicanism.

His life and work remind us that St. Paul listed “gifts of administration” among the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Broughton never lost sight of this, and used his own gifts of administration for the very purpose that God bestowed them — to build up the body of Christ in Australia, and to lead a colonial Church towards maturity and independence within the Anglican communion.

Sentence

No one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. *1 Corinthians 3.11*

Collect

Almighty God,
you bestowed upon your servant William Grant Broughton
a great and arduous ministry,
and endued him with manifold gifts
for the building up of your Church in Australia.
Grant to all bishops and pastors
the wisdom that comes of true service
and the gifts that proceed from the Spirit of love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Ephesians 3.14–21 Psalm 112.1–6

Refrain The righteous manage their affairs with justice.

Matthew 7.24–29

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
the strength of your servant William,
we pray that, as you gather us to this table,
so you will accept the gifts which we offer
and make us glad in the riches of your house.
We ask this through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God,
may we who have received these holy mysteries
follow in the way of your servant William,
to build upon the one foundation of Christ
and become the living temple of your Spirit.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Columba 9 June
Abbot of Iona, Missionary, 597 — Memorial

Columba was a mighty abbot in sixth-century Ireland, who ruled a network of monasteries in his native land and helped to lay the foundation of the Christian Church in Scotland.

Born into the clan O'Neill, Columba lived at a time when the druids, the priests of Celtic paganism, still held sway. He became known as someone whose Christian holiness allowed him to command the magic of the druids and to bend it to the will of Christ. Then, at the age of forty-two, he left Ireland in order to become, as a later biographer said, "a pilgrim for Christ." He and twelve disciples settled on Iona, a small island off the western coast of Scotland.

By becoming "a pilgrim for Christ," Columba meant to set a more perfect course for his inward voyage with the Lord — that is, to enter more deeply into the life of prayer and penance. But he was committed to helping others become "pilgrims for Christ," too. So, from Iona, he founded several new monasteries in Scotland.

Missionary work was a by-product of these foundations. The still-pagan Scots were greatly impressed by the austere life of the Irish monks, and even more by Columba's own powers. His disciples seized the opportunity and began to preach the Gospel. Before long many Scottish tribes were converted to Christ. Columba himself made a few journeys into the Scottish mainland, and he seems to have had a hand in converting at least one important chieftain. As a result, Columba came to be regarded as the Apostle of Scotland; and that is how we remember him today, which is the traditional anniversary of his death in the year 597.

Sentence

Columba sailed away from Ireland to Britain, wishing to be a pilgrim for Christ. *Adomnan's Life of Columba*

Collect

O God,
you girded your servant Columba
with the cincture of holiness
and made him a pilgrim for Christ
in the midst of the Irish and Scottish peoples.
Grant that, having his life and labours in remembrance,
we may rest upon your love and be cheerful in all adversities,
as we await the redemption of all things
in your well-beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 Corinthians 3.11–23 Psalm 89.20–26
Refrain You, O God, are the Rock of my salvation.
Luke 10.17–20

Prayer over the Gifts

Father,
who gave your servant Columba
purgation and peace on the isle of Iona,
grant that we who set these gifts on your table
may know your faithfulness and love
in the celebration of this mystery.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

O God, the Rock of our salvation,
you gave such power to your holy servant Columba
that he bent the magic of the pagan druids
to the will and purpose of Christ.
Turn our hearts from the service of pride
and grant that the knowledge of your mercy
may be our only boast and gladness;
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Saint Barnabas the Apostle

11 June

Holy Day

There were twelve apostles, and then some — some others who never belonged to the original companions of Jesus, but who were also called apostles because they were “sent forth” to proclaim the gospel. Saint Paul was one of these others; so was the man we honour today, the apostle named Barnabas.

The Book of Acts says that he was a Jew born in Cyprus, but that he was living in Jerusalem when he joined “the company of those who believed in Jesus.” His real name was Joseph; the apostles called him Barnabas, or “Son of encouragement,” because “he sold a field which belonged to him and laid the proceeds at the apostles’ feet.” By this act Barnabas encouraged the rest of the disciples to provide for the good of the whole community.

According to the Book of Acts, Barnabas was the one who introduced Paul to the twelve apostles. Later on he moved to Antioch and sent for Paul to help him lead the Church in that city. From there Paul and Barnabas set out on a great missionary journey through the cities of Asia Minor and Greece. The two men had a falling-out over Mark, who wanted to abandon the mission. Barnabas returned to Cyprus with Mark, and Paul went his separate way.

Paul himself mentioned Barnabas several times in his Letters, which suggest that he, not Barnabas, was the senior colleague. Paul also gave a more serious reason for their parting company. It happened at Antioch, when Peter went back on his promise to treat pagan converts as equal with Jewish converts. In the acrimonious debate which followed Barnabas separated from Paul and sided with Peter.

We do not know whether Paul and Barnabas were ever reconciled; an ancient tradition testifies only that Barnabas spent the rest of his days preaching in Cyprus.

Sentence

This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.

Acts 2.32

Collect

Merciful God,
help us to follow the example
of your faithful servant Barnabas,
who, seeking not his own renown
but the well-being of your Church,
gave generously of his life and substance
for the relief of the poor and the spread of the gospel;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Isaiah 42.5–12 *or* Acts 11.19–30; 13.1–3 Psalm 112

Refrain Happy are they who have given to the poor. *Or v. 9 or Alleluia!*

Matthew 10.7–16

Prayer over the Gifts

Faithful God,
accept all we offer you this day.
Kindle in us the flame of love
by which your apostle Barnabas
bore witness to the gospel.
This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of Apostles

Prayer after Communion

God of justice,
may we who have heard your word
and received new life at your table,
bear witness to your truth in the world,
so that all may come to share in your kingdom.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Joseph Butler 16 June
Bishop of Durham, 1752 — Commemoration

Christians have always claimed that theirs was a “reasonable” religion, a religion so intellectually cogent that all thinking people should find it compelling. Up until the eighteenth century very few in western Europe challenged this claim. Then a form of rationalism emerged, which quickly gained the initiative and forced Christian intellectuals onto the defensive. One of the Christian thinkers to address the rationalist challenge was a clergyman of the Church of England named Joseph Butler, who was made bishop of Bristol in 1738 and bishop of Durham twelve years later. A quiet man who never married, he devoted his life to study and his income to charity. His studies bore fruit in a series of tightly reasoned works, in which he developed a balanced description of human rationality and vindicated the reasonableness of the Christian religion. In so doing, Butler used a framework of ideas which often seems foreign to modern thought. But the Christian faith must be renewed in every generation, and defended in the language that each generation understands. And so we remember Joseph Butler today, because he did much to stem the ebbtide of faith in his own age.

Sentence

I give you a wise and discerning mind. *1 Kings 3.12b*

Collect

O God,
by your Holy Spirit
you give to some the word of wisdom,
to others the word of knowledge
and to others the word of faith.
We praise your Name for the gifts of grace
manifested in your servant Joseph Butler,
and we pray that by his teaching
we may know you, the only true God,
and Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 Kings 3.10–12, 15 Psalm 119.97–104

Refrain Through your commandments I gain understanding.
Mark 4.21–25

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
receive all we offer this day,
that joining your servant Joseph Butler
we may share in your eternal Wisdom
and lay hold upon the reason
for the hope that you have set in our hearts.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God,
whose love is sealed upon us by this feast,
grant us so to follow your servant Joseph Butler
that we may never be anxious
when our faith is challenged
nor ever be wanting
when we are called to speak your Word.
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Bernard Mizeki*18 June**Catechist in Zimbabwe, Martyr, 1896 — Memorial*

Bernard Mi-ze'-ki is the Anglican Protomartyr of Southern Africa. He began work as a catechist among the Mashona people of Zimbabwe in 1891. Five years later, when the Mashonas rose up against the British, Bernard had ample opportunity to escape. Instead, he chose to remain with his congregation.

On the night of June 17, 1896, he was assaulted and mortally wounded by warriors from the village where he had his mission. He managed to crawl to a nearby hillside. Early the next morning, as Bernard's wife and another woman approached his hiding place, they were frightened by an unearthly sound, "like many wings of great birds," and by a dazzling light which moved toward the spot where Bernard lay. When the two women finally had the courage to go to him, Bernard's body was gone without a trace.

From that day to this, Anglicans from all over southern Africa have made pilgrimages to the site of his martyrdom, in order to offer their prayers and petitions in the house of so great a witness for Christ.

Sentence

Your neighbours will see your salvation by God, which will come to you with great glory and with the splendour of the Everlasting. *Baruch 4.24*

Collect

Almighty God,
your servant Bernard Mizeki
gladly brought the word of salvation
to a people that did not know him
and in obedience to Christ surrendered his life
for the sake of those committed to his care.
Grant that, after his blessed example,
your Church may ever seek to impart
that power of love and forgiveness,
once for all made perfect
in the passion of your Son Jesus Christ;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Baruch 4.21–24 Psalm 116.1–8
Refrain I will walk in the presence of the Lord.
Luke 12.4–12

Prayer over the Gifts

God of faithfulness, grant that in our offering this day
we may have the fellowship of your holy martyr Bernard,
and give us such joy and simplicity of faith
that your love may always master
our fear of human judgements.
We ask this for the sake of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Martyr

Prayer after Communion

O God our Saviour,
who received your beloved servant Bernard
into the habitations of light and glory,
grant that our lives may ever be linked
with those who suffer reproach or death
for their witness to your justice and mercy.
This we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Alban 22 June
First Martyr in Britain, c. 209 — Memorial

Alban was a soldier in one of the Roman legions which guarded the province of Britannia early in the third century. This legion's camp was at Veru-la'-mium, to the north of London. Though a pagan, Alban gave shelter to a Christian priest who was fleeing persecution. When he observed the priest doing his prayers, he was moved to question him about the Church's faith. The priest's replies led Alban to accept Christ as his only Lord and Saviour.

In the meantime, reports that the priest was hiding with Alban reached the authorities. Soldiers were sent to seize the priest. When the detail reached his dwelling, Alban met them at the doorway. He was wearing his guest's cloak, the customary garb of a Christian priest, and presented himself to the soldiers as the man they were looking for. Taken before the military governor, who discovered the ruse, Alban refused to offer the pagan sacrifices required by law. He was condemned to death and beheaded that same day. Alban's martyrdom is considered to have been his baptism.

Sentence

Alban offered himself to the soldiers in place of his guest and teacher, and was brought in bonds to the judge. *The Venerable Bede*

Collect

Almighty God,
you conferred on your holy martyr Alban
such love for the mercy of Christ
that he gave his life to save a hunted Christian.
Grant us, after his example,
to be so faithful in our confession of your gospel
that we may shelter those who flee from persecution
and bear the reproaches which threaten their lives;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Wisdom 3.1–9 Psalm 63.1–8
Refrain Your right hand holds me fast.
Matthew 10.40–42

Prayer over the Gifts

O God,
who accepted your holy martyr Alban
when he offered the gift of his life,
cleanse our hearts of anxious thoughts
and hold with the right hand of your love
the hands which offer these gifts.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Martyr

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God,
whose loving-kindness is better than life itself,
kindle our hearts with the spirit of mercy
that we, keeping the feast of Alban,
may also keep his holy example
and take up the cause of those who seek our protection.
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Birth of Saint John the Baptist

24 June

Holy Day

The birth of Saint John the Baptist is told in the Gospel according to Luke, where it serves as a bridge between the Old Testament and the time of Christ.

The initial focus of Luke's account is Zechariah the priest and his wife Elizabeth; and the evangelist draws on phrases and motifs from the Old Testament in order to associate them with Abraham and Sarah. Like those ancient figures, the parents of John the Baptist were righteous but childless. Moreover, Elizabeth herself (like Sarah) was well past menopause, so that according to nature she was no longer able to conceive a child. But just as God intervened to make Abraham and Sarah have a child and become the forebears of the chosen people, so an angel announced to righteous Zechariah that he and his wife were to have a son who would be the forerunner of the Chosen One, the Christ. So it came to pass that Elizabeth conceived and gave birth to a son, whom she named John. Then his father Zechariah prophesied, saying,

You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most
High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
to give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of their sins.

Zechariah also saw that his son's mission would prepare the way for the fulfilment of God's oath,
the oath which he swore to our father Abraham,
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
free to worship him without fear,
holy and righteous in his sight
all the days of our life.

Thus, according to Luke, the birth of John the Baptist gathered up and embodied the whole truth of the Old Testament and made it ready for its own perfection in Christ Jesus, the One whose way John was born to prepare.

Sentence

You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way. *Luke 1.76*

Collect

Almighty God,
you called John the Baptist
to give witness to the coming of your Son
and to prepare his way.
Give your people the wisdom to see your purpose,
and the openness to hear your will,
that we to may witness to Christ's coming
and so prepare his way;
through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Isaiah 40.1–11 Psalm 85.7–13
Refrain Show us your mercy. *Or v. 7 or CR 1*
Acts 13.14b–26 Luke 1.57–80

Prayer over the Gifts

God of our salvation,
accept all we offer you this day,
and free us to worship you without fear,
in holiness and righteousness of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of Advent

Prayer after Communion

We thank you, Lord,
for your word and your table
which give us the knowledge of salvation.
Your compassion has broken on us like the dawn;
guide now our feet into the way of peace.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Irenaeus 28 June

Bishop of Lyons, Teacher of the Faith, c. 202 — Memorial

Irenaeus was a second-century bishop and teacher of the faith, who defended Christianity as a gospel for all of human life, in all its dimensions.

Irenaeus grew up in Asia Minor and learned the Christian faith from Polycarp, the holy bishop of Smyrna. After further studies in Rome, he settled at Lyons, a city in south-central France, where he became a presbyter. In the year 177 the Christians of this city were caught in a horrible persecution, during which their bishop and many others were martyred. At the time Irenaeus happened to be at Rome on official business, and when he returned to Lyons the surviving Christians elected him as their bishop. Over the next two decades he rebuilt his shattered community; and in the wider life of the Church he lived up to his own name, which is the Greek word for *peace*, by helping to re-establish harmony between the church of Rome and the churches in Asia Minor. He died at Lyons around the year 202.

Irenaeus was one of the first great theologians of the Christian Church. His most famous work is *Against the Heresies*. It is a long defense of Catholic doctrine against the people known as Gnostics, whose infiltration of Christianity was the great crisis of the second-century Church. This movement was divided into many different groups, but all shared a common belief that physical life was unredeemably evil. They taught that an immaterial spark of the divine was imprisoned in the flesh, and that “true” Christians should learn how to free it, so that it could fly upwards and be reabsorbed into God.

In his great work Irenaeus showed how Gnostic teachings conflicted with the Incarnation and resurrection of Christ. He taught that the Word became flesh in order to sanctify the whole of human life, its physical as well as its spiritual side, so that nothing was left outside the creative love of God and the transforming power of Christ. Though Irenaeus addressed his message to people and movements in the second century, his basic message has remained a touchstone of the Church’s thinking ever since.

Sentence

The instruction he gave was true, and no word of injustice fell from his lips; he walked in harmony with me and in uprightness, and he turned many back from sin. *Malachi 2.6 (REB)*

Collect

God our Creator,
you delight to give us life,
and our life is fulfilled in the vision of your glory.
Grant that, following your holy servant Irenaeus
and withstanding every blast of vain doctrine,
we may never presume to set anything that you have made
beyond the embrace of your salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 John 2.18–25 Psalm 145.8–13

Refrain The compassion of the Lord is over all his works.

Luke 11.33–36

Prayer over the Gifts

Accept, O Lord our God,
these fruits of our life and labour,
and grant us so to gather at this table
that we may know the truth of our redemption
and receive the life of your new creation;
for the sake of him in whom all things have fulfillment,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Preface of the Epiphany

Prayer after Communion

Gracious Lord,
by this Bread of heaven you nourish the whole of our life
and give our bodies the hope of resurrection.
Grant us to honour your holy servant Irenaeus
and to imitate his faithful witness,
that we may grow to the fulness of the image of Christ
and behold our truth in the vision of your glory.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

Saint Peter and Saint Paul, Apostles

29 June

Holy Day

According to a well-attested tradition, the apostles Peter and Paul suffered martyrdom at Rome around the year 64. It is said that Paul as a Roman citizen was granted the right to be beheaded by a sword, but that Peter endured crucifixion, being nailed to the cross upside down. We cannot say whether they died on the same day, but from very ancient times their martyrdoms have been commemorated together.

When Luke wrote the Book of Acts, he focused the first half of his account almost entirely on Peter and the role he played in the founding of the Church. This part of the story reaches its climax with Peter's visit to Caesare'a, where a heavenly vision gave him courage to break with apostolic custom and baptize a family of pagans without requiring them submit to Jewish regulations. At this point, Luke shifted his attention to Paul and devoted the rest of his account to Paul's missionary journeys — a story which culminates with Paul's arrival at Rome, the very heart of the pagan world. Thus, in the Book of Acts, Peter and Paul were like runners in a relay race; it was as if Peter carried the gospel during the first lap, then handed it over to Paul, who finished the course.

A rather different story emerges from Paul's own Letter to the Galatians. Paul presented a picture of conflict, with himself as a loner pitted against Peter and the other leaders of the church at Jerusalem. The two parties eventually met and agreed to a mutual recognition of ministries. But a short time later Peter appeared to go back on this agreement, and Paul rebuked him to his face. In the ensuing controversy Paul was isolated; a number of his own associates deserted him, and he went off on his own.

Paul's Letter to the Galatians is the only first-hand information that we have; and so far as it goes, Peter and Paul are frozen in a history of fierce antagonism. Today's feast bears witness that, even if their disagreement was not resolved in the realm of human history, their martyrdom united them in the paschal victory of Jesus Christ.

Sentence

Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.

John 21.17

Collect

Almighty God,
your blessed apostles Peter and Paul
glorified you in their death as in their life.
Grant that your Church,
inspired by their teaching and example,
and made one by your Spirit,
may ever stand firm upon the one foundation,
Jesus Christ our Lord;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Ezekiel 34.11–16 Psalm 87

Refrain Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of our God.

Or CR 1

2 Timothy 4.1–8 John 21.15–19

Prayer over the Gifts

Almighty God,
receive all we offer you on this feast of the apostles.
Help us to know our own weakness
and to rejoice in your saving power,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of Apostles

Prayer after Communion

Heavenly Father,
renew the life of your Church
by the power of this sacrament.
May the breaking of bread
and the teaching of the apostles
keep us united in your love,
in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Canada Day *1 July*

Canada Day is a national holiday, not a feast of the Church; and yet it is right that we Christians offer prayer and thanksgiving today, because all the good things which we enjoy as Canadians have their origin as gifts of God. The resources of our land and the oceans which border it, our diversity as Canadian people, the heritage of Confederation and our nation's continuing efforts to ensure peace and justice for all its citizens — all these things call the Church to remember and celebrate the God who gave them.

At the same time, we as the people of the Church must accept an immense responsibility as citizens of Canada. We believe that divine grace seeks to fulfill what divine power has created. We are the servants of this saving purpose of God: we do not leave the concerns of Canadian society behind us when we enter our churches; we enter our churches in order to gain fresh strength for the work of making God's justice, compassion, and wisdom ever more present in the life of our nation. On Canada Day, our task is to dedicate ourselves to the mission of bringing all our country's resources — natural and human — within the circle of God's redemptive love in Jesus Christ.

Sentence

If any serve me, the Father will honour them. *John 12.26*

Collect

Almighty God,
whose wisdom and whose love are over all,
accept the prayers we offer for our nation.
Give integrity to its citizens
and wisdom to those in authority,
that harmony and justice may be secured
in obedience to your will;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Isaiah 32.1–5, 16–18 Psalm 85.7–13

Refrain Peace shall be a pathway for his feet. *Or CR 8*

Colossians 3.12–17 John 15.12–17

Prayer over the Gifts

Judge eternal,
accept all we offer you this day,
and grant to our nation unity and peace.
This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of Trinity Sunday

Prayer after Communion

God of love,
may we who have taken holy things
grow in unity and peace.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Saint Thomas the Apostle

3 July

Holy Day

Saint Thomas was a disciple who followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem. The first three Gospels list his name among the twelve apostles but say nothing more about him. It is in the Fourth Gospel that Thomas gains prominence — and even some notoriety. According to John, when Jesus began his final journey to Jerusalem, Thomas understood what it meant and said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.” But after the resurrection, Thomas refused to believe that the other disciples had seen the risen Jesus. His doubt was quashed in the most dramatic way; and in John’s account the risen Lord drove the point home by telling Thomas: “You have believed because you have seen me; blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.”

In the New Testament the appearances of the risen Lord are proof that God’s saving purpose had entered its final stage. By appearing to his disciples, Jesus anticipated the still greater revelation when all the peoples of the earth will see him in glory and acknowledge him as Lord.

So Thomas was not wrong in his desire to behold and touch the Lord. But he made seeing the precondition of believing rather than its fulfillment. What blessing could he expect if, like the rest of the world, he postponed faith until the second coming, when sight will leave the world no choice but to believe that Jesus rose from the dead? Those who have not seen and yet believe therefore have a unique freedom in this present age; they shall not experience the final revelation as an eternity of compelled obedience but as the everlasting moment of creation’s fulfillment.

Jesus had mercy on Thomas and healed his desire even as he granted it. In the same way we who honour the doubting apostle may pray for the healing of our own desires, that they might become a source of freedom and not of constraint when God shall fulfill our faith with the vision of Christ in glory.

Sentence

Have you believed, Thomas, because you have seen me?
Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe. *John 20.29*

Collect

Almighty and everliving God,
who strengthened your apostle Thomas
with faith in the resurrection of your Son,
strengthen us when we doubt,
and make us faithful disciples
of Jesus Christ our risen Lord;
who with you, O Father, and the Holy Spirit
lives and reigns eternally.

Readings

Habakkuk 2.1–4 *or* Hebrews 10.35–11.1 Psalm 126

Refrain Those who sowed with tears shall reap with songs of joy.

Or v. 4 or CR 4

John 20.24–29

Prayer over the Gifts

Living God,
accept all we offer you this day,
and grant that we may find the presence of your Son
in the Church,
in each other,
and in the poor and wounded victims of the world,
for whom he gave his life,
Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

Preface of Apostles

Prayer after Communion

God of truth,
we have seen with our eyes
and touched with our hands
the bread of life.
Strengthen our faith
that we may grow in love for you
and for each other;
through Jesus Christ the risen Lord.

Thomas More 6 July
Lawyer, 1535 — Commemoration

Thomas More was an English lawyer and statesman who was beheaded in 1535 because he chose loyalty to the Pope over submission to his King. As he said to his daughter when she visited him in prison: "God's grace hath strengthened me hitherto and made me content in my heart to lose goods, land, and life too, rather than to swear against my conscience."

For almost twenty years More had enjoyed brilliant success in law and politics. He entered the House of Commons and made a name for himself as a critic of royal policies. Nevertheless he became Speaker of the House and even gained the warm respect of King Henry VIII. At the same time, More gained international fame as a model of the true Renaissance Catholic. He was hailed for the learning and wit he displayed in his writing and conversation; and it was well known that he observed a constant round of intense prayer and strict fasting in his private life. His reputation for political integrity and devout wisdom was rewarded in 1529, when the King appointed him Lord Chancellor of England.

Soon afterwards Henry VIII began to insist on the independence of the Church of England. More sided with those who defended the claims of the Pope and resigned as Lord Chancellor. He retired into private life, but his international fame was so great that the King demanded his public support. When More refused to swear an oath which violated his convictions, the King had him tried on a charge of high treason and sentenced to death. As he stood on the scaffold, More said: "I die the King's good servant, but God's first."

Sentence

Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's. *Mark 12.17*

Collect

Almighty God,
who strengthened Thomas More
to be in office a king's good servant
but in conscience your servant first,
grant us in all our doubts and uncertainties
to feel the grasp of your holy hand
and to live by faith in your promise
that you shall not let us be lost;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 Peter 3.13–16 Psalm 119.161–168
Refrain I have hoped for your salvation, O God.
Mark 12.13–17

Prayer over the Gifts

Merciful God,
remember your servant Thomas More
and look with compassion on our hopes and desires,
that we may be cleansed from all worldly ambitions
and made worthy for the service of your table.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

O God, the Healer of our humanity,
who accepted the witness of your servant Thomas More
for the sovereign rights of conscience,
grant us the testimony of an undivided heart,
that we may go forth into the world
to keep your righteous commandments.
This we ask through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Benedict of Nursia

11 July

Abbot, c. 547 — Memorial

Today we honour Benedict, an abbot in sixth-century Italy and the author of an influential Rule for communities of monks and nuns.

In his youth Benedict abandoned society and for many years dwelt all alone in a cave in order to learn complete obedience to the will of Christ. Word of his holy life spread throughout Italy, and soon he was surrounded by several thousand disciples, whom he formed into a single community. He eventually moved to Monte Cassino, where he gathered a second community of monks. There he died around the year 547.

Shortly before his death Benedict drew up a Rule for the continuing nurture of his community. This Rule teaches monks two chief duties — obedience to their abbot and the work of prayer. Obedience is not meant to be an end in itself; it is supposed to foster stability in spiritual growth, so that each monk might look beyond his own needs and support his brothers in attaining the common goal of perfect conformity to Christ. This communal discipline finds its chief expression through the daily offices, which Benedict called “the work of God.” Seven times a day the whole community gathers to pray the Psalms, hear Scripture, and offer intercession for the needs of the Church and the world. As with the precept of obedience, “the work of God” is meant to be a work of love in Jesus Christ.

Several centuries after Benedict’s death, his Rule was adopted by other monastic communities throughout Europe and became the foundation for the Order of St. Benedict, which flourishes in the Roman Catholic and Anglican communions to this day.

Sentence

Pray at all times in the Spirit in every prayer and supplication.

Ephesians 6.18

Collect

Eternal God,
you endowed your holy servant Benedict
with gifts of discernment and power
to be a true and faithful guide
in the way of Christian perfection.
Instill in our hearts the virtues of stability and concord,
that our prayers may be fixed on you
and our judgements may be formed
according to your great commandment of love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Acts 2.42–47a Psalm 34.1–8

Refrain Look on the Lord and be radiant.

John 15.12–17

Prayer over the Gifts

Gracious Lord,
by the Rule of your blessed servant Benedict
you have taught numberless Christians
to rejoice in the holy work of prayer.
Let our devotion be joined with these gifts
that we may exalt your Name together
and taste the abundance of your goodness.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Grant us, O Lord our God,
after the example of your holy servant Benedict,
to practise with joy the labour of obedience,
that we may never cease from the work of prayer
nor ever relent in our service to one another.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Henry 13 July

Missionary Bishop in Finland, 1156 — Commemoration

Today we remember Henry, a twelfth-century Englishman who is honoured as the apostle and patron saint of Finland.

In 1152 the Pope sent a mission to Norway and Sweden, and Henry went as one of its chaplains. The papal legate ordained him bishop of Uppsala and charged him with supervising the reform of the Swedish Church. Two years later Henry accompanied the Swedes on a crusade against the pagan tribes in southern Finland, and he decided to stay there after the Swedish forces withdrew. Alone except for an interpreter, he journeyed from village to village, proclaiming the gospel at market-day gatherings and baptizing large numbers of people. But his work was suddenly cut short in mid-January of 1156, after he excommunicated a Finnish convert for committing a violent crime. Seeking revenge, the convert caught up with Henry while he was crossing a frozen lake and murdered him with an axe-blow to the head.

Other missionaries came in Henry's wake, and though they experienced many setbacks in their work, the Finnish people eventually became a Christian nation. The triumph of Henry's mission was celebrated in 1300, when his remains were moved from their original tomb to a magnificent shrine in the Finnish national cathedral at Abo.

Sentence

Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries. *1 Corinthians 4.1*

Collect

Almighty God,
teach us to follow
the example of your servant Henry,
that we may proclaim your gospel,
rebuke injustice,
and bear whatever reproaches
the world shall heap upon our faithfulness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 Corinthians 4.9–13 Psalm 96

Refrain Proclaim the glory of the Lord among the nations.

Mark 4.30–32

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
whose blessed servant Henry
declared your glory among the Finnish people,
let the gifts of your good creation
become as seeds of the tree of life,
that we may grow to the full stature of Christ
in the mystery of our redemption.
We ask this through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Maker and Giver of all that is good,
grant us by the power of this mystery
so to trust in your Word and Spirit,
that we may proclaim by speech and deed
the wonders of your saving love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Saint Mary Magdalene

22 July

Holy Day

Mary was called the Magdalene because she was a woman of Mag'dala, a village in Galilee. In the Gospels it is said that Jesus cast seven demons out of her and that she was one of a group of women who followed him and used their wealth to provide for the rest of his companions.

Mary accompanied Jesus to Jerusalem, and three of the evangelists — Matthew, Mark, and John — give her first place among the women disciples who stood nearby while their Lord was crucified. All the Gospel accounts agree that, on the morning of the third day, she went to his tomb in order to anoint his corpse — and was astonished to find the tomb empty, except for mysterious strangers who told her that Christ was risen. According to John, it was just then that Mary became the first to behold and speak with the risen Lord himself; John also reports that Jesus appointed her to proclaim the news of his resurrection to the apostles. For this reason Mary Magdalene is regarded as their equal by the Eastern Church, for she was the apostle to the apostles.

Sentence

If any serve me, the Father will honour them *John 12.26*

Collect

Almighty God,
whose Son restored Mary Magdalene
to health of mind and body
and called her to be a witness of his resurrection,
forgive us and heal us by your grace,
that we may serve you in the power of his risen life;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Judith 9.1, 11–14 *or* 2 Corinthians 5.14–18 Psalm 42.1–7

Refrain My soul thirsts for you, O God, my God. *Or v. 1 or CR 4*
John 20.1–3, 11–18

Prayer over the Gifts

God of life and health,
in your Son Jesus Christ
we find the forgiveness of all that is past.
Grant that in this eucharist today
we may find the healing of all our sins.
This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Compassionate God,
in this eucharist you have set aside our sins
and given us your healing.
Grant that all who have shared in holy things
may bring your healing to this broken world,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Saint James the Apostle

25 July

Holy Day

Today we honour Saint James the Apostle, usually described in the Gospels as “the brother of John” but also known as James “the Greater” in order to distinguish him from two other New Testament figures of the same name. He was a Galilean fisherman, and with his brother John he left his home and his trade in obedience to the call of Jesus. With Peter and John he belonged to an especially privileged group of disciples whom Jesus chose to be witnesses of the Transfiguration, the raising of Jairus’s daughter, and the agony in the garden of Geth-se’ma-ne.

James shared his brother’s hot-headed disposition, and Jesus nicknamed the two of them “Bo-an-er’ges,” or “sons of thunder.” They once expressed a willingness to share the cup of Christ’s sufferings, and in the case of James this was realized very soon after the resurrection. According to the Book of Acts, King Herod launched a persecution of the Church and had James beheaded, thus making him the first of the twelve apostles to suffer death for the sake of Christ.

An old legend claims that the body of James was miraculously transported across the Mediterranean in its stone coffin and came to rest at Compo-ste’la in Spain. During the Middle Ages his shrine there became one of the great centres of pilgrimage, and the Spaniards specially invoked his aid to support them in their long struggle against their Moorish overlords. To this day he remains one of the best loved saints of the Spanish people.

Sentence

I chose you and appointed you, says the Lord, that you should go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. *John 15.16*

Collect

Almighty God,
we remember today your servant James,
the first apostle to give his life
for faith in Jesus Christ.
Pour out on all your people
that spirit of self-denying service
which is the mark of true leadership.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Jeremiah 45.1–5 *or* Acts 11.27–12.3 Psalm 7.1–10
Refrain God is the saviour of the true in heart. *Or v. 11 or CR 5*
Matthew 20.20–28

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
today we honour your servant James,
the first apostle to share the cup of suffering and death.
Receive our offering of praise and thanksgiving,
and renew us in the service of your Son Jesus Christ,
who came not to be served but to serve,
and to give his life as a ransom for many.
We ask this in his name.

Preface of Apostles

Prayer after Communion

Father,
we have eaten the bread of your table
and drunk from the cup of your kingdom.
Teach us, we pray, the way of service,
that in compassion and humility
we may reflect the glory of Jesus Christ,
the Son of man and Son of God, our Lord.

Anne 26 July
Mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary — Commemoration

Today we remember a woman of Israel named Anne, the mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Her story first appeared in an apocryphal writing called “The Book of James,” as part of a mythical account of Mary’s childhood.¹

According to this legend, Anne was the childless wife of a man named Jo’-a-chim, whose neighbours would not let him join in public worship because he had “begotten no offspring in Israel.” Grieved by the reproach, Jo’-a-chim went into the desert to fast for forty days and forty nights, leaving Anne to deal with her own grief at home. One afternoon, “she put on her bridal garments, and ... went into her garden to walk there. And she saw a laurel tree and sat down beneath it and implored the Lord” to grant her a child. God heard her prayer and sent an angel who said: “Anne, Anne, the Lord has heard your prayer, and you shall conceive and bear a child, and your offspring shall be spoken of in all the world.”

And so it came to pass that she conceived a child in her womb; and when the time was fulfilled she gave birth to a daughter and named her Mary. Anne turned her bedchamber into a sanctuary, so that nothing unclean according to the Law of Moses might touch her child; and when Mary was three years old, her parents brought her to the temple at Jerusalem and presented her as a virgin dedicated to God’s service.

Because of this story the figure of Anne came to be venerated throughout the Church, and even today many pilgrims are drawn to her shrine at Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré in Quebec. By her legend she takes her place as a symbol of all childless but faithful women who, after years of prayerful longing, have at last been able to conceive and bear a child — and who have given thanks to God by seeking to protect their child as a truly sacred gift.

¹ See “A Note Concerning Legendary Material” on page 22.

Sentence

She shall receive a blessing from the Lord, and a just reward from the God of her salvation. *Cf. Psalm 24.5*

Collect

Lord God,
the Source and Goal of all creation,
we bless you for your servant Anne,
whose daughter Mary was the Mother of our Lord.
Grant us grace in our succeeding generations
to honour the gift of life,
that young and old together
may learn the love
whose fruit is life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 Samuel 2.1–8 Psalm 85.7–13
Refrain Truth shall spring up from the earth.
Luke 1.26–33

Prayer over the Gifts

Day-spring of all mercy,
whose grace creates in our hearts
the love you would have us offer,
grant us such faithfulness
in the works that you command,
that we may be worthy
to share in the banquet of your mercy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God,
grant us so to walk in the power of this mystery
that we may bear to all who live in need
the gifts of your new creation.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

William Wilberforce 29 July
Social Reformer, 1833 — Commemoration

William Wilberforce was an English politician whose commitment to Jesus Christ made him lead a forty-year campaign for the emancipation of all slaves throughout the British empire.

Wilberforce entered the House of Commons in 1780 as a very wealthy young man with little purpose to his life beyond the conventional duties and privileges of his class. Four years later he experienced a revolution in his attitude to Christian doctrine, when his intellect accepted its claims upon his life; and this was followed by an even greater “conversion of the heart,” when he embraced Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour. Thus transformed from being a Christian only in name to someone who actively practised his faith, he threw himself into projects for the moral conversion of English society; and it was at this time that he agreed to bring before Parliament a bill to end all traffic in slaves.

At that time British landowners in the West Indies relied on slave labour, mostly black Africans kidnapped or bought by white traders who transported them and sold them for a profit in the Americas. Anxious to preserve their way of life, the West Indian landowners subsidized Members of Parliament to resist Wilberforce’s bill. The fight lasted twenty years. In session after session he reintroduced his bill and pleaded for its passage with unflagging conviction and eloquence, only to see it defeated by the tactics of the slaveowners’ party. But the resistance wore down before his persistence, integrity, and Christian character. The night it passed its second reading, the entire House stood and gave Wilberforce the tribute of an ovation.

This victory was not the end of his campaign. He immediately introduced a bill for the abolition of slavery itself, but it still had not passed the Commons when he retired from active politics in 1825. Eight years later, as he lay on his deathbed, he had the joy of hearing that Parliament was finally about to pass his bill. He died on July twenty-ninth, 1833, just as the liberation of slaves became the law of Great Britain and its empire.

Sentence

Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbour in your land.
Deuteronomy 15.11

Collect

O God, the Source of life and liberty,
let your bountiful mercy
continually renew in your Church
the never-failing gift of love,
that following your servant William Wilberforce,
we may have grace
to redeem the needy from oppression
and power to maintain
the cause of those who have no helper;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Deuteronomy 15.10–15 Psalm 72.1–7, 12–14
Refrain He shall redeem the needy from oppression.
Matthew 25.31–40

Prayer over the Gifts

Almighty God,
whose servant William Wilberforce
gladly devoted his wealth to relieve and support the needy,
receive this service from our open hands
and fulfil it with your grace,
that we who offer these tokens of our condition
may be worthy of the abundance of your table.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

God our Redeemer,
grant us so to honour
your servant William Wilberforce
that we may open our hands to the poor
and give liberty to those held captive by wrong.
We ask this through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Saint Stephen 3 August (or 26 December)
Deacon and Martyr — Holy Day

Stephen appears in the Book of Acts when the church at Jerusalem was experiencing internal troubles. Its membership was drawn from two groups of Jews — those who were native Palestinians and those who belonged to “the Dispersion.” The latter group consisted of Jews who had been born and raised in other lands; their native tongue was Greek, and so they were called “the Hellenists.” Rivalry between these two groups had been a feature of Jewish life for a long time, and converts to Christ brought it with them when they entered the Church. It made the Greek-speaking members quick to complain that their widows were not getting a fair share of the community’s food and financial support. To resolve the problem, the apostles appointed seven of the Hellenists to administer the Church’s resources and care for its poor. Stephen, described as “a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit,” was one of these seven. Set apart by prayer and the laying-on of hands he became the first to do what the Church considers to be the work of a deacon.

Stephen’s activities involved more than administrative duties, for the Book of Acts speaks of his preaching the gospel and performing many miracles. These activities brought him into conflict with Jews who shared his own Greek-speaking background; they accused him of blasphemy and hauled him before the council which enforced the law of Moses. Stephen gave a powerful speech denouncing the whole assembly because their refusal to accept Jesus Christ revealed their disobedience to God. Enraged by his words, his audience dragged him out of the city and stoned him to death.

Just before he died under the hail of stones Stephen prayed that Jesus would receive his spirit and forgive his murderers. He thereby became the first Christian martyr — not only because he died for his witness to Christ, but also because he bore witness to God’s will that all, even our worst enemies, may know forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

Sentence

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. *Matthew 5.10*

Collect

Grant us grace, O Lord,
that like Stephen we may learn to love even our enemies
and seek forgiveness for those who desire our hurt;
through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

(Jeremiah 26.1–9, 12–15) Acts 6.8–7.2a, 51c–60 Psalm 31.1–7, 16

Refrain Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

Or v. 5 or CR4

Matthew 23.34–39

Prayer over the Gifts

Refuge of those who trust in you,
we give you thanks for the witness of Stephen.
Accept our offering this day,
and grant your peace and consolation
to those who suffer for your truth.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Martyr

Prayer after Communion

Merciful God,
we have been gathered at the table of your Son.
Hear our prayer for all our sisters and brothers in faith
who suffer for truth, justice, and freedom.
Strengthen their witness
and keep them, with us,
under the protection of your wings.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

The Transfiguration of the Lord

6 August

Holy Day

An account of Jesus' transfiguration on the mount is included in each of the first three Gospels, and in each one it serves as an epiphany, a manifestation of the truth that Jesus is not only the messenger of salvation but also the saving message itself.

Jesus took Peter, James, and John up a mountain, where they beheld his figure clothed in dazzling glory and his conference with Moses and Elijah. Moses was the servant of God who received the divine covenant and delivered it to Israel; while the prophet Elijah was expected to come again and inaugurate the end of the ages, when Israel would be restored and vindicated in the sight of all the nations. The vision of Jesus conversing with these two figures revealed that he was the third founder of Israel and, as God's very Son, the fulfillment of all the promises made in the Law and the Prophets.

The Transfiguration also foreshadowed the still greater event of resurrection, and it gave a foresight of what salvation and the life of glory would be like. The evangelists all began their accounts of the Transfiguration by focusing on Jesus' clothing. It was not stripped off him, as it would be at the crucifixion; instead it was almost unbearably enhanced. Saint Paul would pick up on this image in his Second Letter to the Corinthians, where he spoke of the Christian hope in these terms: "While we are in this earthly tent we sigh with anxiety; not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life." Elsewhere he would speak of "putting on Christ" and of "being clothed with Christ." Salvation, then, will not be a stripping away of what makes us human, but a donning of the vesture of glory; and the vesture of the blessed will be nothing other than the life of the risen Christ himself.

Sentence

This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him. *Matthew 17.5*

Collect

Almighty God,
on the holy mount you revealed to chosen witnesses
your well-beloved Son, wonderfully transfigured.
Mercifully deliver us from the darkness of this world,
and change us into his likeness from glory to glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Daniel 7.9–10, 13–14 Psalm 99

Refrain The Lord our God is the Holy One. *Or v. 1 or CR 2*

2 Peter 1.16–19 Luke 9.28–36

Prayer over the Gifts

Holy God,
receive all we offer you this day,
and bring us to that radiant glory
which we see in the transfigured face
of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of the Incarnation

Prayer after Communion

Holy God,
we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ.
May we who are partakers of his table
reflect his life in word and deed,
that all the world may know
his power to change and save.
We ask this in his name.

John Mason Neale 7 August
Priest, 1866 — Commemoration

John Mason Neale was an English priest in the mid-nineteenth century, who helped to enrich the devotional life of the Anglican communion.

Neale was ordained in 1842, but weak health prevented him from being a parish priest. Instead, he became the warden of a home for elderly pensioners and began his career as a writer and spiritual director. In 1854 he founded the Society of St. Margaret, an Anglican order of nuns which prospered under his guidance and has cared for the sick, the poor, and orphans in many lands — including Canada, where it established a house at Montreal and for many years staffed a mission in the diocese of Algoma.

As a writer Neale excelled at translating ancient Christian hymns for modern use, and many of his versions have become classics in their own right — for example, “Come, ye faithful, raise the strain,” “Christ is made the sure foundation,” and “Jerusalem the golden.” He also wrote a large number of new hymns and carols, the best known being “Good Christian men, rejoice” and “Good King Wenceslas.”

Neale’s life was not uncontroversial. He was one of the first Anglican priests to wear full eucharistic vestments and to make a rule of celebrating the eucharist facing eastwards. These innovations infuriated his diocesan bishop, who withdrew Neale’s license and for fifteen years refused to let him celebrate the eucharist. The anguish which this judgement caused him, together with his heavy commitments as spiritual director and writer, contributed to his death at the age of forty-eight on August 6th in 1866.

Sentence

Every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old. *Matthew 13.52*

Collect

O God our Hope and Strength,
grant us in all time of our testing
to know your presence and obey your will,
that following the example of your servant John Mason Neale,
we may accomplish with integrity what you give us to do,
and endure with the courage of love
what you give us to bear;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Sirach 4.11–14, 16–18 Psalm 106.1–5

Refrain Visit me with your saving help.

Matthew 13.44–52

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
who nurtured religion in the hearts of many
through the service of John Mason Neale,
accept our devotion and praise
that we may serve the honour of Christ
in this sacrament of his love.
This we ask through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Source and Giver of the eternal Word,
whose servant John Mason Neale
gathered for his generation
the riches of the Catholic tradition,
grant that in the beauty of holiness
we may continually bring forth from this treasure
a wealth of prayer and service.
We ask this through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Dominic 8 August
Priest and Friar, 1221 — Memorial

Dominic was a Spanish priest who, early in the thirteenth century, founded the Order of Preachers — a brotherhood whose entire vocation is to preach and instruct the faithful in the doctrines of the Church.

Dominic's own vocation as a preacher began in 1206, when he was passing through southern France with his bishop. He noticed how the people flocked to the Cathars, who combined a life of radical simplicity with strange, non-Christian beliefs. Dominic realized that the people could not be brought back to the Church so long as bishops and priests made the rights of the institution their primary concern. So he adopted a life modelled on today's gospel: he renounced all property except for the robe on his back and travelled up and down the countryside, preaching to strangers on the road and to crowds in the market-places. Dominic convinced many others to join him in his enterprise of faith, and together they developed a movement which not only countered heresy in France but also spread out and renewed the teaching of the faith throughout southern Europe.

Dominic himself was a quiet person who preferred to live with his fellow-preachers in poverty, rather than accept any of the honours pressed upon him. As an early account of his life says: "He rarely spoke unless it was with God in prayer, or about God for the instruction of those who travelled with him." He specially desired the gift of love, so that he might always care for others in their need for salvation. In his later years he began to develop a rule for his followers, to ensure that their unique vocation would continue in the Church. His new brotherhood was called the Order of Preachers and its members came to be known as "Dominicans" in his honour. Dominic himself died in 1221, still on the road preaching, but the Dominicans carried on his work and became a major force in theological education — as they still are to this day.

Sentence

I have called you in righteousness, says the Lord, I have taken you by the hand and kept you. *Isaiah 42.6*

Collect

God of the prophets,
you gave to your servant Dominic
the gift of love in the work of preaching,
so that erring hearts might return to Christ.
Grant us everywhere in word and deed
to show ourselves true heralds of your gospel,
that we may attend to the hungers of the world
and know how to speak your word of salvation
to those who have lost all hope;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

Readings

Romans 10.13–17 Psalm 40.4–11
Refrain I love to do your will, O my God.
Luke 10.1–12

Prayer over the Gifts

Almighty God, who led your servant Dominic
to preach the fulness of your salvation,
do not withhold your compassion,
but receive these gifts and oblations,
that we may feast with you in peace.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of Pentecost

Prayer after Communion

Gracious God,
who appointed your servant Dominic
to labour in the harvest of your Word,
grant that we may not hide in our hearts
the testimonies of your righteousness,
nor conceal your love and faithfulness
from those who hunger for your presence.
This we ask for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Laurence *10 August*
Deacon and Martyr at Rome, 258 — Memorial

Today we honour Laurence, a deacon of the Roman church who was martyred in the middle of the third century. As a deacon, he assisted the bishop at the eucharist by reading the gospel and administering the cup. Laurence also had charge over the wealth of his church, to see that it was used for the relief of the poor and the needy. On August 6th in the year 258, during renewed persecution of the Church, he was arrested with his bishop and several other deacons. Later that same day, all of them were beheaded, except Laurence. The pagan magistrate knew that Laurence kept his church's money and ordered him to hand it over. The deacon asked for three days' grace, and on August 10th he came to the magistrate and led him out into the courtyard. The yard was filled with beggars, widows, lepers, cripples and the mentally ill. "Here," Laurence said, "*this* is the Church's wealth!" Enraged by such daring, the magistrate had him executed at once. Early in the fifth century, Augustine of Hippo summarized the meaning of his example in this way: "Laurence ministered the blood of Christ to the faithful, and for the sake of Christ's name he poured out his own."

Sentence

The King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life, because we have died for his laws. *2 Maccabees 7.9*

Collect

Almighty God,
you called your holy deacon Laurence
to minister the riches of Christ,
and for the sake of Christ's name
gladly to pour forth his life.
Grant to us who keep his feast
such faithfulness in our service to one another
and such joy in bearing witness to you,
that the world may be stirred to open its heart
and attend to your word of salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Colossians 1.24–29 Psalm 69.31–36
Refrain The afflicted shall see and be glad.
Mark 8.34–38

Prayer over the Gifts

Gracious Lord,
your blessed martyr Laurence
cherished the riches of your Church
in the lives of the poor and needy.
Regard your own gifts in us,
that we may be worthy to share in the one oblation
by which your Son redeemed the world from its sorrow.
We ask this through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Martyr

Prayer after Communion

Kindle in your Church, O God,
the Spirit whom blessed Laurence served,
that we may love what he loved
and hasten to follow the example of his faithful daring;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Clare of Assisi *11 August*
Abbess, 1253 — Memorial

Today we honour the memory of Clare, a thirteenth-century abbess who spent all her life in the Italian town of Assisi.

At the age of eighteen, a woman of beauty and wealth, she heard Francis of Assisi preach about the poverty of Christ. She was so deeply stirred that she renounced her former life, threw away all her brocades and silks, and put on the rough garment of a nun. Clare hoped to imitate Francis in a life of wandering, but neither Francis nor the authorities of the Church were ready to allow women such evangelical freedom. She eventually took over a small enclosure next to the church of San Damiano in Assisi and there gathered a community of women who wished to devote themselves to Christ-like poverty. Under Clare's direction they became "the Order of the Poor Ladies of San Damiano," and sought to live up to their name by refusing anything that would bind them to the economic order of thirteenth-century Italy, even when rich people tried to give them land or the proceeds of a business. They accepted only alms and small donations for immediate needs, just like the poorest people out in the world. They also did what they could to help beggars and poverty-stricken families who came to the gate of their enclosure.

Clare herself lived what she taught, claiming no privileges for herself as she devoted her days and nights to prayer and contemplation, to the spiritual needs of her sisters, and to the practical necessities of her fellow citizens. Despite increasing ill health, and though she never went outside her convent's walls in thirty years, she remained a source of strength for all sorts and conditions of people right up to her death on this date in the year 1253.

Sentence

Though our Lord Jesus Christ was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.

2 Corinthians 8.9

Collect

O God,
whose blessed Son became poor
so that through his poverty we might be made rich,
deliver us, we pray,
from an inordinate love of this world,
that in honour of your holy servant Clare
we may serve you with singleness of heart
and attain to the riches of the world to come;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Song of Solomon 2.10–13 Psalm 63.1–8

Refrain Your loving-kindness is better than life itself.

Luke 12.32–37

Prayer over the Gifts

Generous God,
who led your blessed servant Clare
to embrace the poverty of Christ,
cleanse our hands from greed and our hearts from fear,
that we may know the abundance of your table
and rejoice in the treasure which never fails;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Source and Giver of the eternal Word,
teach us to have such love
for the example of your holy servant Clare,
that above all else we may set our hearts
on the gift of life eternal
which you alone bestow;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Consecration of Charles Inglis 12 August *First Anglican Bishop in Canada, 1787 — Commemoration*

On this date in 1787 a priest named Charles Inglis was consecrated bishop of Nova Scotia, with jurisdiction over the Church of England in settlements as far west as the Niagara peninsula; and in commemorating this event we mark the official beginning of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Inglis himself was born into a family of Scottish Episcopalian clergy who had moved to Ireland. Poverty and a lack of opportunity led him to emigrate to Pennsylvania, where he worked as a schoolteacher while studying for ordination. He was made a priest in 1758 and served as a missionary in Delaware before moving to Trinity Church in New York City.

With the approach of the American Revolution Inglis became an ardent defender of loyalty to the Crown — so much so that, after independence, the State of New York passed a bill which denied him amnesty and confiscated all his goods. Despite being forced into exile in England, he still loved America and planned to return and settle among the Loyalists in Nova Scotia or New Brunswick. At this point the English government finally decided that Anglicans in British North America should have their own bishop; and though Inglis was not the first choice of the authorities, he turned out to be the only available candidate. So, on August twelfth, 1787, he was consecrated bishop at Lambeth Palace.

His new charge was enormous, for it covered all of the Maritime provinces, Quebec, and what is now Ontario. His advancing years and ill health made it difficult for him to travel, and he spent most of his time in Nova Scotia, with occasional visitations to New Brunswick. Nevertheless, until his death in 1816, he proved to be an effective leader and administrator, sensitive to the unique conditions of the Church of England in Canada. We honour him for his patience in building our Church and for his pastoral wisdom in sustaining it through its earliest years.

Sentence

Unless the Lord builds the house, their labour is in vain who build it. *Psalm 127.1*

Collect

Eternal God,
who laid your hand upon Charles Inglis
and made him the first bishop
of your Anglican flock in Canada,
grant to each and all of us the insight of faith,
the eagerness of hope, and the skill of love,
that we may continue to build upon the one foundation of life,
which is Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Ezekiel 34.11–16 Psalm 40.5–11
Refrain I love to do your will, O my God.
Matthew 9.35–38

Prayer over the Gifts

Giver of all,
by whose grace your bishop Charles Inglis
was faithful in the care of your people,
make us, we pray,
obedient in the service of this table,
that we may be partners
in the eternal oblation of your Son Jesus Christ,
who stands at your right hand in glory,
now and for ever.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Faithful and loving God,
who by the consecration of Charles Inglis
laid the foundation of the Canadian Church,
we pray for the gifts of wisdom, justice, and love,
that we may become a true and living temple
where you delight to make your dwelling,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jeremy Taylor

13 August

Bishop of Down and Connor, Spiritual Teacher, 1667 — Memorial

In the middle of the seventeenth century the Church of England suffered greatly from civil war and revolution, and many of its people sought guides who could help them find spiritual order in their own lives. Today we remember the finest of these Anglican spiritual teachers, a bishop named Jeremy Taylor.

Taylor had been a priest for nine years when the English Civil War broke out in 1642. He joined the side of King Charles and served as a chaplain in the royal forces. Towards the end of the war he was captured and briefly imprisoned; on his release he found refuge at the house of the Earl of Carbery in Wales. Here he acted as spiritual director to the earl's wife and wrote some of his best works. He also experimented with the liturgy and composed one of the first "alternative rites" in Anglican history. In 1658 Taylor moved to Ireland and was lecturing there when the monarchy and the Church were restored two years later. As a reward for his loyalty he was made bishop of two dioceses in northern Ireland, Down and Connor. Taylor had a very hard time because many of his clergy held presbyterian views and refused to acknowledge the authority of any bishop. His conflicts with these clergy wore down his health, and he died after a short illness on this date in 1667.

Almost all of Taylor's writings were designed to help people to develop and keep a rule of spiritual practice. He understood how hard such a task can be, and he did not seek to make it seem easier than it is. He taught that Christians have a fear-some personal responsibility for choosing the way of Christ in all their actions. He also believed that holiness involved training in the deeper and more difficult rule of love — love for God in prayer and love for other humans in the works of everyday life. In the end, Taylor's strictness as a spiritual teacher had a purpose of joy — such joy as can be tasted only by those who accept its cost and practise its duties.

Sentence

Oh, that my ways were made so direct, that I might keep your statutes. *Psalm 119.5*

Collect

O God,
whose days are without end
and whose mercies cannot be numbered,
make us, with your servant Jeremy Taylor,
deeply sensible of the duties of love
and the cost of our salvation,
that we may walk in paths of holiness and righteousness
all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

James 2.14–26 Psalm 119.1–8

Refrain Happy are they who walk in the law of the Lord.

Matthew 5.17–20

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
who gave to your servant Jeremy
wisdom in the guidance of souls,
cleanse us from all malice
and free us from all guilt,
that our service this day
may become an acceptable sacrifice in your sight.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

God of righteousness,
may the teaching of your servant Jeremy Taylor
help us to order our works and desires,
that we may have increase of grace,
fruitfulness in all good works,
and understanding in the way of godliness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Maximilien Kolbe 14 August
Martyrs, 1945, 1941 — Commemoration

Today we honour Maximilien Kolbe and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, two very different Christians who suffered martyrdom at the hands of the Nazis during the second World War.

Kolbe was a Polish Franciscan priest who sheltered Jews and other refugees after the Germans conquered his country in 1939. Two years later he was arrested and sent to the concentration camp at Auschwitz. He had been there only a short time when, as punishment for another prisoner's escape, the camp commandant ordered that ten inmates be chosen at random and starved to death. One of the chosen victims fell to his knees and begged for mercy. Kolbe stepped forward and offered to take his place. His offer was accepted, and he was thrown into the starvation cell with nine other prisoners. He spent his time either praying or nursing his fellow victims. After two weeks, only Kolbe and three of his companions remained alive. On August fourteenth, 1941, they were killed with an injection of carbolic acid.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German Lutheran pastor and one of the most promising theologians of his generation. He opposed the Nazi regime from the very first and committed himself to resistance by non-violent means. But after the outbreak of the second World War, his sense of Christian responsibility in a situation of evil drew him into a plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler. The plot failed, and when his complicity came to light, he was marked for extermination. He was shunted from one concentration camp to another until, early on the morning of April ninth, 1945, he was hanged at Flossenbourg.

We remember these two different martyrs together because each assumed a Christ-like responsibility for the lives of others — Kolbe by stepping forward to take the place of a fellow-prisoner at Auschwitz, and Bonhoeffer by working to free Germany and the world from the curse of Adolf Hitler.

Sentence

If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed,
because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is
resting on you. 1 Peter 4.14

Collect

O God,
we bless you for the witness of your martyrs
Maximilien and Dietrich,
who walked in the bitter path of the Cross
and gave their lives that others might live.
Grant that our devotion may issue in the deeds of love,
and our confession of your holy Name
in a readiness for justice;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 Peter 4.12–14, 16–19 Psalm 119.105–112

Refrain I have sworn to keep your righteous judgements.
John 15.12–19, 26–27

Prayer over the Gifts

God of grace,
who made your servants Maximilien and Dietrich
strong in their witness against evil,
cleanse our lives of all injustice
and wash our hands in innocence,
that we may be worthy
to celebrate the mystery of this table.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Martyr

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God,
who raised up the sufferings of your martyrs
as stations on the way to perfect freedom,
grant us so to acknowledge your Son before the world
that we may share in his love for all creation.
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Saint Mary the Virgin

15 August

Holy Day

Mary is honoured because she was the Mother of Jesus Christ, the Son of God — and because the Gospels testify that she was a virgin when she conceived and gave him birth. Their witness to such a wonder has generated much of the devotion that is paid to her. But it is not the only reason, for the evangelists also portray her as the archetype of all the people of God and the person who leads their praises of the Almighty.

In Luke's account of the Annunciation, Mary was perplexed by the meaning of God's word to her and yet chose to accept the wondrous service which it ordained her to accomplish. After the birth of her son, Mary continued to be puzzled whenever she met with a further sign of his divine origin or with hints of what he was meant to do. But she was always patient in her puzzlement; in Luke's words, "Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart." The fruit of her pondering may be reflected in the fact that all the evangelists say that she followed her son from Galilee to Jerusalem and stood with the small company of women who witnessed his crucifixion. The Book of Acts adds that, after the resurrection, she shared in the disciples' community of prayer and watched with them for the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

An ancient tradition testifies that Mary was taken up in glory as soon as she died, and Christian devotion has never begrudged her the place of highest honour in the presence of God. It has delighted in the conviction that she who responded to God's perplexing call with praise must already enjoy the reward of faith — and that she who gave the Son of God his human life has received all the fullness of the eternal life which he was born to give.

Sentence

Hail, O favoured one, the Lord is with you! The Holy Spirit will come upon you. *Luke 1.28, 35*

Collect

O God,
you have taken to yourself the blessed Virgin Mary,
mother of your incarnate Son.
May we who have been redeemed by his blood,
share with her the glory of your eternal kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Isaiah 7.10–15 Psalm 132.6–10, 13–14

Refrain Arise, O Lord, into your resting place. *Or v. 8 or CR 2*

Galatians 4.4–7 Luke 1.46–55 *or* Luke 2.1–7

Prayer over the Gifts

God of mercy,
receive all we offer you this day.
May we share with the Virgin Mary
the joys of your eternal kingdom,
and live with you in unending love.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of Christmas

Prayer after Communion

God of grace,
today we raise our voices
to magnify your holy name,
and, in our own generation, to call her blessed
who became the mother of our Saviour Jesus Christ.
May we who have shared this holy food
continue, with her, in your glorious kingdom,
founded and established in Jesus Christ our Lord.
We ask this in his name.

Holy Women of the Old Testament

16 August

Memorial

When the Church honours the Blessed Virgin Mary, it is often inclined to view her in isolation and to forget that she was a Hebrew woman. The evangelists, especially Saint Luke, did not make this mistake, but saw her in the light of a long line of women mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures — Sarah, whose husband was Abraham; Miriam, the sister of Moses; Deborah, one of the Judges of Israel; Hannah, the mother of Samuel; Ruth, the legendary grandmother of King David; Bathsheba, the wife of David and the mother of Solomon; the widow of Zar'ephath, who trusted the prophet Elijah and received mercy in the time of her grief; and the mother of the Maccabean martyrs, who encouraged them to keep faith with God and perished with them because she would not join in pagan sacrifices.

These women all had one thing in common: they were people who first appear as living on the edges of their society. For instance, Sarah and Hannah suffered the reproach of being childless in a culture which counted a woman's worth by the number of children she bore; while Ruth, Bathsheba, and the widow of Zar'ephath were all foreigners in Israel, women from other nations which worshipped other gods. But all became the vessels of God's mercy and crucial symbols of the salvation that God sought to make for Israel. Indeed, the very fact that they came from the edges of society made them bearers of Israel's truth before God. For Israel itself was a society on the edges of the world, a nation easily scorned by the more powerful kingdoms round about, repeatedly invaded and oppressed. What set Israel apart was, of course, its covenant with the one true God — and its tenacity in faithfulness to this covenant. Thus, the holy women of the Old Testament symbolized Israel's faithfulness to God in a hostile world. For just as each was vindicated for her faith in the God of Israel, so they became models of Israel's vocation and living testimonies to the vindicating power of God. That is why we specially remember these holy women today.

Sentence

Strength and dignity are her clothing; she opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

Proverbs 31.25–26

Collect

Blessed are you, Lord, God of our mothers,
for you raised up generations of holy women
in the house of your people Israel
that they might preserve the way of your covenant.
Grant us a measure of their faith,
that we may be unafraid of rulers in their might
and strong in our hope of your vindication;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 Samuel 2.1–10 Psalm 68.9–13

Refrain Great was the company of women who bore glad tidings.

Luke 2.36–40

Prayer over the Gifts

God of Sarah, Deborah and Hannah,
and of all the holy women of Israel,
behold the tokens of our service
which we offer with faith in your promise,
and renew in us
the bond of your eternal covenant.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Eternal Partner in the covenant of grace,
be mindful of your promises
and make us the bearers of that light
which heals the nations of their sorrow.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, the Son of Mary.

John Stuart 17 August
Priest, Missionary among the Mohawks, 1811 — Commemoration

Today we honour the life and labours of John Stuart, Anglican missionary among the Mohawks and the first resident priest in Upper Canada, who died in 1811.

Stuart was born in Pennsylvania and raised a Presbyterian, but entered the Church of England while at college and was ordained to the Anglican priesthood in 1770. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel assigned him to its mission in northern New York, where he quickly won the trust and affection of the Mohawk people. Six years later he and his native flock were overtaken by the American Revolution, and Stuart had a large part in keeping the Mohawks loyal to the British Crown. As a result he suffered many indignities at the hands of the rebels and in 1781 he fled to Canada with his family. Four years later he settled at Kingston, because he was chaplain to the regiment stationed there and it was near a band of loyalist Mohawks. In due course he also became rector of the Anglican parish in Kingston, though for many years, as the only priest in Upper Canada, his pastoral responsibilities extended as far west as Niagara. Even after other Anglican priests came into the province, Stuart still rode a circuit of two hundred miles several times a year, ministering the gospel among the Mohawks and in the scattered Loyalist settlements round about.

His preaching was plain and, as the saying goes, straight from the heart; and he was ready to celebrate in the roughest conditions when he saw that the people truly desired the Word of God and the sacraments of the Church. He once wrote that all he wanted was “to lead a good life, preach sound doctrine, and to be industrious and zealous in the discharge of the functions of an honest and upright clergyman.” He more than surpassed this modest ambition, so that today we may join his contemporaries in hailing John Stuart as “the father of the Episcopal Church in Upper Canada.”

Sentence

According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation. *1 Corinthians 3.10*

Collect

Lord God,
you drew your servant John Stuart
to share the lot of an exiled people
that the Anglican way might be established
in the scattered settlements of Upper Canada.
Grant that, honouring his steadfast labours,
we may show true loyalty to your gospel
and continually strengthen one another
in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 Corinthians 3.8–11 Psalm 101

Refrain My eyes are upon the faithful in the land.

Mark 4.1–9

Prayer over the Gifts

God of all faithfulness,
who nurtured a loyal people
by the labours of John Stuart,
grant that our service may be sown with your Word
and yield in our lives
the abundant harvest of your kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Merciful God,
let the remembrance of John Stuart
guide and inform our actions,
that we may continue to build
on the foundation he laid
by the preaching of Jesus Christ our Lord;
who is seated at your right hand in glory,
now and throughout all ages.

Bernard 20 August
Abbot of Clairvaux, 1153 — Memorial

Bernard was the twelfth-century abbot of Clairvaux, a French monastery which under his leadership became a centre of the spiritual revival known as the Cistercian movement.

Bernard came from a noble family famous for its military prowess, but at the age of twenty-two he underwent a conversion to the monastic life and entered the newly founded Cistercian order. He channelled all the energy, aggressiveness, and brilliance of his warrior heritage into love for God, care for the mystical tradition of the Church, and preaching; and for the next forty years Bernard's eloquent voice dominated the western Church as his sermons and treatises renewed the theology of the spiritual life which it had received from the ancient Latin Fathers.

His prestige as spiritual teacher also gave him enormous authority when it came to shaping the policies of the Church; his endorsement ensured that one candidate in a papal election triumphed over the other who had been favoured to win; and Bernard's preaching throughout France in 1147 brought about a massive popular response to the Pope's call for a second crusade against the Muslims.

Thus, even as he was committed to monastic separation from the world, Bernard of Clairvaux had tremendous influence on the life and imagination of twelfth-century Europe; and we honour him today because he used that influence to renew in his own age the ageless thirst for that love which is above all other loves, which God "has poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit."

Sentence

Wisdom will open his mouth in the midst of the assembly,
and he will find gladness and a crown of rejoicing.

Sirach 15.5b–6a

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God,
you kindled the flame of your love
in the heart of your servant Bernard,
so that he became a shining light
in the midst of your Church.
Kindle in us such faith,
that by deeds of love
we may show forth the light of Christ
and rouse this present age to desire your perfect beauty;
through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Romans 5.1–5 Psalm 139.1–9

Refrain You have searched me out and known me.

John 15.7–11

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
keep us mindful of your holy servant Bernard,
that our offering this day
may be delivered from the pride
which will not acknowledge your gifts,
and from the false humility
which fails to lay hold of your mercies.
We ask this through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Preserve us, O God,
by your loving-kindness and mercy,
that we may follow your servant Bernard
and ascend the stairs of your truth
to love you without measure;
though Jesus Christ our Lord.

Saint Bartholomew the Apostle

24 August

Holy Day

Bartholomew is known to us only because his name is listed among the twelve apostles in the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke. His name means “son of Tolmai,” and he is sometimes identified with Nathanael, a disciple who appears at the beginning of the Fourth Gospel. According to John, Nathanael learned about Jesus of Nazareth from his friend Philip and gave the skeptical response, “Can anything good come from Nazareth?” Nevertheless he went along with his friend, and when Jesus saw him he said, “Here is an Israelite worthy of the name; there is nothing false in him.”

Some sources credit Bartholomew with having written a Gospel; its existence was known to various Christian theologians up to the eighth century, but it has been long since lost. There is a tradition that he travelled to India, where it was later said that he left behind a copy of the Gospel according to Matthew in Hebrew. Another ancient tradition says that Bartholomew was flayed alive at Albano’polis in Armenia while seeking to bring the good news of Christ to that nation.

Sentence

You are those who continued with me in my trials. You shall eat and drink at my table in my kingdom. *Luke 22.28, 30*

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God,
who gave to your apostle Bartholomew
grace to believe and preach your word,
may your Church truly love what he believed
and faithfully preach what he taught;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Deuteronomy 18.15–18 *or* 1 Corinthians 4.9–15 Psalm 91
Refrain He shall give his angels charge over you. *Or v. 11 or CR 4*
Luke 22.24–30

Prayer over the Gifts

Faithful God,
receive all we offer you this day.
May we, like your apostles,
so live the life of Christ
that your Church may be the sign of salvation
to all nations of the world.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of Apostles

Prayer after Communion

God of our salvation,
you have fed us at the table of your Son
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Lead us in his way of service,
that your kingdom may be known on earth.
We ask this in his name.

Monnica 27 August
Mother of Augustine of Hippo, 387 — Commemoration

Today we remember Monnica, a woman of fourth-century North Africa and the mother of Augustine of Hippo.

She was a devout Christian, regular in her prayers and careful in raising her children to be Christians as well. However, her eldest son Augustine wandered away from the Church in his youth and came under the spell of an outlaw sect known as the Manichees. Monnica refused to give up on her son and tried to get others to argue him out of his infatuation with Manichean teachings. She once approached a bishop who told her that, given time, her son would certainly outgrow his false opinions. But Monnica would not be soothed and continued her entreaties. The bishop finally groaned: "Woman, go away from me now! As sure as you live, it is impossible that a son of such tears should perish!"

Augustine was embarrassed by his mother, and when he decided to leave North Africa and seek his fortune in Italy, he tricked her so that she would not come with him. He ought to have known her better, for she eventually showed up on his doorstep. By that time Augustine had at last renounced the Manichees and was slowly moving back towards the Church. Monnica had the supreme joy of beholding the fulfillment of her prayers at the Easter Vigil of the year 387, when Augustine was baptized at the basilica of Milan.

Shortly afterwards he decided to return to North Africa with his mother, but while they were waiting for a ship to take them across the Mediterranean Monnica fell ill. It was soon clear that she was dying, and Augustine became anxious, knowing she had always wanted to be buried in North Africa. She told him not to worry, saying: "Nothing is far from God; I need not fear that he will know where to raise me up at the end of the world." A few days later she died, at peace with God, the Church, and her son.

Sentence

Her children rise up and call her blessed; many women have done excellently, but she surpasses them all. *Cf. Proverbs 31.28, 29*

Collect

O God,
who heard the prayers
and gathered up the loving tears of Monnica
for the conversion of her child Augustine,
deepen our devotion, we pray,
and help us to work in accordance with your will,
that we may bring others,
even our own kindred,
to the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 Samuel 1.10–11, 20 Psalm 115.12–15
Refrain The Lord has been mindful of us.
John 16.20–24

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
whose blessed servant Monnica
nurtured in the life of the Spirit
the son whom she bore in her body,
make this service the sign of your new creation,
that we may know your mercy
and taste your eternal glory.
We ask this for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

O God,
grant us so to trust in your faithfulness
that we may follow your servant Monnica
by persevering in prayer and in all good works
until the time appointed
for the fulfilment of your love.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Augustine 28 August
Bishop of Hippo, Teacher of the Faith, 430 — Memorial

Augustine of Hippo was a North African bishop who died in the year 430 — and a teacher of the faith whose thought has continued to shape the mind and imagination of the western Church ever since.

Augustine was raised a Christian but wandered away from the Church in his youth. His restless intellect and fierce ambition led him into a neo-Christian cult and from his small home town in North Africa to Carthage, then to Rome, and finally to the imperial capital of Milan. There he underwent a spiritual and intellectual crisis which brought him back to the Church; he was baptized at Milan in the year 387, at the age of thirty-three. Shortly afterwards he resigned his post in the imperial government and returned to North Africa, where he hoped to live as a monk in company with his friends. But during a visit to the North African port of Hippo Regius he was seized by the congregation and forcibly ordained as a presbyter. A couple of years later he became their bishop and served them in this office until his death three and a half decades later.

There is hardly an aspect of Christian thought that Augustine's own thinking did not influence. But his work as a theologian grew out of his vocation as a pastor, and he usually would not address an issue unless it affected his flock or was raised by a correspondent. He was able to talk on many different levels at once, combining practical instruction, the interpretation of Scripture, and theological insights of rare speculative power in a style of writing and speaking which had few equals in its day.

Augustine also possessed enormous personal charm, a quality which made all sorts of people take pleasure in his company. This attractiveness may still be met and felt by those who choose to engage Augustine's life by reading what he wrote. In commemorating him today, the anniversary of his death in the year 430, we are not only remembering an influential intellect of the Church. We are also honouring a whole person who gave his heart as well as his mind to the task of growing up, with others, "to the measure of the full stature of Christ."

Sentence

In the midst of the assembly he opened his mouth, and the Lord filled him with the spirit of wisdom and understanding.
Sirach 15.5 (Vlg)

Collect

God, ancient of days and for ever new,
you are the light of the minds that know you,
the life of the souls that love you,
and the strength of the hearts that serve you.
Remember, we pray, your servant Augustine,
and grant us so to rejoice in his teaching and holy life,
that we may set our minds on the beauty of your truth
and order our desires by the rule of your Spirit;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 John 4.7–16 Psalm 102.19–28

Refrain Our hearts are restless until they rest in you.
Matthew 23.8–12

Prayer over the Gifts

Grant us grace and power, O God,
so to lift up our hearts to you
that we may offer the spiritual sacrifices
which are acceptable in your sight,
through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of Trinity Sunday

Prayer after Communion

God of grace and mercy,
you chose your holy servant Augustine
and made his heart to blaze
with love for your eternal truth.
Grant that we who are made members of Christ
may be in truth
what we have received in this sacrament.
We ask this through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist

29 August

Holy Day

The Gospel according to Mark tells us that John the Baptist was thrown into prison because he had offended King Herod and his wife Herodias. No harm came to him until Herodias exploited a frivolous vow which the King made during a banquet; and then to preserve his own honour Herod ordered John to be beheaded.

In Mark's account this story is designed to present a stark contrast: while Herod feasted with his friends in wanton luxury, John languished in prison because of his steadfast witness to the word and justice of God. And though Herod knew that John was a holy and righteous man, and even heard him gladly, yet he condemned the prophet to death rather than dishonour a drunken vow. Like the voices of the proud quoted in the ancient Psalm, Herod could say, "With our tongue will we prevail; / our lips are our own; who is lord over us?"

But the Psalm also foresaw a day when the voices of the proud would be stopped by the justice of God:

"Because the needy are oppressed,
and the poor cry out in misery,
I will rise up," says the Lord,
"and give them the help they long for."

So it was that Mark set the story of John's death in the context of what Jesus was doing — how he was fulfilling the prophecy of John not only by preaching the gospel of repentance but also by deeds which revealed the power and righteousness of God. When Herod learned of all these things, he was seized with anxiety. Having misused his power to behead John, he now knew that John was vindicated — and heard the death-knell of his own sovereignty — in the life and mission of Jesus of Nazareth.

Sentence

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. *Matthew 5.10*

Collect

Almighty God,
who called John the Baptist
to give witness to the coming of your Son
and to prepare his way,
strengthen us by your grace,
that as he suffered for the truth,
so we may boldly resist corruption and sin,
and receive with him the unfading crown of glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

2 Chronicles 24.17–21 *or* Hebrews 11.32–40

Psalms 71.1–6, 15–17

Refrain My tongue will proclaim your righteousness.

Or v. 15 or CR 5

Mark 6.17–29

Prayer over the Gifts

God of the prophets,
receive all we offer you this day,
and strengthen us to proclaim
your holy and righteous word.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

God of righteousness,
may we who honour John the Baptist,
the greatest of the prophets,
always turn to him who takes away the sin of the world,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Robert McDonald 30 August
Priest in the Western Arctic, 1913 — Commemoration

Today we honour the memory of Robert McDonald, an Anglican priest who ministered in the western Arctic from 1862 until his retirement forty years later.

He based himself at Fort McPherson, a trading post in the Yukon, and journeyed westwards into Alaska, ministering to the various Kutchin tribes who inhabited the region. His greatest achievement as missionary and pastor was to train and support native ministers. He regarded himself more as a resource for their work than as a master clergyman who had to keep all authority in his own hands. He also proved to be a serious ethnographer, with several ground-breaking studies of native life and language to his credit.

McDonald was part Ojibway through his mother, and because of this “mixed blood” background his superiors in the Church Missionary Society treated him as a second-class priest. Their reports on work in the Arctic always referred to “the European missionaries — and Archdeacon McDonald.” He knew of this prejudice and deeply resented it, but he never let it affect his love of Christ or deter him from the work of helping native people come to feel the same love. And that is why we remember him today — because he was an Anglican priest whose devotion to the gospel surmounted prejudice for the sake of enabling the native people of the Arctic to become full partners in the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

Sentence

Whenever you enter a town and the people welcome you, say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you."

Luke 10.8, 9

Collect

Lord God,
you called your servant Robert McDonald
and made him strong to endure all hardships
for the sake of serving you in the Arctic.
We pray you, according to your holy Word,
to send forth labourers into your harvest,
that many may be gathered to your kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Colossians 3.1–4, 12–17 Psalm 23

Refrain The Lord guides me along right pathways.

Luke 10.1–9

Prayer over the Gifts

Giver of every perfect gift,
by whose grace your servant Robert McDonald
sojourned for Christ in the Arctic,
grant us courage in all we offer this day
to cast aside every prejudice
and to triumph over all adversities.
We ask this through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

God of everlasting mercy,
who led your servant Robert McDonald
in the paths of righteousness,
grant us patience in our duties
and compassion in our dealings,
that our lives may reveal your mercy
and our labours may proclaim your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Aidan 31 August
Bishop of Lindisfarne, Missionary, 651 — Commemoration

Aidan was an Irish monk who restored Christianity in the war-ravaged kingdom of Northumbria early in the seventh century.

In the year 631 pagan invaders wrecked all the churches in this kingdom, which covered much of northeastern England. Its king asked the Irish monks at Iona for help in restoring Christianity among his people. First they sent a bishop who regarded his Anglo-Saxon flock as obstinate and uncivilized; he soon became disgruntled and returned to Iona. Then the monks chose Aidan, had him consecrated bishop, and sent him to Northumbria.

Aidan established a monastery on an island called Lindisfarne. This allowed him to come and go among the people as he wished. As the Venerable Bede later said of him: "Aidan used to travel everywhere on foot ... in order that, as he walked along, whenever he saw people, whether rich or poor, he might at once approach them and, if they were unbelievers, invite them to accept the mystery of the faith; or, if they were believers, that he might strengthen them in the faith, urging them by word and deed to practise almsgiving and good works." As he journeyed, Aidan founded monasteries and saw to the building of churches; he taught the people how to use fasting and meditation on the Scriptures to strengthen their faith; and he obtained freedom for children who were held as slaves. Finally, because of his obvious holiness and care for the poor, he was able to bear effective witness against the rich and powerful when they exploited or oppressed their neighbours.

Aidan spent just over a decade in mission-work, then retired from Lindisfarne to a much smaller island nearby in order to give himself entirely to prayer and contemplation. There he died in the year 651, beloved by God and by the people of Northumbria.

Sentence

I do all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings. *1 Corinthians 9.23*

Collect

Loving God,
who made your servant Aidan
a wanderer among the English
that he might bring them home to your kingdom,
grant us, after his example, to walk so faithfully
along the pathways of this life,
that in all our converse with others
we may commend the saving gospel
of your Son Jesus Christ;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 Corinthians 9.16–23 Psalm 85.8–13
Refrain Peace shall be a pathway for his feet.
Matthew 19.27–30

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
who by the preaching and holy life
of your blessed servant Aidan
made your glory to dwell in England,
grant us such love for Christ
that his truth may be found in our lives
and his gifts may abound in our service.
We ask this for his sake,
who is our righteousness and peace.

Preface of Apostles

Prayer after Communion

God of our salvation,
grant us fellowship with your holy servant Aidan,
that wherever we walk in this world,
our steps may be directed always
towards the inheritance of eternal life.
This we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Martyrs of New Guinea

2 September

1942 — Memorial

In the summer of 1942, the forces of imperial Japan reached New Guinea, which lies just to the north of Australia. All white people were ordered to evacuate the northern coast, but a number of Anglican missionaries decided to stay with their people for as long as possible. Their faithfulness resulted in martyrdom.

Among these martyrs the greatest honour is shared by Lucien Tapiedi, a native catechist, and Vivian Redlich, an English-born priest. It was said of Redlich that he “had a constant vision of the Risen Christ,” and this vision gave him the courage to stay at his mission when Japanese forces landed on New Guinea. He celebrated the eucharist with his people one last time, then headed into the jungle. There he was joined by five other Anglican missionaries. One of them was Lucien Tapiedi, whose work among his own people had already made him a true apostle of Christ. Under his guidance the small company of refugees tried to reach the coast, but they were ambushed and captured by native collaborationists. Tapiedi stepped forward in an effort to save his companions, only to be cut down and butchered. A few days later Redlich and the others were beheaded, and their bodies were cast into the sea.

May Hayman and Mavis Parkinson were Anglican missionaries at Gona; Hayman was also Redlich’s fiancée. When the invading army landed near their mission, these two women fled into the jungle. Encountering other refugees, they attempted to cross the mountains to safety at Port Moresby. When their party was ambushed, the two missionaries managed to get away together — only to be captured a few days later and murdered by the invaders.

None of these martyrs died in vain, for their example has nurtured a strong Papuan Church. This Church particularly rejoices in its celebration of St Lucien Tapiedi, for his witness has given its people a vibrant will to proclaim Christ in what is still one of the main frontiers of Christian mission.

Sentence

No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. *John 15.13*

Collect

Almighty God,
in the sight of your mercy we call to mind
the noble company of your martyrs in New Guinea,
who followed the precept and example of their Saviour,
and laid down their lives for their friends;
and we pray that we who honour their memory
may imitate their loyalty and faith;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Revelation 7.13–17 Psalm 116.1–8

Refrain The Lord watches over the innocent.

Luke 12.4–12

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
who made the holy martyrs of New Guinea
true partners in your eternal faithfulness,
fulfil these gifts with your grace
that the service we offer you this day
may bear us into the fellowship of your glory.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Martyr

Prayer after Communion

God of mercy,
who brought your holy martyrs of New Guinea
through the great tribulation,
grant us ever to abide in your presence,
that, whatever the calling you give us,
we may be ready for your service
and constant in the truth of your gospel.
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Gregory the Great 3 September
Bishop of Rome, Teacher of the Faith, 604 — Memorial

Today we recall Gregory the Great, who became bishop of Rome in the year 590 and guided his people through fourteen crisis-filled years, using his gifts as a pastor and teacher to strengthen their faith in the saving mercy of God.

Sixth-century Italy was an unhappy land, afflicted by brigands and war, burdened with recurrent crop-failures and famine, and decimated by bubonic plague. The people took these events as signs that the end of the world was indeed just around the corner, and they were frightened. Gregory shared this expectation but not the fear of it — on the contrary, he looked forward to the world's end as a day of liberation, and helped his people to understand the tribulations of their age in the light of God's promise to bring creation out of its misery. In the meantime, he followed the example of the five wise maidens in the parable appointed for today's gospel: he kept watch over the Church, making sure that it was well-ordered and at peace in itself so that it would continue to shed the light of Christ even as all other lamps appeared to be going out. That is why he sent a small party of Roman monks to Anglo-Saxon England, so that those who lived at the ends of the earth might be converted to the knowledge and love of Christ before his coming again in judgement. Because of this initiative and the support he continued to give it Gregory is justly called "the apostle of the English."

He himself preferred to be known by another title, as "Gregory, the servant of the servants of God." And so he was in his preaching, in his pastoral gifts, and in his missionary foresight. Gregory followed the gospel and became great by serving the whole body of the faithful and renewing their hope of God's love in Jesus Christ.

Sentence

Whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. *Mark 10.43*

Collect

Almighty God,
who raised up Gregory of Rome
to be the servant of your servants,
grant that our lives like his may resound with your Word
and proclaim your saving work in deeds of justice and mercy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

2 Corinthians 4.5–12 Psalm 57.6–11

Refrain Exalt your glory, O God, over all the earth.

Matthew 25.1–13

Prayer over the Gifts

Father in heaven,
who bestowed the abundant gifts of your Spirit
upon your holy servant Gregory,
pour the same Spirit into our hearts,
that we may be worthy to share
in the paschal oblation of your Son Jesus Christ,
who sits at your right hand in glory,
now and for ever.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Merciful God,
receive our thanks and praise
for the service of Gregory the Great;
and as you refresh us with Christ the living bread,
so let our hearts and minds be guided
by Christ the saving wisdom,
that we may learn your truth
and act upon it in love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

First Anglican Eucharist in Canada

4 September

1578 — Commemoration

In the summer of 1578 an English fleet appeared off the coast of Baffin Island. This expedition was under the command of Martin Frobisher, who had made two previous voyages to the Canadian Arctic. On the second voyage Frobisher's crew thought they found gold, so the expedition of 1578 came to settle the unknown land and mine its riches. It included a priest of the Church of England named Robert Wollfall. On Sunday, September third, the company of the ship *Anne Francis* gathered on the shore of Baffin Island and, as the captain later reported, "Master Wollfall preached a godly sermon, which being ended he celebrated also a Communion upon the land The celebration of the divine mystery was the first sign, seal and confirmation of Christ's name, death and passion ever known in these quarters. Master Wollfall made sermons and celebrated the Communion at sundry other times in several and sundry ships, because the whole company could never meet together at anyone place."

Wollfall was the vicar of West Harptree, in the diocese of Bath and Wells, when he joined Frobisher's third expedition. He was a graduate of Eton and King's College, Cambridge, who (as the captain of the *Anne Francis* tells us) had "a good honest woman to wife and very towardly children" and was himself "of good reputation among the best." Despite his professional standing and large family, he chose to take part in Frobisher's arduous expedition because he desired to sustain the faith of his comrades and, if the opportunity arose, to preach the gospel among the native peoples.

In the event, Frobisher decided to give up the idea of establishing a permanent settlement on Baffin Island and took the entire fleet back to England in mid-September. Almost a century would pass before Anglicans again celebrated the eucharist on Canadian soil.

Sentence

The Lord rained down manna upon them to eat, and gave them bread from heaven. *Psalm 78.24*

Collect

Eternal God,
you caused a company of English explorers,
when they entered this land in quest of wealth,
to remember the riches of our crucified Lord
in the mystery of bread and wine.
Grant us, who now prosper beyond their imagining,
ever to seek the true wealth which comes from above;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and for ever.

Readings

Exodus 16.13–17a, 31–32 Psalm 78.18–25

Refrain God set a table in the wilderness.

John 6.53–59

Prayer over the Gifts

O God,
who prepared a table in the wilderness
and gathered our forebears
to feast on the mercies of Christ,
let this present table
be laid with true and acceptable gifts,
that your grace may perfect our service
and your power may fulfill our worship.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of Weekdays

Prayer after Communion

O God our Saviour,
you open the doors of heaven over this table
and make us sharers in the banquet of your kingdom.
Grant that we may be faithful
in the life which we have here received,
and bold with love in our pilgrimage to your glory.
We ask this for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary 8 September

Memorial

A legend dating from the second century tells this story about the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary:¹

Once upon a time there was a Jewish couple named Jo'-a-chim and Anne. They were elderly, and their neighbours reproached them for not having any children. But God heard Anne's laments and sent an angel to tell her: "You shall conceive and bear, and your offspring shall be spoken of in all the world." Anne responded: "As the Lord my God lives, if I bear a child, whether male or female, I will bring it as a gift to the Lord my God, and it shall serve him all the days of its life."

And so it came to pass that Anne conceived; and when the time was fulfilled, she gave birth to a daughter and named her Mary. Both parents vowed to dedicate their child to the service of God, and when she was three years old they presented her in the temple at Jerusalem. "And the high priest placed Mary on the third step of the altar, and the Lord God put grace upon the child, and she danced for joy with her feet, and the whole house of Israel loved her."

Such is the legend of the nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and we continue to tell the story because it bears witness to a deeper truth of faith — that Mary herself was the daughter of Israel's hope and the child whose own offspring would fulfill the longing of the whole family of creation.

¹ See "A Note Concerning Legendary Material" on page 22.

Sentence

Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song. *Isaiah 51.3*

Collect

Eternal God,
who revealed the mystery of your loving providence
in the birth of Mary, the Mother of our Lord,
grant that we who now call her blessed
may be clothed with the light of your new creation
and rejoice with her
in the radiance of our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Isaiah 61.9–11 Psalm 132.6–8, 14–18

Refrain Here will I dwell, for I delight in her.

Luke 1.26–33

Prayer over the Gifts

Hand of redemption,
enfold us with your love,
that we may share in the blessing
which you bestowed upon Mary,
and celebrate according to your will
this mystery of the holy Child she bore;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of the Incarnation

Prayer after Communion

God of faithfulness and truth,
who formed us in the image of your Word,
grant us so to bear your Son into the world
that this earth may become the cradle
where you nurture your new creation.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Edmund James Peck 10 September
Priest, Missionary to the Inuit, 1924 — Memorial

Today we honour the memory of Edmund James Peck, an Anglican priest who died in 1924 after almost forty years in the eastern Arctic serving the Inuit and helping them to know Christ.

Peck started life in the workers' tenements of Manchester and entered the Royal Navy while he was still a child. He planned to make the Navy his life, but a series of near-fatal illnesses and shipboard accidents led him to experience what he called "the movements of grace." His experience of Christ made him decide to give his life to spreading the word of eternal life, and in 1876 he volunteered for work in the Canadian Arctic.

His first post was at Little Whale River on Hudson's Bay, where he spent seven years before being sent further north to minister to the Inuit around Fort Chimo. He then opened a mission on Baffin Island, where he laboured — as he put it, "itinerated" — among the Inuit until his retirement in 1921. He died at Toronto, on this very date, three years later.

Peck was as handy with wood, bolts, and iron as he was with the New Testament and the Prayer Book, and he built the Anglican Church in the eastern Arctic not only spiritually by his preaching but also physically with his own hands. The Inuit were impressed by Peck's readiness for hard work and still more by his honest interest in their culture and conditions — but still the reason for his presence often puzzled them. He obviously had no goods to trade, so they wondered what he was doing at the trading posts. Early in his career at Little Whale River he overheard one Inuit give this explanation to another: "Him? Oh, he fell down from heaven to save the Innu." Peck laughed at the thought that he had come from heaven — but he gave his whole life to make the rest of the saying come true.

Sentence

This is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 1 John 5.11

Collect

God of our salvation,
whose servant Edmund James Peck
made the testimony of the Spirit his own
and gladly proclaimed the riches of Christ
among the Inuit people,
give the joy of your gospel to us also,
that we may exalt you
in the congregation of all peoples
and praise you
in the abundance of your mercies;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 John 5.6–12 Psalm 107.23–32

Refrain Give thanks to the Lord for his mercy.

Matthew 28.16–20

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
who guided the labours of your servant Edmund,
grant that our offering
may be the work of your grace,
and our worship
may bear witness to your love.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of Pentecost

Prayer after Communion

Grant us, O merciful God,
so to remember your servant Edmund
that we may raise the glad sound of your gospel
until the whole of this nation
resounds with your praise.
We ask this through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Cyprian 13 September
Bishop of Carthage, Martyr, 258 — Memorial

Cyprian was one of the great heroes of the third-century Church, because he guided the Christians in the North African city of Carthage through a period of frightening persecution, until he himself was martyred in the year 258.

He was a wealthy fifty-year-old barrister when he converted to Christianity, and he probably viewed his baptism as his retirement from public service. But the Christians at Carthage decided to exploit his social position and political prestige, and they elected him as their bishop in the year 248.

The next decade proved to be very difficult for the Church in North Africa. The pagan government renewed its persecution of the Church and, on the advice of his presbyters, Cyprian went into hiding for two years. When he returned to Carthage, he had to deal with a large number of people who had lapsed from the faith during the persecution but, once it was past, wanted to come back to the Church. Cyprian refused to slam the door of God's mercy and the Church's forgiveness on them, because he understood the weakness of human will and, even more, the infinite compassion of God in Christ. But, by the same token, he was sure that the returning apostates had wounded Christ anew when they took part in pagan sacrifices. So, he opened the arms of the Church to returning apostates, but required them to undergo public penance in order that they might learn something of what it cost to love and be loved by Christ.

Cyprian himself was called to fulfill this love when, early in the year 258, the imperial government began a new round of persecution. He was banished from Carthage, but insisted on returning and surrendering himself. After a brief trial at which he bore unyielding witness to Christ, he was taken outside the city gates and beheaded.

Sentence

I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, and I lay down my life for the sheep. *John 10.14–15*

Collect

Almighty God,
your love strengthened holy Cyprian
to guard the purity of your Church
and to let his own life be struck down
by the sword of persecution.
Teach our hearts the discipline of your Spirit,
that we may conform ourselves
to the image of the Crucified
and show forth in our lives
the power of his glorious resurrection;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Philippians 3.7–11 Psalm 116.10–17
Refrain I will lift up the cup of salvation.
John 10.11–16

Prayer over the Gifts

Eternal Father,
you have given us new birth
in the womb of the body of Christ.
As we offer this sacrament of unity,
keep us mindful of your holy martyr Cyprian
and make our offering worthy of the costly love of him
who gave his life for us, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Martyr

Prayer after Communion

Giver of all,
grant that we who honour your power
in the sufferings of holy Cyprian,
may continue to do your will on earth
and be greeted with the perfection of your love
in the glory of the age to come;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Holy Cross Day

14 September

Holy Day

Early in the fourth century the emperor Constantine took the Christian Church under his protection, and to show his imperial benevolence he ordered a grand church to be built in Jerusalem. The site he chose was Gol'gotha, the hill where Jesus of Nazareth was crucified and buried. It had once stood outside the city walls, but before the time of Constantine the hill had been levelled and buried under tons of debris. The entire area had to be excavated for Constantine's new church, and the emperor put his mother Helena in charge of the work. In the course of digging the labourers discovered a large beam; and the authorities soon decided that it was a remnant of the very same cross on which the Lord had been crucified. Portions of this beam were enshrined near the altar of the new church when it was dedicated in honour of the Resurrection on September fourteenth in the year 335; and ever since then, in the East and in the West, Christians have kept this date as Holy Cross Day.

Jesus was crucified at the time of year when people in the northern hemisphere prepare the earth for planting. But September is harvest, our time for reaping and sharing what the earth, under our care, has brought forth. Just so with our remembrance of the Holy Cross. On Good Friday we recalled its planting at the seedtime of the new creation; and now, on the verge of autumn, we look for Christ, the true Vine which the Cross supported, to bear the fruit of justice and mercy not only in our own lives but also in the dealings of the world.

Sentence

Far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Galatians 6.14*

Collect

Almighty God,
whose Son our Saviour Jesus Christ
was lifted high upon the cross
that he might draw the whole world to himself,
may we who rejoice in the mystery of our redemption
have grace to take up our cross and follow him,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Numbers 21.4b–9 Psalm 98.1–5

Refrain The Lord has made known his victory. *Or v. 1 or CR 3*

1 Corinthians 1.18–24 John 3.13–17

Prayer over the Gifts

Merciful God,
through the death of your beloved Son
you transformed an instrument of shame
into a sign of hope and glory.
Receive all we offer you this day,
and renew in us the mystery of his love;
through the same Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.

Preface of Holy Week

Prayer after Communion

Almighty God,
we give thanks that you have made us partakers
of the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who took our nature upon him
and suffered death upon the cross for our redemption;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Ninian 16 September
Bishop in Galloway, c. 430 — Memorial

Today we celebrate the memorial of Ninian, a fifth-century bishop who was the first to preach the gospel in western Scotland.

He originally came from England, then a province of the Roman empire, and spent many years in centres of Christian culture like Rome and southern Gaul. At that time the leaders of the Church tended to think that people who lived outside the boundaries of the Roman empire were not worth converting to Christ. In Britain this attitude was visibly reinforced by Hadrian's Wall — a string of stone forts built across the northern boundary of England, in order to keep out the Scottish tribes. But one day Ninian either climbed over or sailed around this wall and headed into barbarian territory in order to bring the gospel to the enemies of his culture.

Ninian eventually established his base in Galloway, at a place called White House, where modern Whithorn now stands. The place was called White House because Ninian built a church there and had its stone masonry painted white. It is not clear how far into Scotland he extended his mission. He or his disciples may have worked as far south as the Lake District in England and as far north as Moray Firth in Scotland. This would make Ninian's mission one of the great links between the Church in Roman Britain and the vibrant Church of the Irish and Scots. And all because Ninian himself surmounted a wall of stone — and the wall of prejudice — which divided two opposing cultures!

Sentence

I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth. *Isaiah 49.6*

Collect

High Sovereign of all creation,
grant us grace to follow your holy servant Ninian
in surmounting every wall of prejudice,
that the glad tidings of Christ
may be heard and accepted
in every language, culture, and community
throughout the whole wide earth.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Romans 10.14–17 Canticle 6 (Seek the Lord)
Refrain My word will prosper in that which I purpose.
Matthew 28.16–20

Prayer over the Gifts

Source and Giver of redemption,
grant us so to hear and speak your Word,
that in company with your blessed servant Ninian,
we may render this holy service
by faith in your mercy
and with confidence in your love.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of Pentecost

Prayer after Communion

O Lord our God,
strengthen our wills and kindle our faith
by the remembrance of your holy servant Ninian,
that we may share the riches of your love
and make the earth be glad
with the tidings of our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

**Founders, Benefactors and Missionaries
of the Anglican Church of Canada** 18 September
Memorial

On this day in 1893 the first General Synod of the Church of England in the Dominion of Canada closed its deliberations with a Service of Thanksgiving. The Canadian Church was no longer three separate provinces, united only through their common obedience to the archbishop of Canterbury. It was now an autonomous national Church, united in itself as a full member of the Anglican family of churches throughout the world. Today we commemorate this historic event in the life of our Church, and take the occasion to give thanks for all those men and women who contributed in various ways, both great and small, to building the Anglican way of life in this nation of Canada.

We may well feel like the author of the Letter to the Hebrews who, as he reckoned up the heroes of faith, finally had to confess: “And what more shall we say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets.” Just so, time would fail us now to tell of all the founders and missionaries who settled the Church and the gospel among us — Charles Inglis of Nova Scotia, George Mountain of Quebec and Francis Fulford of Montreal, John Strachan of Toronto and Benjamin Cronyn of Huron, John McLean of Saskatchewan, George Hills of British Columbia, and William Bompas of Athabasca. And what of all those who never held high office in the Church — all the faithful clergy and people who joined together to build the churches and nourish the parish communities that dot this land: time would certainly fail us even to begin to tell of them!

We may use this feast to reflect upon the history of our own parishes and to recall with thanksgiving the founders, benefactors, and missionaries who, having laid the one foundation which is Jesus Christ, went on to raise, adorn, and sustain the Anglican household of faith in our own corners of Canada.
[Here mention may be made of local founders, benefactors, and missionaries.]

Sentence

All these were honoured in their generations, and were the pride of their times. *Sirach 44.7*

Collect

Almighty God,
we remember all your faithful servants
who laboured in this Church
to preach and establish your Word
and to nurture your people in the ways of holiness.
Grant us so to tend the heritage
which you gave them grace to secure,
that we may become true partners with them
in the joys of your heavenly kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Hebrews 11.32–35, 39–12.2 Psalm 89.1–4
Refrain Your love, O Lord, for ever will I sing.
John 4.32–38

Prayer over the Gifts

In your goodness, O Lord,
remember all those who gave of their life and substance
for the building up of your Church in Canada,
and grant us so to share in their heritage
that we of this present generation may offer to you now
the gifts of true and acceptable service.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Giver of all that is gracious,
you join us with the company of your servants
who raised and sustained the Anglican Church of Canada.
Grant us such faithfulness in the harvest of their labours
that we may receive a blessing from your hands
and rejoice in the abundance of your household.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Theodore of Tarsus 19 September
Archbishop of Canterbury, 690 — Commemoration

Today we remember Theodore, who became archbishop of Canterbury in the year 667 and brought peace and new order to the troubled English Church.

Theodore was sixty-five years old and a refugee from Tarsus in war-torn Asia Minor, when the Pope chose him to rule the Anglo-Saxon church. Once he arrived in England, he found an institution in disarray. A number of bishops were flouting a recent synod, where those who followed the customs of the older Celtic tradition agreed, for unity's sake, to conform to Roman usages. Theodore also found that many dioceses had to be reorganized, or new dioceses set up, just to meet the pastoral needs of the people. He attacked these needs with the energy of a man half his age. He was unyielding in his use of authority wherever he found irregularities, but generous beyond measure towards those who combined true holiness of life with a genuine concern for unity. The Venerable Bede says that Theodore "was the first of the archbishops whom the whole English church consented to obey." His skills as an organizer, and his wisdom in setting policies, made the Church a truly national and unifying force in a country still divided into many kingdoms. When he died on this date in the year 690, he left the Anglo-Saxon Church so strong and at peace that it was able to spare many of its best people to lead the advance in the conversion of the Germanic peoples in continental Europe.

Sentence

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God *Matthew 5.9*

Collect

Almighty God,
by the faithful ministry of your bishop Theodore
you bound up the wounds of the English Church
and renewed its vigour in the works of peace.
Teach us, we pray,
the art of your healing grace,
that we may know the true balm and remedy
for the divisions which afflict your Church;
through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

2 Timothy 2.1–5, 10 Psalm 112.4–9

Refrain The righteousness of the faithful stands fast for ever.

Matthew 24.42–47

Prayer over the Gifts

Father in heaven,
by whose Spirit we remember with honour
your faithful servant Theodore,
purge from our midst all strife and discord
and dispose our hearts to the way of peace,
that our offering may accord with your will
and our service may be the work of true worship.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Gracious God,
who blessed the labours of your servant Theodore,
grant us so to abide in the liberty of this feast
that our wisdom may be informed with love
and our lives may be examples of peace.
This we ask through Jesus Christ the Lord.

John Coleridge Patteson

20 September

Bishop of Melanesia,

and His Companions

Martyrs, 1871 — Commemoration

John Coleridge Patteson was the first bishop of Melanesia, a vast chain of islands in the South Pacific, where he was martyred in 1871.

He had left England and a comfortable curacy sixteen years earlier in order to help Bishop Selwyn in New Zealand. He was assigned to work among the island peoples of Melanesia, where he quickly learned some twenty-three of their many different languages and dialects. He believed that the Melanesians might benefit by learning certain skills from European civilization, but he was entirely free of the veiled racism which spoke of “the white man’s burden” — in his eyes, the natives of Melanesia were the equals of any European. After he became bishop in 1861 he acted on this conviction by labouring to build up an indigenous ministry. He also campaigned to end the virtual enslavement of Melanesian labourers by Englishmen from Australia and Fiji.

While on a routine visitation of his vast diocese in September, 1871, Patteson anchored off Nakapu, one of the Santa Cruz islands where, a few months earlier, five of the inhabitants had been murdered by some Anglo-Australian raiders. Unaware of this atrocity, the bishop crossed the reef and was rowed ashore by the islanders. Soon afterwards his companions were showered with arrows as they waited in a boat just beyond the reef. Three of them were wounded: an English priest named Joseph Atkin and two Melanesians, John Ngongono and Stephen Taroaniara. A couple of hours passed, then a canoe floated out from the shore, containing the bishop’s mangled corpse. A few days later, Atkin and Taroaniara died of tetanus.

When the people of Nakapu learned that they had murdered a man who sought to defend them against their oppressors, they sought to be reconciled with his soul by receiving from his successor the gospel which he had tried to bring them. So, despite the tragedy of his death, the spirit of Patteson’s work lived on, and today the Church of Melanesia is an independent province in the Anglican Communion.

Sentence

I have given you as a light to the nations, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. *Isaiah 42.6, 7*

Collect

Almighty God,
you called John Coleridge Patteson
to be your witness in the islands of Melanesia
and by his labours and suffering
to raise up a people for your own possession.
Pour out upon your Church in every land
the Spirit of service and sacrifice,
that the nations may acknowledge your sovereign law
and all peoples may give you glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Isaiah 42.1–4, 6–7 Psalm 69.31–38
Refrain You who seek God, your heart shall live.
John 12.24–26

Prayer over the Gifts

Grant us, eternal God,
after the example of John Coleridge Patteson,
so to offer this service of thanks and love
that we may know the blessings of your justice,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Martyr

Prayer after Communion

Holy God,
who gave your servant John Coleridge Patteson
grace to serve you even by his death,
grant that we may renounce all thoughts of pride
and order the whole of our lives
to the working of your righteous purpose.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Saint Matthew *21 September*
Apostle and Evangelist — Holy Day

Today we honour Saint Matthew, a disciple and apostle of Christ who is traditionally believed to be the author of the first Gospel in the New Testament. According to that Gospel, Matthew was a tax-gatherer when Jesus called him; the Gospels according to Mark and Luke agree, but say that the taxgatherer's name was Levi. It is probably one and the same person, the disciple we call Matthew.

In first century Judea, tax collectors were viewed as foul collaborators who extorted money from their own people in order to sustain the Roman occupation and enrich themselves. Matthew was an outcast in his own nation, so polluted by his job that he could not take part in the worship of Israel. The fact that Jesus consorted with the likes of Matthew, and even called him into his circle of disciples, was one of the things that scandalized his fellow Jews the most.

With such a background it may be ironic that the Gospel according to Matthew is considered the most Jewish of the four versions in the New Testament. It takes the greatest pains to show that Jesus was faithful to his Jewish heritage and constantly cites Old Testament texts to prove that he did not come to abolish the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them.

Matthew's Gospel is also the work of a true literary artist who not only wrote well but also knew how to organize his materials to their best advantage. These qualities have made it, down through the centuries, the favourite version for many of the preachers, teachers, and reading public of the Church.

Sentence

You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth. *Acts 1.8*

Collect

Almighty God,
who through your Son
called Matthew to be your apostle and evangelist,
free us from all greed and selfish love,
that we may follow in the steps of Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Proverbs 3.1–6 *or* 2 Timothy 3.14–17 Psalm 119.33–40

Refrain Instruct me in your statutes, O Lord. *Or v. 33 or CR 4*

Matthew 9.9–13

Prayer over the Gifts

Father,
accept all we offer you this day.
Guide us with your love
as you nourish the faith of the Church
by the preaching of your apostles.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of Apostles

Prayer after Communion

God of mercy and compassion,
we have shared the joy of salvation
that Matthew knew when Jesus called him.
May this food renew our life in him
who came not to call the righteous
but sinners to salvation in his kingdom,
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sergius 25 September

Abbot of Holy Trinity, Moscow, Spiritual Teacher, 1392 — Commemoration

Today we remember Sergius, a Russian monk of the fourteenth century who, even before his death in 1392, was regarded by the Russian people as their national saint.

Sergius left home around the age of twenty and built a hermitage in the forest of Zagorsk just south of Moscow. He dedicated his little shelter — and his own life within its walls — to the Most Holy Trinity; here he learned to pray without ceasing, even while he helped out the peasants who lived nearby and showed hospitality to any strangers who passed by his hovel. In time word of his manner of life spread throughout the land, until contemporaries felt that his sanctity must be as great as the Russian forest itself. Disciples began to gather around him, and at first they lived in their own individual huts, each with a separate plot of ground for growing food. Sergius eventually brought them together to live as a community under one roof, but this reform caused some dissent and he went to live at another monastery. His exile was short, for the monks soon realized how great a loss they had inflicted on themselves and begged him to return.

With Sergius as its abbot, Zagorsk became the focus of a religious and national revival among the Russian people. Tartar overlords had oppressed them for over a century, and as they began to fight for their freedom they found new strength in the Orthodox faith. Sergius gave this movement his blessing, and his spiritual power upheld the Russian princes in their resolve to lead their people into battle against the Tartar horde and finally break its hold on Russia. Sergius spent his final years travelling, always on foot, from one prince to another in an effort to keep them united. His journeys ended where they had begun, in the monastery of the Holy Trinity at Zagorsk, on this date in 1392.

Sentence

He will be filled with the spirit of understanding, and give thanks to the Lord in prayer. *Sirach 39.6*

Collect

O God,
you kindled the flame of your love
in the heart of blessed Sergius
and made his witness to your glory
a shining light and a steady guide
in the midst of the Russian people.
Lead us by your grace
and overshadow us with your mercy,
that in all things we may obey your will
and at all times know your presence;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Sirach 39.1–9 Psalm 34.1–8

Refrain Look upon the Lord and be radiant.

Luke 12.33–37

Prayer over the Gifts

Ancient of days,
the strength of your servant Sergius
and the provision of all his needs,
receive from our hands
the gifts which you yourself bestowed
and surround this table with your mercy,
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Lord God,
who set your love as a seal
upon the heart of blessed Sergius,
grant that we may stand in the company of the righteous
and know our true stature by the measure of Jesus Christ,
our salvation, light, and peace.

Lancelot Andrewes 26 September
Bishop of Winchester, 1626 — Commemoration

Lancelot Andrewes was a scholarly bishop of Winchester who died in 1626, and we remember him today because his legacy of preaching and devotion is one of the touchstones of our Anglican tradition.

Andrewes spent over thirty years at Cambridge University, first as an undergraduate, then as a teaching Fellow, and finally as Master of Pembroke College. His learning was immense, and he knew so many languages (a wit once said) that he could have been “the interpreter-general at the confusion of tongues.” His gifts as a scholar not only won him a seat on the commission which produced the King James Version of the Bible in 1611, but also successive appointments as bishop of Chichester, Ely, and finally Winchester.

But there was more to Andrewes than scholarship and the prestige it won for him. While Master of Pembroke College he was also the rector of a London church where he nourished his congregation with instruction in the art and discipline of prayer; and every Saturday he used to walk the aisles of old St. Paul’s Cathedral, ready to hear any who came to him for confession and spiritual counsel. Likewise, in his sermons, he marshalled all his learning in order to expound with passion the saving truth contained in each word and phrase of his text.

At his death in 1626 he left behind another testimony to his devotion, a little book called “Private Prayers,” in which texts from Scripture and the Church’s ancient liturgies were brought together in a braid of adoration, praise, thanksgiving, penitence, oblation, intercession, and petition. Thus, in private prayer as in public office, Lancelot Andrewes sought to be in touch with the deepest springs of Christian action, experience and thought — so that his character became like a mirror in which the Church of England beheld the rich integrity of its own inheritance.

Sentence

These were wise men, and never a whit the less wise for coming to Christ; nay, never so truly wise in anything they did, as in so coming. *Lancelot Andrewes, 1620*

Collect

Everlasting God,
you guided your servant Lancelot Andrewes
in preaching and in prayer
to bring forth ancient treasures
for the renewing of the English Church.
Grant us to share his conformity to Christ,
that our hearts may love you, our minds may serve you
and our lips may proclaim the greatness of your mercy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God now and for ever.

Readings

Sirach 51.13–22 Psalm 78.1–6
Refrain I inclined my ear and received wisdom.
Matthew 13.44–52

Prayer over the Gifts

Source of all mercy and love,
who taught your servant Lancelot Andrewes
to seek wisdom in prayer,
fulfill us with your own true gift,
that we may share in the life of your Word
and be partners in the work of your Spirit.
This we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

O God our Salvation,
by whose Word and sacrament
we partake of the fulness of your Son,
grant that, following your servant Lancelot Andrewes,
we may proclaim with gladness the riches of your grace
and with steadfast love give glory to your Name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Saint Michael and All Angels

29 September

Holy Day

Today we celebrate those mysterious beings which Scripture calls “angels,” a name which comes from the Greek word for “messengers.” Messengers from God can be visible or invisible, and may take human or non-human forms. Christians have always felt themselves to be attended by healthful spirits — swift, powerful, and enlightening. These spirits are often depicted in Christian art in human form, with wings to show that time and space do not constrain them, with swords to signify their power, and with dazzling raiment to represent their ability to enlighten faithful humans. Of the many angels mentioned in the Bible, only four are called by name: Michael, Gabriel, U’riel, and Ra’pha-el. In the Book of Revelation, the Archangel Michael is presented as the powerful agent of God who wards off evil from God’s people and delivers peace to them at the end of this life’s mortal struggle.

Many good and faithful Christians find it difficult to accept the existence of angels; for them, angels have no more reality in fact than unicorns, griffins, or the phoenix. It may be true that the existence of angels is not one of the things in which Christians must believe if they want to be saved. Yet whenever Christians say the Nicene Creed, they confess that God has created “all that is, seen and unseen.” Entertaining the possibility of angels may be one way of acknowledging the sheer diversity of life, visible and invisible, that God has ordained in creation.

Sentence

Bless the Lord, all you his hosts, you ministers of his who do his will. *Psalm 103.21*

Collect

Eternal God,
you have ordained and constituted in a wonderful order
the ministries of angels and mortals.
Grant that as your holy angels stand before you in heaven,
so at your command
they may help and defend us here on earth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Genesis 28.10–17 Psalm 103.19–22

Refrain Bless the Lord, O my soul. *Or v. 1 or CR 1*

Revelation 12.7–12 John 1.47–51

Prayer over the Gifts

God of glory,
as you have appointed angels to minister in your presence,
so may all our worship bring you worthy praise.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of Trinity Sunday

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God,
you have fed us with the bread of angels.
May we who come under their protection,
like them give you continual service and praise;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jerome 30 September
Teacher of the Faith, 420 — Memorial

Jerome was a fourth-century monk who produced the standard Latin version of Scriptures known as the Vulgate and by his own commentaries on the text had a lasting influence on the Church's interpretation of the Bible.

He was born in Italy around the year 340 and baptized as a young man. His upbringing led him to expect the best of himself, and he set his heart on spiritual perfection. His first experiment in monastic life ended in scandal; we do not know what it was all about, except that it forced him to leave his home. He then tried his vocation as a hermit in Palestine, but found that he could not endure the physical hardship it required. He eventually returned to Italy, where he became secretary to the bishop of Rome and began his lifelong work of editing and improving earlier Latin translations of Scripture in order to produce the Vulgate, whose name means "the Bible in Common Speech."

In the meantime, Jerome again moved to Palestine and settled at Bethlehem, where he gathered and ruled over a community of monks and another community of devout women. Here he wrote his commentaries on Scripture, which were to remain standard reference works in the Latin West for over a thousand years. He died at Bethlehem in the year 420.

Jerome could exercise great charm in personal encounters, and some of this charm is reflected in his letters. But he was also a vain, pugnacious, and jealous man who could not endure someone else being thought his equal; and his jealousy (as much as his concern for orthodox teaching) led him to besmirch and finally destroy the reputations of several erstwhile friends. By common consent he is the most unlikeable person ever called a saint by the Church — and yet the Church recognizes that God may nourish the faithful by means of even the least promising instruments. So, we do not dwell on the flaws of Jerome but give thanks for the fruit of his labours as translator and scholar, because we see in them a true work of God's grace.

Sentence

And they read from the law of God clearly, and gave the sense,
so that the people understood the Scriptures. *Nehemiah 8.8*

Collect

God of truth,
who gave to your servant Jerome
the gifts of learning and wisdom
to render in the language of the people
the meaning of your holy Scriptures,
grant us, as we ponder the written Word,
to be ruled by your Holy Spirit,
that Christ, the living Word,
may transform us according to your will;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Nehemiah 8.1–3, 5–8 Psalm 119.105–112

Refrain Your word, O Lord, is a lantern to my feet.

Luke 24.44–48

Prayer over the Gifts

Merciful God,
who opened the mind of your servant Jerome
to understand the witness of your holy Scriptures,
establish your Word in our hearts, we pray,
that our offering may accord with your justice
and our service may be ruled by your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of Pentecost

Prayer after Communion

Giver of all,
you overrule our contentious hearts
and gather us in the communion of your Son.
Open our minds to the knowledge of your promises,
that we may abide in your love
and continue for ever in the bond of your peace.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Francis of Assisi

4 October

Friar, 1226 — Memorial

Today we celebrate Francis of Assisi, the thirteenth-century Italian whose greatest honour was to be known as *il Poverello*, “the little poor one of Christ.”

He grew up in a very wealthy family and seemed to have not a care in the world until he was twenty years old, when a chance encounter with a leper left him appalled by his own uselessness. Soon afterwards he heard Jesus speaking to him from a painting of the crucifixion over the altar of a local church. He threw away his wardrobe and renounced his father’s wealth in order to care for the poor and the crippled. In 1208 he heard the commission which the risen Lord gave to his apostles, “Go, make all nations my disciples,” and knew that it was also addressed to him. Francis began to train his followers for the task of making Jesus truly known and loved among the ordinary people of Italy. Out of this movement developed the Order of the Lesser Brethren, commonly called the Franciscans.

Francis cared deeply for his new Order, but he also grew restless as it became an established institution of the Church. He distanced himself from its day-to-day life and eventually went his own way as he strove to imitate Christ’s total obedience to God. Two years before his death he was granted a sign which manifested this desire. One September day in 1224, he had a vision of the Crucified borne on the wings of a seraph. As the vision withdrew, the wounds of Jesus appeared in Francis’s own flesh — the scars like nail-wounds on his hands and feet, and in his right side a scar like a spear-wound. These marks, called the *stigmata*, remained on Francis’s body until his death two years later.

Sentence

May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. *Galatians 6.14*

Collect

Grant us, Almighty God,
after the example of your holy servant Francis,
to do what you would have us do,
and always to desire what is pleasing in your sight,
that cleansed by your love,
enlightened by your truth,
and kindled with the fire of your Holy Spirit,
we may follow in the footsteps of your beloved Son
and make our way to you, O God most High;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Galatians 6.14–18 Psalm 148.7–14
Refrain The Name of the Lord only is exalted.
Matthew 11.25–30

Prayer over the Gifts

Loving God,
join our offering to the sacrifice of your only Son,
that our service may be stamped with his humility
and bear the image of his obedience;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

God of all goodness,
who gave to your servant Francis
a will to be the servant of all,
grant us in our service of your gospel
to hold back nothing of ourselves for ourselves,
that Christ may receive the whole of our lives
into the habitations of light and glory;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paulinus

10 October

First Bishop of York, Missionary, 644 — Commemoration

Paulinus was a Roman monk who was made a bishop in the year 625 and sent to the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Northumbria, where he settled at York and ministered to the few Christians at the court of King Edwin.

The pagan king engaged Paulinus in long private discussions about the Christian faith and eventually called a council of his nobles to debate whether he should accept Paulinus's religion. One of them answered in the classic tones of the Anglo-Saxon heritage and said: "This, O King, is how the present life of man appears to me in comparison with that time which is unknown. You are sitting feasting with your nobles in winter time; the fire is burning on the hearth in the middle of the hall and all inside is warm, while outside the wintry storms of rain and snow are raging; and a sparrow flies swiftly through the hall. It enters in at one door and quickly flies out through the other. For the few moments it is inside, the storm and wintry tempest cannot touch it, but after the briefest moment of calm it flits from your sight, out of the wintry storm and into it again. So this life of man appears but a moment; what follows or indeed what went before, we know not at all. If this new doctrine brings us more certain information, it seems right that we should accept it." The council decided that Edwin would do right to become a Christian; and on Easter Day, 627, Paulinus baptized him.

Many Northumbrian noblemen followed their king's example, and Paulinus was able to extend his mission beyond York, founding churches as far south as Lincoln. But his work suffered a terrific setback when Edwin was killed in battle with the pagan Mercians, who then ravaged the Northumbrian church. Paulinus decided to quit northern England and return to Kent, where he was made bishop of Rochester and devoted himself to his flock until his death in the year 644.

Sentence

Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord! *Isaiah 2.5*

Collect

Almighty God,
you sent your holy servant Paulinus
to preach the gospel of peace
in a kingdom of warriors,
that those who feared the darkness of their fate
might know the living splendour of your light.
Grant us, after his example,
so to manifest our adoption as your children
that we may succour the hopeless
and bring peace to war-filled hearts;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Isaiah 2.2–5 Psalm 27.1–6

Refrain The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Matthew 5.14–16

Prayer over the Gifts

Eternal God,
open our hearts to the riches of your grace
that the gifts which we offer with our hands
may be made perfect with your justice,
and the service which we render with our lips
may be heard in the tabernacle of your glory.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Grant us, Almighty God,
so to remember your holy servant Paulinus,
that we may share in his witness
and bring those who have no hope
to place their whole confidence in you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Edward the Confessor

13 October

King of England, 1066 — Commemoration

Today we remember Edward, a king of England who died in 1066 and was called “the Confessor” because of his religious devotion and many pious works.

He spent much of his early life in exile with his mother in France because a Danish invader had killed his father and older brother and usurped the Anglo-Saxon throne. But when the usurper died without a credible heir, the English recalled Edward and asked him to be their sovereign. He proved to be a cautious ruler who rarely left his palace and preferred anything or anyone French over English ways. But he also had the williness of a survivor and managed to out-manoeuvre the ambitious earls of his kingdom, so that England enjoyed twenty-two years of relative peace.

Edward devoted a good deal of his royal income to the relief of the poor and the protection of the ordinary folk, and he lavished enormous amounts on the Church. He was responsible for the building of Westminster Abbey, which was consecrated in 1065 and eventually became the place where England’s kings and queens received their coronation.

Unlike his father and older brother, Edward managed to die in his own bed rather than on the battlefield. But because of an ill-considered promise made to Duke William of Normandy many years earlier, his immediate bequest to England was a confused succession and, in its wake, the Norman Conquest. The Norman kings, in fact, were the major advocates of Edward’s canonization; and we commemorate their success in this cause, by remembering him on the day in 1163 when his Norman successors moved his remains to a splendid shrine in Westminster Abbey.

Sentence

Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the king's son; that he may rule your people righteously, and the poor with justice. *Psalm 72.1–2*

Collect

O God,
you called your servant Edward the Confessor
to rule the English people in justice
and to endow your Church with works of beauty.
Mercifully grant that, following his example,
we may provide for the needs of the poor
and give shelter to the homeless and orphan;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

2 Chronicles 6.12–21 Psalm 138.5–9

Refrain All the rulers of the earth will praise you.

Matthew 5.1–10

Prayer over the Gifts

God of righteousness,
grant that we may know
the fulfilment of our service
in the wondrous oblation of your Son,
and be delivered from all evils
both in this life and in the age to come.
We ask this through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

O Lord our God,
you restore the whole of our life
with the meat and drink of heaven.
We pray that all those set in authority
may follow the example of Edward the Confessor,
to defend the poor who cry out in distress
and to preserve the lives of the needy;
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Teresa of Avila

15 October

Spiritual Teacher and Reformer, 1582 — Commemoration

Teresa of Avila was a Spanish nun of the sixteenth century whose visions of Christ and gifts as a spiritual director have placed her among the greatest of all Christian mystics.

She was the only daughter of a minor nobleman and entered the Carmelite convent in her native town of A'vil-a when she was twenty-one. Over the next two decades she endured many illnesses, one of which left her paralyzed, and also a nagging sense that in her prayers and devotions she was doing nothing more than "treading water." Then, in answer to her despair, she began to have visions and hear "interior voices." The most famous of these experiences, known as "transverberation of the heart," took place over a number of days in 1559. At her left side Teresa beheld an angel who held a golden spear with a flaming tip, with which he pierced her heart again and again. Teresa later wrote that each time the angel withdrew the spear she was ' 'left completely afire with a great love for God," and knew that her soul would "never be content with anything less than God."

Three years later, in obedience to another vision, Teresa left her convent with thirteen other nuns to observe the primitive constitutions of the Carmelite Order in all their strictness. Despite fierce, sometimes violent opposition from the Carmelite establishment, Teresa eventually founded sixteen other Reformed Carmelite houses.

In the midst of her other concerns Teresa also found time to write a number of books, which reflect her holiness, wisdom, and sense of humour; and through them she has become one of the most widely loved saints in the Church, attractive even to those who have not shared her Spanish catholicism or her monastic vocation.

Sentence

All the works of the Lord are very good, and whatever he commands will be done at the appointed time. *Sirach 39.16*

Collect

Almighty God,
who spoke to your servant Teresa
in the stillness of your abiding love,
grant us the will to follow her example,
that in prayer and sacrament,
and by meditation upon your Word,
we may find your peace wherever we live;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God now and for ever.

Readings

1 Kings 19.4–13 Psalm 66.7–11

Refrain The Lord brought us into a place of liberty.

John 14.1–11

Prayer over the Gifts

Eternal God,
you made the work of your Son to triumph
in the life of your servant Teresa.
Mercifully assist us in our offering of praise,
that thirsting for your peace,
we may drink from the well of eternal life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Heavenly Father,
you open the doors of heaven over this table
and make us sharers in your eternal banquet.
Grant us such perseverance in prayer
that in company with your blessed servant Teresa,
we may know our lives
to be held in your loving hands,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

John of the Cross

15 October

Priest, Spiritual Teacher, 1591 — Commemoration

John of the Cross was the greatest Spanish mystic of the sixteenth century, and his writings still nourish modern Christians in their hunger for true experience in the spiritual life.

John was born in 1542 and became a Carmelite friar at the age of twenty-one. Four years later he met Teresa of Avila and joined in her reform of the Carmelite Order, serving as confessor to Teresa's nuns. His prominence in the reform-movement made him a target of intrigues; twice he was abducted and imprisoned. After Teresa's death he also suffered vindictive treatment at the hands of his own superiors in the Reformed Carmelites, and their harshness contributed to his death in 1591.

Through all his trials John was sustained by an intense mystical love for Jesus Christ. Like Teresa, he experienced the presence of Christ in "intellectual visions." His reflection upon these experiences issued, first of all, in poetry of extraordinary power and beauty. At the urging of his disciples, he selected a number of his poems and produced prose commentaries on them, which have become classics of mystical theology. John united the vocation of a theologian with the experience of a mystic, and his writings are the supreme example of theology as the fruit of prayer.

Sentence

You speak in my heart and say, "Seek my face." Your face,
Lord, will I seek. *Psalms 27.11*

Collect

O God,
you kindled the living flame of your love
in the heart of your servant John of the Cross
and made him a shining light
in the midst of your Church.
May we also be inspired
with the vision of your truth
and live as children of the light;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Song of Solomon 2.8–17 Psalm 121
Refrain My help comes from the Lord.
John 16.12–15, 25–28

Prayer over the Gifts

God of infinite light,
who sustained your servant John
through all his tribulations,
grant us humility in the offering of this service
and joy in the receiving of your gifts;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

O Lord our God,
who granted true visions of your love
to your servant John of the Cross,
make us faithful
to the life you have given us,
that your Spirit may guide us
into all the truth of your Son Jesus Christ,
who sits at your right hand in glory,
now and for ever.

Ignatius 17 October
Bishop of Antioch, Martyr, c. 115 — Memorial

Ignatius was the second bishop of Antioch in Syria, who was caught in a persecution of the Church around the year 115 and condemned to suffer death in the public arena. The authorities decided to send him all the way to Rome for execution of this sentence. He was put in the custody of ten soldiers and escorted along a route which led through cities with large Christian congregations. There was a lengthy stop-over at Smyrna, on the coast of Asia Minor, and Ignatius took the opportunity to write letters to the four churches that he had just passed through. There was another stop-over at Philippi in Macedonia, where Ignatius wrote another three letters, two back to churches in Asia Minor and one forward to the church at Rome. Taken together, these seven letters were Ignatius's last testament. He exhorted each church to gather in unity under its bishop, most especially at the eucharist; and he urged the churches to reject certain heresies about the person of Christ. Above all, Ignatius urged the churches to rejoice with him in the prospect of his own martyrdom for the sake of Christ. He embraced his fate passionately, even with a joy that we may find hard to fathom. Ignatius wrote in his letter to the church at Rome: "I am God's wheat: let me be ground by the teeth of wild beasts, that I may be found pure bread for Christ."

Sentence

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live,
but it is Christ who lives in me. *Galatians 2.19b–20*

Collect

Almighty God,
we praise your Name
for your bishop and martyr Ignatius of Antioch,
who offered himself as grain to be ground
that he might present to you the pure bread of sacrifice.
Accept, we pray,
the willing tribute of our lives
and give us a share in the pure and spotless offering
of your Son Jesus Christ;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Romans 8.35–39 Psalm 116.1–8
Refrain Into your hands I commend my spirit.
John 12.23–26

Prayer over the Gifts

Heavenly Father,
who adorned your Church
with the witness of your holy martyr Ignatius,
grant to us, we pray,
the gift of true and gracious unity,
that your Spirit may direct our service
and our offering may be your work in our midst.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Martyr

Prayer after Communion

O Lord our God,
may the bread of heaven refresh us
and the wine of your kingdom give us new strength,
that we who honour your martyr Ignatius
may manifest by our actions
what we became by our baptism;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Saint Luke the Evangelist

18 October

Holy Day

Luke is mentioned three times in the Letters of Saint Paul, once as “the beloved physician,” but the Church remembers him chiefly as the author of two books which came to be included in the New Testament.

The first book is the one we know as the Gospel according to Luke, where he told the story of Jesus, his preaching and mighty work in the border-country of Galilee, his suffering, death and resurrection at the very heart of Israel, in Jerusalem itself. The second of Luke’s two books is the Acts of the Apostles. In this work he told how the good news was spread: how the apostles began their preaching at Jerusalem and moved westwards with the gospel until they reached the very centre of the Roman empire, the city of Rome itself. Thus, in these two books, Luke presented a comprehensive history of the gospel in terms of a journey from the hinterland of Judea to the heartland of imperial power and civilization.

We offer thanks to God for bestowing such gifts of understanding and literary skill on Luke, and we celebrate Luke himself because he responded so faithfully to the working of grace. But still, we remember the story-teller for the story that he told; and that story is the Lord’s story. So, on this his day, we can honour Saint Luke no more highly than by joining in the telling of that story, which God gave him power to give us; that story which is the praise of God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.

Sentence

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who bring good tidings, who publish peace. *Isaiah 52.7*

Collect

Almighty God,
who inspired Luke the physician
to proclaim the love and healing power of your Son,
give your Church, by the grace of the Spirit
and the medicine of the gospel,
the same love and power to heal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Sirach 38.1–4, 6–10, 12–14 *or* 2 Timothy 4.5–13 Psalm 147.1–7

Refrain Praise the Lord who heals the brokenhearted. *Or v. 3 or*
Alleluia!

Luke 4.14–21

Prayer over the Gifts

God of compassion,
you are a strong tower for all who trust in you.
Be now and evermore our defense,
that we may proclaim the only name under heaven
given for health and salvation,
the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of All Saints

Prayer after Communion

Living God,
may we who have shared in these holy mysteries
enjoy health of body and mind,
and witness faithfully to your gospel,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jean de Brébeuf, Isaac Jogues and Their Companions

19 October

Missionaries and Martyrs in New France, 1642–1649 — Memorial

Today we honour the eight Canadian martyrs who suffered for Christ between 1642 and 1649; and we name two of them especially — Jean de Brébeuf and Isaac Jogues.

Jogues came to Canada in 1636 and was posted to the Huron mission on Georgian Bay. Six years later he was captured by the Iroquois and endured horrific trials for a full twelve months before making his escape to France. Undeterred by his experiences, he returned to New France and volunteered to open a Jesuit mission among his former captors. He was accompanied by a Jesuit lay-brother named Jean de La Lande. As soon as they arrived among the Mohawks, the two Jesuits were taken prisoner. On October eighteenth, 1646, Jogues was hatched to death; La Lande suffered the same fate the next day.

Jean de Brébeuf was one of the first Jesuit priests to arrive in New France and in 1633 he settled among the Hurons on Georgian Bay. He felt complete solidarity with the crucified Jesus and had mystical premonitions that he would share the sufferings of Christ in his own flesh. His visions came true in 1649, when Iroquois war parties invaded Huronia for the second year in a row. On March sixteenth they assaulted the mission of Saint-Louis, where Brébeuf and another Jesuit priest named Gabriel Lalemant were staying. The two Jesuits refused to abandon their flock and were captured. Later that afternoon, and on through the night, Brébeuf was subjected to atrocities which defy description. He endured until dawn the next day, when an Iroquois warrior ended his sufferings. Lalemant was put through a similar ordeal later that day and was finally killed towards sunset.

By their faithfulness Brébeuf, Jogues, and their six companions won a victory that is as vast as God's mercy. For their victory was in the cross of Christ, whose love for the Huron and Iroquois peoples was the reason they gave up their lives.

Sentence

After this, let no one trouble me; I carry branded on my body the marks of Jesus. *Galatians 6.17 (NJB)*

Collect

Eternal God,
you consecrated the first-fruits of faith
in the forests of North America by the preaching and blood
of Jean de Brebeuf and his holy companions.
In your mercy send forth many
to labour in every corner of this nation,
that your gospel may yield in our day
a rich and bountiful harvest
by the increase of true Christian people;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Romans 8.28–39 Psalm 116.10–16
Refrain I will lift the cup of salvation.
Luke 12.8–12

Prayer over the Gifts

Almighty God,
by whose power the holy martyrs of Canada
bore their wounds and suffered death
in the image of your crucified Son,
regard not our sins but your grace in giving us this service,
that we may take the cup of salvation
and know the blessings of your table;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Martyr

Prayer after Communion

Heavenly Father,
who gave your holy martyrs of Canada
power to share in the sufferings of your Son,
grant us such strength in our faith
that we may never fear nor falter in our witness to your love;
for the sake of him who died and rose again,
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Today we remember James, who was a brother of Jesus, a witness to his resurrection, and a leader of the Church in Jerusalem. He is not mentioned in any of the gospels, which suggests that he did not follow his brother or take part in his journey to the cross. But when Saint Paul wrote his First Letter to the Corinthians, he made this note: after the resurrection Jesus “appeared to [Peter], then to the Twelve; then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time; *then he appeared to James*, then to all the apostles.” The risen Lord chose his own brother to be one of the original witnesses to his resurrection; and this fact, together with his kinship to Jesus, gave James special authority among the other disciples. He came to be recognized as the equal of Peter and John in the leadership of the Church.

James and many other disciples of his brother still considered themselves Jews, still worshipped in the Temple, and still tried to obey the law of Moses. As a result they were suspicious of Saint Paul and his mission to the gentiles. They believed that the gospel was only for Jews, and that pagans first had to be circumcised according to Jewish law before they could be baptized and considered disciples of Christ. Paul taught just the opposite — that pagans had free access to Christ through faith and baptism. The controversy threatened to divide the whole Church, so Paul went up to Jerusalem and argued his case with James and the other “pillars” of the Jerusalem church. In the end James accepted Paul’s arguments and acknowledged that his mission to the non-Jewish nations was indeed the work of God. As Paul wrote: “James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.” Thus, James is honoured for his reconciling wisdom, as one who overcame his own prejudices in order to preserve the unity of the fledgling Church.

Sentence

This is an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.

John 1.47 (RSV)

Collect

Let your people, O God,
continually cherish the memory of James,
who was a pillar in your Church
supporting its witness to the resurrection;
and grant that,
following his example in the work of reconciliation,
we may bring all who are at variance and enmity
to peace and perfect unity in your Son;
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Acts 15.12–22a Psalm 1

Refrain Happy are they who delight in the Lord.

Matthew 13.53–58

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
who made your servant James
a pillar of your Church at Jerusalem,
grant that we who offer these gifts
may dwell in the bond of mutual peace.
We ask this through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of All Saints

Prayer after Communion

Giver of redemption,
who taught your servant James,
the brother of our Lord,
to seek the way of reconciliation,
keep us in the unity afforded by this sacrament,
that we may never give occasion for strife
and be ready in the service of peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Alfred the Great

26 October

King of the West Saxons, 899 — Commemoration

Alfred the Great is a hero of English history because of his military and political victories — and a hero of the Church because of his efforts to build a truly Christian nation.

In 871, at the age of twenty-two, he became the king of the West Saxons and was immediately caught in a desperate seven-year struggle against the Danes who had overrun all the rest of England. The West Saxons emerged victorious, and Alfred spent the next twenty years of his life and reign struggling to win the peace. He sought to reconstruct the political life and institutions of his kingdom — and more, to bring about a renaissance of Anglo-Saxon Christianity. He organized a system of national education and personally supervised the translation of many Latin writings into Anglo-Saxon, in order to meet his people's growing literacy. Alfred the Great was, in short, the pattern of a Christian king, one whose prowess in war was matched and finally overshadowed by his wisdom in the works of peace.

Sentence

He shepherded the people with a faithful and true heart, and guided them with the skilfulness of his hands. *Psalms 78.72*

Collect

Sovereign Lord,
you strengthened the arm of your servant Alfred
to restore in his ravaged kingdom
the knowledge of peace and the love of learning.
Make us eager to increase our understanding
while we are in this world,
and give us a fervent longing to reach that endless life
where all shall be made clear;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Wisdom 6.1–3, 9–12, 24–25 Psalm 21.1–7

Refrain The king rejoices in your strength, O Lord.

Luke 6.43–49

Prayer over the Gifts

Eternal God,
who gave wisdom to your servant Alfred the Great,
make our offering the work of peace
and bless our worship with your grace and mercy,
that we may know the triumph of your kingdom
in the paschal mystery of your Son Jesus Christ,
who reigns for ever in glory.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Source of all power and wisdom,
whose servant Alfred passed through the trial of war
to win still greater victory in the works of peace,
teach us to love what you bestow by this sacrament,
that we may show forth in our lives
our perfect unity in Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Saint Simon and Saint Jude

28 October

Apostles — Holy Day

Today we commemorate Saint Simon and Saint Jude, whose names appear in the New Testament on every list of the twelve apostles.

Simon was called “the Zealot,” which suggests that he once belonged to a Jewish resistance movement. Animated by religious fervour, the Zealots used any means, even terror, to overthrow Roman rule and revive Jewish independence. Simon originally may have followed Jesus in hopes that he would “restore the kingdom to Israel.”

Jude “the son of James” was also called Thaddeus. One of the Letters included in the New Testament is ascribed to him; and we hear his voice in Saint John’s account of the Last Supper, where he is distinguished as “the other Judas, not Iscariot.” Judas Iscariot was the disciple who betrayed Jesus, and the fact that Jude shared the traitor’s name made Christians reluctant to ask for his prayers. For this reason Jude is considered the patron saint of what is shunned by the world, especially lost causes and those who suffer from incurable diseases.

The western Church remembers Simon and Jude together because, in the seventh or eighth century, the church of Rome acquired some relics of both apostles and placed them in a single shrine. October twenty-eighth is probably the anniversary of the dedication of this shrine.

With so little information to go on, our commemoration of Simon and Jude may be compared to their patronage of lost causes and hopeless cases. It is a little victory against the odds of history. For Christ is often made known by deeds which are recorded nowhere else but in the eternal remembrance of God; and by honouring Simon and Jude today we share in God’s own mindfulness of their apostolic zeal.

Sentence

You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth. *Acts 1.8*

Collect

Almighty God,
we thank you for the glorious company of the apostles,
and especially on this day for Simon and Jude.
As they were faithful and zealous in their mission,
so may we with ardent devotion
make known the love and mercy
of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Deuteronomy 32.1–4 *or* Ephesians 2.13–22 Psalm 119.89-96

Refrain O Lord, your word is everlasting.

Or v. 89 or CR 4

John 15.17–27

Prayer over the Gifts

God of faithfulness,
accept our offering this day,
and give us grace to witness to your truth
and to follow in the path of those
who acknowledge Jesus as Lord for ever and ever.

Preface of Apostles

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God,
we are nourished by the bread of life.
Strengthen us to witness to the gospel,
and bring us to reign with Jesus Christ your Son,
for he is Lord now and for ever.

James Hannington 29 October

Bishop of Eastern Equatorial Africa,

and His Companions

Martyrs, 1885 — Commemoration

Today we remember James Hannington, the first Anglican bishop of Eastern Equatorial Africa, who was murdered with most of his company while trying to enter Uganda in 1885.

Hannington was raised in a wealthy Congregationalist family but in his youth conformed to the Church of England, went to Oxford, and chose to enter the ordained ministry. He combined two qualities which Victorians found especially attractive in their clergy — he was a first-class athlete as well as a priest with heartfelt religion. After five years in an English curacy, he volunteered his services to the Church Missionary Society for work in the Victoria Nyanza district. When the Society decided to organize this district into the diocese of Eastern Equatorial Africa, Hannington was their choice for first bishop. He was consecrated in June, 1884, and a year later was heading inland from Mombasa with a large party of European and African Christians.

He hoped to open a more direct route to the people around Lake Victoria and, after two months on safari, decided to divide his party and proceed with a smaller group. Five days later, the bishop and his companions reached the eastern shore of Lake Victoria.

In the meantime, news of Hannington's approach had reached Mwanga, the king of Buganda, who immediately ordered the European party to be seized. Hannington and his companions were ambushed, captured, and then subjected to privation and torture for over a week. On October 29, 1885, they were butchered. The bishop's last words were: "Go, tell Mwanga I have purchased the road to Uganda with my blood."

Sentence

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to try you, but rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings. *1 Peter 4.12-13*

Collect

Precious in your sight, O Lord,
is the death of your martyrs
James Hannington and his companions,
who purchased with their blood a road into Uganda
for the proclamation of the gospel;
and we pray that with them
we also may obtain the crown of righteousness
which is laid up for all
who love the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Readings

1 Peter 3.14-18, 22 Psalm 124

Refrain Those who endure to the end shall be saved.

Matthew 10.16-22

Prayer over the Gifts

Holy and eternal God,
whose martyr James Hannington
sealed his witness to your glory
by the shedding of his blood,
grant to us,
by the offering and outpouring of these gifts,
that we may celebrate in gladness
the mystery of our redemption;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Martyr

Prayer after Communion

O God,
by whose mercy we share in the risen life
of him who was once crucified,
conform us to that perfect love
by which your martyrs conquered the fearful might of death,
that we also may show forth your victory;
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

John Wyclyf *30 October*
Reformer, 1384 — Commemoration

John Wyclyf was a fourteenth-century English priest who has been remembered in the Protestant tradition as a forerunner of the Reformation.

A native of Yorkshire, Wyclyf entered Oxford University in 1345 and spent most of the next forty years there. The details of his career are very obscure, though it is known that he was granted a doctorate in 1372 and appointed rector of Lutterworth two years later.

By that time Wyclyf had become notorious for his attacks on the clergy of his day. He produced a series of theological treatises in which he argued for the right of secular rulers to deprive “unworthy priests.” He was cited for heresy, but the patronage of the English royal family saved him from being tried in ecclesiastical court. His royal patrons withdrew their protection when Wyclyf went on to attack the Church’s official teaching about Christ’s presence in the eucharist. With the king’s support, his opinions were formally condemned in 1382 and his supporters were excluded from Oxford. Wyclyf himself seems to have left the university two years earlier and retired to Lutterworth.

Wyclyf gave his approval to a translation of Scripture into Middle English, although he had no hand in its actual production. A movement known as the Lollards called him their master, but his academic concerns and connection with the unpopular policies of the Crown left him without any wide influence or following among the people of England. He died in 1384, having suffered a stroke while hearing Mass.

Sentence

Hear, O my people, and I will speak: O Israel, I will bear witness against you. *Psalm 50.7*

Collect

O God,
whose justice continually challenges your Church
to live according to its calling,
grant us who now remember the work of John Wyclif
so to forsake all anger and self-will,
that the pure light of your gospel
may continually cleanse and renew
the body of your Son Jesus Christ;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Hosea 11.1–9 Psalm 50.7–15, 22–24

Refrain Make good your vows to the Most High.

Mark 13.3–13

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
grant that we who bring these tokens of our praise
may know the presence of him
who enfolds our service in mercy.
We ask this for his sake,
who pleads for us in glory.

Preface of Lent

Prayer after Communion

God of mercy and power,
grant us contrition for the wounds
which our sins inflict upon your Church,
and such love for Christ
that we may seek to heal
the divisions which afflict his Body,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God now and for ever.

Jan Hus 30 October
Reformer, 1415 — Commemoration

Jan Hus was a Czech priest who was unjustly condemned and executed in 1415 because he advocated reforms in the life and doctrine of the Church.

He grew up when the Czech people were being moved by an extraordinary revival in their practice of the eucharist. At that time most Christians did not dare to receive the sacrament of Christ's body more than three times a year. The Czechs broke with this custom and joined in daily celebrations where everyone, from the youngest infants to the oldest widows, received communion. This common experience of the eucharist acted as leaven in the life of their nation and raised them to a new sense of justice in their dealings with one another — and in what they expected from their German rulers.

Hus became the best-known theologian of this movement after 1402, when he was appointed to the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague. His preaching and genuine goodness of character made him beloved among all classes of the Czech nation. But his outspoken demands for reform of the Church — and his challenge of those doctrines which were used to justify ecclesiastical abuses — made him the target of intrigues on the part of German churchmen in Prague. He was summoned to the council of Constance in 1415, where the authorities reneged on their promise of immunity and safe conduct and had him tried on a fraudulent charge of heresy. He was convicted without a hearing and burned at the stake on July 6th of that year.

Protestants have always regarded Hus as a precursor of their own movement, because he was killed for advocating the reformation of doctrine as well as of institutional abuses. In this century, Roman catholic scholars have also acknowledged that he was unjustly condemned and recognized that he was a teacher of great courage and true reforming instincts.

Sentence

Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord; he will come to us like the showers, like the spring rains that water the earth. *Hosea 6.3*

Collect

Eternal God,
you endued your servant Jan Hus
with singular gifts in character and utterance,
so that he recalled the Church to the image and form of Christ.
Grant that we who honour him this day
may ever obey the precepts of love
even as we bear witness against corruption,
and may never cease to pray for our enemies
even as we suffer their contempt;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Hosea 11.1–9 Psalm 50.7–15, 22–24

Refrain Make good your vows to the Most High.

Mark 13.3–13

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
grant that,
just as many grains were gathered to make this bread,
and many grapes to make the wine of our common cup,
so your Church may be gathered into one
for the celebration of your redeeming love,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of Lent

Prayer after Communion

God of mercy and power,
grant us contrition for the wounds
which our sins inflict upon your Church,
that we may have power to heal
the divisions which cripple the Body of your Son,
who reigns at your right hand, now and for ever.

Saints of the Reformation Era

31 October

Commemoration

On October 31st in the year 1517, a notice was posted on the door of the Castle Church at Wittenburg, a town in Saxony. It was put there by Martin Luther, an Augustinian monk and a lecturer in the University of Wittenburg. He invited other academics to debate ninety-five theses or propositions regarding the Church's doctrine and practice of penance. These Ninety-Five Theses triggered a cluster of reactions which eventually forced Luther into open rebellion against the papacy; and his rebellion set in train the movement called the Protestant Reformation.

Luther and the other leaders of this movement accused the Church of encouraging "works righteousness" — the idea that people could earn salvation by doing good works. Against this notion they preached salvation by faith alone — by faith in the sole righteousness of Christ. As a popular hymn has expressed it:

Look, Father, look on his anointed face,
And only look on us as found in him
For, lo! between our sins and their reward
We set the Passion of thy Son our Lord.

Many heard this teaching as a word of liberation which released them from the fear that held them captive and in its place gave them new courage to live godly and gracious lives.

There were many others who remained faithful to the Roman Catholic Church and sought to renew its teaching and worship. They acted out of love for the unity of Christ's Body — just as the Protestant reformers acted out of love for the truth of Christ's gospel. But it was the tragedy of their age that each side turned its love for Christ into a source of bitter conflict. So, while we remember the Protestant and Catholic saints of the Reformation era, we may beseech Christ for their reconciliation in heaven — and for the healing of all divisions in the Church on earth.

Sentence

Faith, hope, love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love. *1 Corinthians 13.13*

Collect

Almighty God,
by the gospel of your Son
you stirred the hearts of many reformers
to seek afresh the knowledge of your grace
and to renew the ways of godliness.
Pour healing upon your Church, we pray,
and bind up the wounds
which prejudice inflicted and pride keeps sore,
that we with patience may seek
that unity of mind, speech and love
which is the reflection of your eternal life,
O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
whom we worship and confess,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Isaiah 35.1–10 Psalm 85
Refrain You have blotted out all our sins.
Matthew 18.15–22

Prayer over the Gifts

God of mercy and forgiveness,
grant that in contending for your truth
we may have grace
to put on the righteousness of Christ
and worship you by faith with thanksgiving.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Gracious God,
in this banquet of most heavenly food
you reveal your Son to faith and gather us into his peace.
Give us a tender care for the conscience of others
and a ready obedience in the works of love.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

All Saints

1 November

Principal Feast

Today's festival had its origins in the fourth century, when churches in the East began to celebrate "the feast of the martyrs of the whole world" on the Sunday after Pentecost. Several Western churches adopted this festival and kept it on various dates in April or May, but in the early Middle Ages the church of Rome assigned it the much later date of November first and broadened the feast to include all the saints. Western Christendom has followed this custom ever since.

Saints are Christians who in various ways, often against great odds, showed an extraordinary love for Christ. The Holy Spirit acted in their lives so that they chose to bring aid to the needy, justice to the oppressed, hope to the sorrowful, and the divine word of forgiveness to sinners. For the sake of Christ they were servants to the people of their day; and the service they rendered in the past makes them examples to the rest of the people of God throughout history.

The Church also believes that our life on earth has eternal consequences; and so our remembrance of what the saints *were* is directed to what they *are*. It is the Church's conviction — a conviction often expressed in the Anglican tradition — that the saints continue to be our partners and fellow-servants before the face of God's glory. We pray for our present needs, and the saints pray with us — not as if their prayers were better than our own, but because they are still bound to us in mutual service as members of the one body of Christ.

For this very reason, we may say of the Church's saints what the Letter to the Hebrews says about the Old Testament saints — that they and their service shall not be perfect until all of God's friends have answered the invitation of Christ and arrived at the banquet of glory. For that is the ministry of the saints in heaven as on earth: to help others become partners in the salvation of God.

This festival may be observed on the Sunday following 1 November, in addition to its observance on the fixed date.

Sentence

They are before the throne of God, and he who sits upon the throne will shelter them with his presence. *Revelation 7.15*

Collect

Almighty God,
whose people are knit together in one holy Church,
the mystical Body of your Son,
grant us grace to follow your blessed saints
in lives of faith and commitment,
and to know the inexpressible joys you have prepared
for those who love you;
through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns
with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Readings

- A Revelation 7.9–17 Psalm 34.1–10
Refrain Taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are they who
trust in him. *Or v. 9 or Alleluia!*
1 John 3.1–3 Matthew 5.1–12
- B Revelation 21.1–6a Psalm 24.1–6
Refrain The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.
Colossians 1.9–14 John 11.32–44
- C Daniel 7.1–3, 15–18 Psalm 149
Refrain Sing to the Lord a new song. *Or v. 1 or Alleluia!*
Ephesians 1.11–23 Luke 6.20–36

Prayer over the Gifts

Holy and mighty God,
we give you thanks for the triumph of Christ
in the lives of all his saints.
Receive all we offer you this day,
and help us, like them, to run our course with faith,
that we may come to your eternal kingdom.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of All Saints

Prayer after Communion

Lord of hosts, we praise your glory reflected in your saints.
May we who share at this table
be filled with the joy of your eternal kingdom,
where Jesus is Lord, now and for ever.

All Souls

2 November

The Commemoration of All Faithful Departed — Memorial

On this day we call to mind all the faithful departed who are now with God in Christ Jesus. We especially remember all those who have touched our own lives, and the men and women of our own *parish* [or *community*] whose good works have sustained and enhanced the ongoing life of our Christian community.

The Church has kept this memorial of all the faithful departed since the eleventh century, when it also began to celebrate the feast of All Saints. The Church believed that the souls of departed saints were immediately taken into the presence and full glory of God, while all other departed souls still had to undergo some healing and growth before they could be strong enough to bear the radiance of God's face. Out of this belief grew the medieval doctrine of purgatory, which taught that there was an intermediate state between death and glory, when souls were purged of the effects of those sins which still marred their wills and affections.

When the Church of England reformed its doctrine and worship in the sixteenth century, it rejected "the Romish doctrine concerning purgatory ... [as] a fond thing vainly imagined." The Anglican tradition has not withdrawn that criticism, but over the centuries we have learned to believe what we have prayed in the Burial Office — that the good work which Almighty God began in the faithful departed may be perfected unto the day of Jesus Christ. For growth in perfection must be infinite because our perfection is communion with the infinite God. So we magnify God's power by confessing that the divine mercy continues to perfect the souls of the departed according to the measure of eternal life revealed in Jesus Christ.

This Memorial may be celebrated either on 2 November or on a convenient day in the week after All Saints.

Sentence

I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord; whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. *John 11.25, 26*

Collect

Father of all,
we pray to you for those we love, but see no longer.
Grant them your peace,
let light perpetual shine upon them,
and in your loving wisdom and almighty power,
work in them the good purpose of your perfect will;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

Readings

Wisdom 3.1–9 Psalm 116.1–8

Refrain Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his servants.

1 Peter 1.3–9 John 6.37–40 *or* John 11.21–27

Prayer over the Gifts

Gracious and righteous Lord,
we are united in the love of Jesus Christ.
Accept all we offer you this day,
and bring us, with all your faithful people
who have gone before us,
into his eternal glory;
who is Lord, now and forever.

Preface for the Commemoration of the Dead

Prayer after Communion

God of love,
may the death and resurrection of Christ,
which we celebrate in this eucharist,
bring us, with the faithful departed,
into the peace of your eternal home.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ,
our hope and our salvation.

Richard Hooker

3 November

Priest, Teacher of the Faith, 1600 — Commemoration

Richard Hooker was an English priest who died in 1600, and we remember him today as a theologian who defended the Church of England and its choice of “the middle way” between Roman Catholic and Puritan ideologies.

Hooker entered Oxford University in 1567 and for eighteen years devoted himself to scholarship and reflection on the subtle points of theology. He became deputy professor of Hebrew, was ordained to the priesthood, and appeared to be set on a purely academic career. But his learning, moderation, and commitment to the Church of England brought him to the attention of the authorities, and he was appointed Master of the Temple, an office of great prestige because it made him the chief preacher to the legal community of London. He held this post for six years, then resigned to become the rector of a parish near Salisbury. A few years later he moved to a rectory in the diocese of Canterbury, where he died at the age of forty-six.

He was a quiet man, loving to his wife and children, glad in his piety, and happy in his ministry. But the Church remembers him primarily for the one great work that he wrote — a majestic study entitled *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*.

This work was addressed to a group of English protestants who were nicknamed Puritans because they sought to purify the Church of England according to their own narrow reading of the Bible. Against this movement Hooker argued for a more liberal outlook, which coordinated the testimony of Scripture, the course of Christian history, and the values of human reason, in order to defend the English Church as a communion for all the people, not just a small group of “saints.” The experience of our tradition has confirmed his teaching, and today we honour his work as a true cornerstone of Anglican history.

Sentence

Those who wait upon the Lord shall possess the land; they will delight in abundance of peace. *Psalm 37.10b, 12b*

Collect

Grant to us, O God Most High,
the gifts of wisdom and understanding,
that following the teaching of your servant Richard Hooker,
we may cleave without compromise to those saving doctrines
on which the faith of your Church is founded,
and order all else most fittingly
by the rule of love and the bond of peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 Corinthians 2.6–10, 13–16 Psalm 37.3–6, 32–33
Refrain The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom.
John 17.18–23

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God of our forebears,
who taught your servant Richard Hooker
to hold fast the bond of truth and peace,
grant us now to be found in your Son,
that the gifts which we offer with our hands
may be signs of the faith which abides in our hearts.
We ask this through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of the Reign of Christ

Prayer after Communion

O God, the source of all life,
who strengthened the mind of your Church
by the teaching of your servant Richard Hooker,
deliver us from pride of heart
and free our will and understanding
that we may seek those things of truth and peace
which unite us in the commonwealth of your grace.
We ask this for the sake of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Saints of the Old Testament

4 November

Memorial

At this time of year the Church celebrates the feast of All Saints and gathers up thanksgiving for the whole company of those who, in various and different ways, bore witness to Christ. Today we extend our thanksgiving and include the saints of the Old Testament in our celebration of faith.

The New Testament teaches us that Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, was “born under the law of Moses” and thereby fulfilled the long history of God’s covenant with Israel. For this reason, the Church believes that he gathered into the kingdom of heaven all those Hebrew men and women who bore faithful and holy witness to God in the ages before his coming in great humility to redeem the whole world.

The Eastern Orthodox tradition has always remembered this important truth and taken pains to commemorate the Old Testament saints in its liturgies. Local churches in the West have also done so since ancient times, and we claim this tradition of remembrance for our own Church. Our faith did not begin with the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, but with Abraham and Sarah, with Moses and Miriam and Aaron, with Deborah and Samuel, with holy kings like David and Hezekiah, and with prophets like Elijah and Jeremiah. We give thanks for the testimony of their lives and celebrate their faith, because they were the true forebears of Christ, who has made us partners and fellow heirs with them in the covenant of salvation.

Sentence

The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is God not of the dead,
but of the living. *Matthew 22.32*

Collect

Almighty God,
in the midst of your people Israel
you raised up many saints,
who through faith in your eternal covenant
conquered kingdoms, did justice,
and won strength out of weakness.
Grant us to hold in glad remembrance
their holy lives and fearless witness,
that by your grace we may press on towards the goal
for the prize of our heavenly calling;
through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Hebrews 11.1–3, 8–12, 23–28, 32 – 12.2 Psalm 37.28–36

Refrain The law of God is in the heart of the righteous.

Matthew 22.23–32

Prayer over the Gifts

Grant us, Almighty God, with the saints of ancient Israel,
so to be faithful in the grace of your covenant,
that our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving
may have its truth and fulfilment
in the one oblation of Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Preface of All Saints

Prayer after Communion

God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
who set your law in the hearts of the righteous,
grant us your love as the rule of our lives,
that we who have tasted the grace of Christ
may come to be seated at the banquet of his glory.
We ask this for his sake,
who lives with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever.

Willibrord*7 November**Archbishop of Utrecht, Missionary, 739 — Commemoration*

Willibrord was an early medieval monk who pioneered the Anglo-Saxon mission to northwestern Europe. Beginning in the year 690, he devoted four decades to preaching the gospel among the Frisians and Germans, and laid the foundations of the Church in modern Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands.

Willibrord was an Englishman by birth, but after he became a monk he chose to pursue his vocation in Ireland. Like many other monks of the time, he believed that exile from his native country on earth would make him a better pilgrim on the way to his eternal homeland in heaven. This sense of pilgrimage motivated his decision to lead a mission to the land of the Frisians, who were the ancestors of the modern Dutch and Belgians. He and twelve companions sailed around England, across the North Sea, and landed at the mouth of the river Rhine. With the institutional support of the Pope and the military support of the Franks, he and his companions evangelized whole districts, then consolidated their work by establishing monasteries. These monasteries were staffed by other Anglo-Saxons who heard what Willibrord was doing and crossed the North Sea to join him in his pilgrimage of preaching. He was made archbishop of Utrecht and used this position to organize the Church in the Low Countries. He carried his mission even to Denmark and the German tribes along the Baltic.

Willibrord continued in his missionary calling despite all the hardships and dangers it involved. He was still active well into his seventies, when he retired to a monastery in Luxemburg. He died on this date in 739, in his eighty-first year, happy to leave the lands of pilgrimage for his true native country on high.

Sentence

I will bring foreigners to my holy mountain, says the Lord, and make them joyful in my house of prayer. *Isaiah 56.7*

Collect

Lord our God,
you made your servant Willibrord
a pilgrim for the sake of your gospel,
and by his faithful labours
you revealed to those who served false idols
the true way and worship of Christ.
Guide our thoughts and direct our wills,
that our steps may never waver nor fail
in the perfect freedom of your service;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Isaiah 56.3–8 Psalm 98.1–4

Refrain All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.
Luke 10.1–9

Prayer over the Gifts

Merciful God,
who called your servant Willibrord
to the work of an apostle
and sustained him in the office of a bishop,
open the gates of your kingdom over this table,
that we may share in the riches of your mercy.
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of Apostles

Prayer after Communion

Lord God,
who upheld your servant Willibrord
through many a battle in the heavenly warfare,
grant us cheerfulness in our callings,
faithfulness in your covenant,
and patience in all trials of our love,
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Leo the Great

10 November

Bishop of Rome, Teacher of the Faith, 461 — Memorial

Today we remember Leo the Great, an effective pastor and wise teacher who served as bishop of Rome from the year 440 until his death two decades later.

Twice during his term of office barbarian armies laid siege to Rome, and Leo found that he was the only person who had both the authority and the courage to negotiate with the invaders. The first time he managed to save Rome from looting and its citizens from slavery. The second time he was less successful; parts of the city were burned and many of its people were carried off. Leo devoted the wealth of his church to relieving the survivors and redeeming the captives from slavery.

Leo's reputation as a teacher of the faith rests first of all on the sermons he preached at Christmas, in Lent, on Easter Day and on Pentecost. He did not analyze and present formal arguments so much as take a series of contrasting images from Scripture and set them in pairs, in order to suggest the breadth of salvation through the union of opposites.

He used this same method when he was drawn into a Church-wide controversy about the person of Christ. Greek theologians had tried to explain how Jesus could be human as well as divine, and their rival theories were dividing the Church. Leo did not propose another explanation so much as a rule for contemplation and prayer. He said: "God the Word assumed the form of a servant without the defilement of sin, and enriched what was human without impoverishing what was divine. For the self-emptying by which the Invisible caused himself to be visible, and by which the Creator and Lord of all things willed to be mortal, was a bowing down in compassion, not a failure of power." This ability to unite different scriptural images so that the faithful might pray into the mystery of salvation — combined with his gifts as a true leader in a time of crisis — is the reason why he is called Leo "the Great."

Sentence

Make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. *Philippians 2.2*

Collect

O Lord our God,
grant that your Church,
following the teaching of your servant Leo the Great,
may hold fast the mystery of our redemption
and adore the one Christ,
who shared all the fulness of your glorious Deity,
yet humbled himself in mercy
to share all the pains of our humanity.
We ask this through the same Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Philippians 2.1–13 Psalm 77.11–15

Refrain Your way, O Lord, is holy.

Matthew 16.13–19

Prayer over the Gifts

Source and Partner of the eternal Word,
who gave power to your servant Leo
to speak with understanding
in the congregation of your people,
grant that our offering
may be rooted and grounded in your mercy
and our worship may be governed by your love,
through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of the Epiphany

Prayer after Communion

Gracious God,
who wonderfully created and yet more wonderfully restored
the dignity of human nature,
grant that by the power of these holy mysteries
we may be strengthened in the way of truth
and quickened in the works of love,
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Martin 11 November
Bishop of Tours, 397 — Memorial

Today the Church honours Martin, a fourth-century bishop of Tours who was “filled with power from on high” — and used it to serve the poor and strengthen the faithful in their witness to Christ.

Martin was a soldier by profession, but renounced military life when he accepted the gospel and became a catechu'men, which is the Church's name for someone preparing for baptism. There is a story which shows that he already understood what his new life required of him. He was riding into Amiens when he met a beggar who was almost naked, and he cut his soldier's cloak in half in order to clothe the man. The following night he had a dream in which he saw Christ himself wrapped in half of a soldier's cloak and saying, “Martin, a mere catechumen, covered me with his garment.”

After his baptism Martin spent several years wandering, then settled near Poitiers and built himself a little shelter where he lived and prayed as a monk. Other Christians in quest of perfection began to gather around him, and he eventually organized the first monastic community in France.

In the year 372 he was elected bishop of Tours, but he continued to live as a monk, dwelling in a bare cell and holding no property for himself, even as he cared for the people of his diocese. He also launched a continuing mission to the pagan countryfolk in his district, and took an active part in the wider life of the Church.

Even before his death in the year 397 Martin became the subject of a biography which concentrated on his miraculous powers and ensured his fame as a wonder-worker down through the Middle Ages. Today we do not forget the powers that God bestowed on him, but prefer to remember how he used them — for the peace of the Church, for the spread of the gospel, for leading the faithful in the way of holiness, and for mercy to the poor.

Sentence

Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none;
and whoever has food must do likewise. *Luke 3.11*

Collect

Lord God of hosts,
you clothed your servant Martin
with the spirit of sacrifice,
and set him in the midst of your Church
as a guide in the path of holiness.
Give us grace to follow the light of his example,
that we may be clothed with your righteousness
in the dwellings of peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Isaiah 58.6–9 Psalm 16.5–11

Refrain I have set the Lord always before me.

Matthew 25.34–40

Prayer over the Gifts

God of peace,
grant that we may follow
the example of your holy servant Martin
by putting our works at the service of your praise
and by offering our lives in thanksgiving for your love.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Merciful God,
you count no service complete
unless it includes the oppressed.
Grant us so to honour
the remembrance of your holy servant Martin,
that we may share what you have given us
with all whom we behold in need.
We ask this through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Charles Simeon *12 November*
Priest, 1836 — Commemoration

Charles Simeon was an Anglican priest who died in 1836 after fifty-four years of ministry at Cambridge University, where he was a spiritual guide for innumerable students and a shining light in the Evangelical Revival of his day.

Simeon went to Cambridge as a serious young man who imposed such burdens on his own conscience that he experienced the eucharist as an occasion of guilt, not gladness. Then, as he prepared to make his Easter communion in 1780, he came to know worthiness in Christ alone, and when he received the Sacrament on Easter morning he experienced the sweetness and beauty of the risen Christ in his own life. From that moment he devoted himself to helping others know the same joy.

After his graduation Simeon remained at Cambridge, took Holy Orders, and was appointed Vicar of Holy Trinity, the University church. His enthusiasm for Christ was considered vulgar by academics and townspeople alike, and rowdy students often disrupted worship in his church. But his faithfulness as a pastor, especially towards those who suffered during a local famine, finally outmatched the hostility and by 1800 his spiritual authority was unrivalled.

Simeon won his greatest fame in the pulpit, where he preached sermons which were passionate in their delivery and powerful in communicating the vibrant joy of salvation in Christ. But he exercised his most enduring influence at “conversation parties,” where he entertained undergraduates and provided them with tea and serious discussion as an alternative to the drunkenness, idleness, and bullying which beset their peers. These parties formed several generations of students and gave them a fervent commitment to Christ, so that Simeon had an truly evangelical impact which reached far beyond Cambridge and was felt in all corners of England long after his death.

Sentence

You gave him bread from heaven, containing in itself all sweetness. *Cf. Wisdom 16.20*

Collect

God of grace and compassion,
whose providence is unerring wisdom
and whose wisdom is unbounded love,
grant that, like your servant Charles Simeon,
we may walk with Christ in all simplicity
and in all things know your mercies;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Isaiah 26.1–9 Psalm 145.8–13

Refrain The Lord is loving to everyone.

John 21.15–17

Prayer over the Gifts

Maker and Giver of our banquet,
whose minister Charles Simeon
nurtured the seed of your gospel
in young and old alike,
renew the work of our hands
with the gift of your new creation,
that we may be nourished for your service
and strengthened to accomplish your praises.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

God our Saviour,
you restore us to the new and living way
and strengthen our lives to do your will.
Grant us, like your servant Charles Simeon,
so to abound in the fruits of this sacrament
that we may light the paths of many
to the gateway of your household.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Consecration of Samuel Seabury *14 November* *First Anglican Bishop in North America, 1784 — Commemoration*

On this date in 1784 three Scottish bishops laid hands on Samuel Seabury, making him the first Anglican to be consecrated for the office and work of a bishop in North America.

For over a century the Anglican Church in the American colonies had been governed by the bishop of London, and despite repeated pleas to English authorities it still lacked a resident bishop when the United States were granted independence. To end the absurdity of being episcopalian without an episcopate, the clergy of Connecticut held a conference in March of 1783, at which they elected Seabury, a native son with thirty years' experience as a priest, to sail for England and be consecrated their bishop.

He expected his negotiations with the English bishops to be easy and quick, but was bitterly disappointed. After a fruitless year in London he packed his bags and journeyed north to Aberdeen, where he opened negotiations with the bishops of the Scottish Episcopal Church. They quickly agreed to consecrate him, but on one condition — that he do all in his power to make the American Church adopt the Scottish Communion Office. This liturgy was the first true “alternative rite” in Anglican history; it remodelled and enriched the Communion Order of the English Prayer Book, so that the eucharist might conform more closely to the shape of the ancient liturgies.

Seabury accepted the Scottish condition and when he returned to the United States was successful in fulfilling it. The first American Prayer Book of 1789 incorporated a Prayer of Consecration which was substantially the same as Scotland's — thus turning a local rite into an international alternative within the Anglican tradition. So, we honour Samuel Seabury not only for his perseverance in bringing the Anglican episcopate to North America, but also for his role in renewing the liturgical heritage of our communion.

Sentence

I will save my flock, says the Lord God, and I will feed them in justice. *Ezekiel 34.22, 16*

Collect

Eternal God,
you blessed your servant Samuel Seabury
with the gift of perseverance
to renew the Anglican inheritance
in the churches of North America.
Grant us unity in faith, steadfastness in hope,
and constancy in love,
that we may ever be true members
of the body of your Son Jesus Christ;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Ezekiel 34.11–16 Psalm 40.5–11
Refrain I love to do your will, O my God.
Matthew 9.35–38

Prayer over the Gifts

Giver of all,
by whose grace your bishop Samuel
was faithful in the care of your flock,
make us, we pray,
obedient in the service of this table,
that we may be partners
in the eternal oblation of your Son Jesus Christ,
who stands at your right hand in glory,
now and for ever.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Faithful and loving God,
we give you thanks for the ministry of Samuel Seabury
and pray for the gifts of wisdom, justice, and love,
that we may become a true and living temple
where your mercy dwells with delight.
We ask this through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Margaret*16 November**Queen of Scotland, Helper of the Poor, 1093 — Commemoration*

Margaret was an Anglo-Saxon princess who became the consort of King Malcolm III of Scotland in 1069. She bore eight children and through her husband initiated civilizing reforms in the Scottish royal court, the Scottish Church, and the Scottish nation. But Margaret is chiefly remembered for her efforts on behalf of Scotland's poor. She not only gave out large sums of money but also ensured that institutions already in place did indeed provide relief for the homeless, the hungry, and the orphaned. In addition, Margaret supplied the funds which purchased freedom for those Anglo-Saxons who had been sold into slavery by their Norman conquerors. Hence, to her title of Queen is added the still greater title for a Christian — "Helper of the Poor."

Sentence

This is the fast that I choose, says the Lord: to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin. *Isaiah 58.6, 7*

Collect

O God,
you gave to your servant Margaret
such faithfulness as Queen of Scotland
that she cared for the poor
and relieved the needs of those who lay in prison.
Grant us a like devotion,
whatever the service to which you call us,
that we may be agents of your justice
and true servants of your mercy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Isaiah 58.6–12 Psalm 146.4–9

Refrain Happy are they who hope in the Lord their God!

Matthew 25.31–40

Prayer over the Gifts

God of grace and mercy,
who made your holy servant Margaret
a partner in the works of your loving-kindness,
regard our service according to your mercy,
that your grace may be the leaven of this offering
and your love may be mingled with these gifts.
We ask this through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of the Reign of Christ

Prayer after Communion

God our Redeemer, you restore the dignity of creation
with a new and glorious liberty.
Grant us so to follow the example of your servant Margaret,
that we may discern your Son in all whom we meet.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Hugh 17 November
Bishop of Lincoln, 1200 — Commemoration

Today we commemorate Hugh, a twelfth century bishop whose rare holiness and generous love nurtured the people of Lincoln from 1186 until his death fourteen years later.

As a young man Hugh joined the Carthusians, an order of monks who dwelt high in the French Alps. They kept communal life to a minimum and made each monk free to pursue contemplative prayer in solitude and silence.

In 1175 Hugh was sent to head the first Carthusian house in England. His leadership proved so effective that, eleven years later, King Henry II appointed him bishop of Lincoln, then the largest diocese in the kingdom. He reorganized the institutional life of his unwieldy see; he restored Lincoln cathedral, even joining in the work with his own hands; and he took a leading part in defending the Church against the policies of King Henry and his son, Richard the Lion-Heart.

He did not spend all his time with senior clergy and mighty kings; on the contrary, he was constantly on the move among his people as he sought to keep in touch with their needs. He also took the side of those who were ostracized or oppressed. On two occasions he threw himself into anti-Semitic mobs and singlehandedly rescued their Jewish victims from being murdered. On another occasion he rebuked foolish clerics who said that God disdained to be loved by women. He asked them to think, saying, "To no man was it granted to be called the father of God, but it was given to a woman to be the Mother of God."

As a bishop, Hugh shared the inner freedom he had learned as a Carthusian, and the people responded with gratitude and love. When he died in 1200, his coffin was escorted into Lincoln cathedral not only by kings, archbishops, and abbots, but also by a mighty throng of ordinary women and men — all of whom felt that they were not burying a bishop so much as honouring a friend.

Sentence

He shall blossom as the lily and strike root as the poplar; his beauty shall be like the olive-trees, and his fragrance like the cedars. *Cf. Hosea 14.5, 6*

Collect

Holy God,
who endowed Hugh of Lincoln
with boldness before sovereigns
and humility in serving his flock,
grant that we also, rejoicing in your mercy
and fearing nothing but the loss of you,
may be bold to speak the truth in love;
through Jesus Christ our Redeemer,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Ephesians 4.1–16 Psalm 112.4–9
Refrain The righteous are full of compassion.
Matthew 24.42–47

Prayer over the Gifts

God of peace,
by whose grace your blessed servant Hugh
was a wise and faithful steward
over your household and people in Lincoln,
grant us so to share in your goodness
that our worship may be leavened with your justice.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Gracious God,
who gave your blessed servant Hugh
the liberty of your household,
may this banquet of our redemption
give us courage in the face of injustice
and compassion in the face of need.
We ask this through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Hilda 18 November
Abbess of Whitby, 680 — Commemoration

Hilda was a seventh-century Englishwoman who became the abbess of Whitby and nurtured adjoining households of nuns and monks. The Venerable Bede wrote of her: “All who knew abbess Hilda, the servant of Christ, called her Mother because of her wonderful devotion and grace ...; she never ceased to give thanks to her Maker or to instruct the flock committed to her care.”

She was born into the royal family of Northumbria and lived a quiet, devout life in the world until the age of thirty-three, when she decided to take the habit of a nun. Almost at once she was given charge of a small community at Wearmouth, and her guidance proved so effective that she was asked to renew the life of another community nearby. In the year 657 she finally moved to Whitby, a monastery which included a household of monks and a household of nuns. Under her leadership it became the most famous religious community in all England.

The Venerable Bede reported: “Not only was Hilda an outstanding example of holy life to all who were in her monastery, but she also provided an opportunity for salvation and repentance to many who lived far away and who heard the happy story of her industry and virtue.” Bede went on to say: “So great was Hilda’s prudence that not only ordinary people but also kings and princes sometimes sought and received her advice when they were in difficulties. She compelled those under her direction to devote so much time to the study of the holy Scriptures and so much time to the doing of good works, that there was no trouble in finding many who were fitted ... for the service of the altar.”

So, we give thanks for Hilda of Whitby, who died in the year 680 and used her own gifts of holiness and wisdom to nurture holy gifts in others, that they might serve the people of Christ and make seventh-century England a household of God.

Sentence

In the assembly of the Most High she opens her mouth, and in the presence of his hosts she tells of her glory. *Sirach 24.2*

Collect

Lord our God,
you girded your servant Hilda
with the gifts of justice and holy strength,
and made her a wise and prudent mother
in the household of your Spirit.
May we never cease to give thanks to you, our Maker,
or be slow to instruct one another
in the knowledge and love of your mercy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Ephesians 4.1–6 Psalm 122
Refrain Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.
Matthew 19.27–29

Prayer over the Gifts

Eternal God,
who beckoned to your servant Hilda
and made her a judge among your people,
cast from this household all works of strife
and keep every harm from this table,
that our worship may accord with your will
and our gifts may befit your purpose;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Maker and. Lover of all creation,
who trained your servant Hilda
in the works of wisdom and reconciliation,
draw us, we pray, towards the goal of our faith,
where we shall know the truth of our dignity
in the fulness of your peace.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Elizabeth 19 November
Princess of Hungary, 1231 — Commemoration

Today we remember Elizabeth of Hungary, a thirteenth-century princess who devoted her short life to serving the poor, the sick, and the homeless.

She was born in 1207 and at the age of fourteen became the wife of Ludwig, the ruler of Thuringia. Their marriage was happy and with her husband's support Elizabeth not only cared for their own children but also found time to supervise various projects for the aid of the poor. She founded several hospitals and homes for the elderly, and provided shelters for orphans and abused children. But then Ludwig died, and her brother-in-law drove her from the royal court. Elizabeth joined the Franciscans as a lay-associate and adopted a life of poverty. She did menial labour in the very hospices which she had founded and went into the homes of poor people to help them with their daily tasks. Love for Christ kept her going in the most brutalizing conditions, but in 1231 she succumbed to overwork and a sudden virus. She was only twenty-four when she died.

The people of Germany immediately began to venerate her, and she was declared a saint of the Church within four years of her death. Even today, many hospitals throughout the world bear her name, in memory of her devotion to binding up the wounds of suffering humanity.

Sentence

Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Matthew 25.34

Collect

Almighty God,
by whose grace your servant Elizabeth of Hungary
both knew and honoured Jesus
in the poor of this world,
grant that we, following her example,
may serve with love and gladness
those whom we find in any need or trouble;
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Tobit 12.6b–10 Psalm 146.4–9

Refrain The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down.

Luke 12.32–34

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
you call us to set our hearts
on a treasure that abides for ever.
Grant that our oblation
may rest on service to the poor
and be fulfilled with your justice;
through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Giver of this feast,
grant us so to lay hold of your mercy,
that following the example of blessed Elizabeth,
we may never shrink from the poor in their need
nor ever turn our eyes from those in distress.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Edmund

20 November

King of East Anglia, Martyr, 870 — Commemoration

Today we recall Edmund, an Anglo-Saxon king who was martyred in the year 870. He was raised in the Christian faith and at the age of twenty-three succeeded his father on the throne of East Anglia. His kingdom lay on England's coast and was especially vulnerable to the Vikings, who were sea-faring marauders from Scandinavia. Five years after Edmund began his reign they mounted a huge raid upon his kingdom and shattered the East Anglian army in a single battle. Edmund himself was captured and brought before the Viking leader, who offered to spare the king's life if he renounced the Christian faith. Edmund rejected the offer and confessed Christ before his captor. Tradition says that the Vikings tied him to a tree, scourged him brutally, then riddled him with arrows and finally beheaded him. Once his murderers had departed, the East Anglians recovered the body of their king and eventually interred it with honour at the town of Bedricsworth, which ever since then has been called Bury St. Edmunds. The reputation of King Edmund the Martyr spread beyond the borders of East Anglia, and he became a national saint, honoured by all the English for his valour in holding on to Christ even at the cost of his life.

Sentence

Before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord
with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might.

2 Kings 23.25

Collect

O God,
who called your servant Edmund
through the brutal trial of martyrdom
from an earthly to a heavenly throne,
mercifully grant that, holding him in remembrance,
we may be fruitful in good works
and attain to the crown of everlasting life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

2 Kings 23.21–25, 29–30a Psalm 80.8–18

Refrain Preserve, O Lord, what your right hand has planted.

Matthew 10.34–39

Prayer over the Gifts

Grant, Almighty God,
that as you made your servant Edmund
steadfast in the hope of sharing your glory,
so you will make your people here gathered
worthy of the gifts which you bestow.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ.

Preface of a Martyr

Prayer after Communion

God of compassion,
who crowned your holy martyr Edmund
with the crown of glory and righteousness,
let the mystery of this holy communion
make us strong in our witness to your power
and gracious in our dealings with one another.
We ask this through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Clement 23 November
Bishop of Rome, c. 100 — Commemoration

Today we honour Clement of Rome, who flourished at the dawn of the Church's history and is known to us as the author of a pastoral letter written around the year 96.

He seems to have been a slave who adopted the name of his former master, Clemens, in gratitude for being granted his freedom. We do not know how or when he became a Christian, and though it is clear he rose to a position of leadership in the Roman church, we cannot be sure what office he held or what role he performed. One tradition lists him as the third bishop of Rome after St. Peter and says that he reigned between the years 90 and 100. But other evidence suggests that the church in first-century Rome was governed by a council of presbyters, not by a single bishop. In that case, Clement may have been the president of this council or simply the presbyter who acted as minister for relations with other churches.

Whatever his office, he wrote a pastoral letter to the church at Corinth after a group of its junior clergy had convinced the rest of their community to depose its ruling council of presbyters. Clement wrote on behalf of the Roman church and castigated the rebels for their pride, then rebuked the entire community for letting partisan strife go so far. His argument does not follow a straight line, but instead presents a round of variations on the theme of pride and true humility, self-will and Christian obedience. He concluded with this advice:

Is there anyone among you who has a noble mind, who is compassionate, who overflows with love? Let such a person say: "If I am the cause of any disorder, friction, or division among you, I will remove myself. I will go away, anywhere you wish, and I will do anything the congregation says — only let there be peace between Christ's flock and their appointed presbyters." Anyone who does this will earn a great name in Christ and be sure of a welcome anywhere, because "the earth is the Lord's and everything in it."

Sentence

Make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *Ephesians 4.3*

Collect

O God,
you chose your servant Clement of Rome
to recall the church of Corinth
to peace in the body of Christ.
By the power of your Holy Spirit
dwelling in the Body of your Son,
reveal what is not yet known,
confirm what you have already revealed,
and keep us blameless in our service of your truth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

2 Kings 2.9–14 Psalm 78.1–7

Refrain We will not hide what we have heard and known.
Luke 6.37–45

Prayer over the Gifts

God of our forebears,
turn our hearts from strife and jealousy
and make us love the works of peace,
that our life may be ready
to receive the abundance of your table.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Gracious God,
who healed the wounds of your Church
through the ministry of your servant Clement,
keep us in the unity of your Spirit
that our lives may overflow
with the goodly treasure of your peace.
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Saint Andrew the Apostle

30 November

Holy Day

Today we honour the memory of an apostle named Andrew. The Gospels say that he was a fisherman and the brother of Peter, and his name always appears near the top in the lists of the twelve apostles. The Fourth Gospel pairs him with Philip in answering the Lord's questions at the feeding of the five thousand and later in acting as an intermediary for some pagans who wished to meet Jesus. But that is all: Andrew's story is no sooner begun, than it is swallowed up in the greater story of Jesus.

The people of the Church later invented legends about Andrew, to give their memory more than just a name to honour and more than just a single episode to recount. These legends gave Andrew exotic adventures travelling and preaching in many different places until he was martyred, crucified on a cross in the form of an "X." Some of these legends may indeed be true, but biographical truth is not their purpose or function. So we come back to the gospels and their brief account of Andrew's calling.

Andrew was a Galilean fisherman minding his own business, mending his own nets, when along came Jesus. The Lord called him, and Andrew got up and walked — he walked into the story of Jesus. From that moment on, his life was no longer his own; Andrew had no other story but the story of Jesus, the story that is told about Jesus, the story that Jesus himself tells.

And that is how we honour the memory of the apostle named Andrew: by remembering his name as we tell the story of Jesus, the One who called both Andrew and us into the story of salvation.

Sentence

You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. *Acts 1.8*

Collect

Almighty God,
who gave your apostle Andrew
grace to believe in his heart
and to confess with his lips that Jesus is Lord,
touch our lips and our hearts
that faith may burn within us,
and we may share in the witness of your Church
to the whole human family;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Deuteronomy 30.11–14 *or* Romans 10.8b–18 Psalm 19.1–6
Refrain Their message has gone out to the ends of the world.
Or v. 4 or CR 2
Matthew 4.18–22

Prayer over the Gifts

Eternal God, ruler of the universe,
may we who have heard your word
always be ready to answer your call
and to follow without fear.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of Apostles

Prayer after Communion

Father,
may the gifts we have received at your table
give us courage to follow the example of Andrew the apostle
and share in the ministry of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Francis Xavier*3 December**Missionary to the Far East, 1552 — Commemoration*

Today we remember Francis Xavier, a Jesuit priest who left Europe in 1542 and brought the gospel of Christ to the outcasts of India, the cities of southeast Asia, and the warrior society of Japan.

Francis was one of the first seven members of the Society of Jesus, which was founded to advance the Catholic Counter-Reformation. But the Jesuits looked beyond Europe and hoped to win the whole world for the Church. That is why Francis boarded a ship and sailed around the Horn of Africa to the Portuguese colony of Goa on the coast of India. With a small group of followers and even smaller resources, he began his apostolate in southern India, extended it to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), and then moved on to Malacca, Vietnam, and Malaysia, until he reached Japan. He died in 1552, alone on an island off the coast of China, while trying to smuggle himself into the Chinese empire.

Francis had trouble learning new languages and usually had to rely on an interpreter whenever he preached. But words are not the only way of communicating the truth, and his personal holiness made a great impression on the various peoples he encountered. More importantly, Francis understood that the gospel is meant first of all for the poor of the earth. So, he chose to do most of his apostolic work among the outcasts and untouchables of every culture he visited. Such a quality made him like the first apostles — and, like them, he loved not his own life unto death, but gave himself wholly to the task of proclaiming the riches of the knowledge and worship of Christ.

Sentence

He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth. *Isaiah 42.4*

Collect

God of all the earth,
you called your servant Francis Xavier
and rejoiced to see him preach your Gospel
among the outcasts of India
and the warriors of Japan.
Kindle our hearts with your truth,
that we may give the whole of our lives
to the working of your will and purpose;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Isaiah 42.1–4 Psalm 96

Refrain The coastlands shall wait for his law.

Luke 10.1–9, 17–20

Prayer over the Gifts

Gracious God,
whose servant Francis Xavier
drew people of many races and nations
to believe in the gospel of your kingdom,
grant us so to receive your Word
that we may have no reason for fear
in the offering of our service.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of Apostles

Prayer after Communion

O God most high,
you gladden our faith
with the remembrance of your servant Francis Xavier.
Grant us so to follow his example,
that we may teach the heart of this present age
the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ,
who reigns in glory now and for ever.

Nicholas Ferrar

4 December

Deacon, 1637,

and the Community of Little Gidding

Commemoration

Today we honour Nicholas Ferrar, a deacon of the English Church who died in 1637 after eleven years at Little Gidding, a place in Huntingdon where he shared his family's enterprise of a godly household.

When the Ferrars moved there from London, Little Gidding consisted of a derelict manor-house and a chapel which had been turned into a hay-barn. They restored the chapel and set the rest of the farm in order, so that it provided them with a livelihood as they practised their chief design, which was to live as a Christian community. The entire family gathered in the chapel twice a day for the Prayer Book Offices, and from dawn until after midnight they took turns offering intercessions and reciting the Psalter, while the others got together for discussions to build up one another's faith. The family also practised a constant round of service to their rural neighbours; they set up a school for the local children, relieved the destitute, and cared for the sick.

In all these activities Nicholas took his part, but he was by no means the only saint of the family. We should remember his mother Mary Ferrar, who purchased the manor of Little Gidding and was the true founder of the community; we should also honour his sister Susanna, and his nieces Mary and Anna Collett, who breathed life into the household's religious purpose. Nicholas himself well understood the communal nature of his family's experiment in godliness. As he wrote to one of his nieces in 1631: "I purpose and hope by God's grace to be to you-wards, in the search and study of true wisdom and perfection in Christ Jesus, not as a master but as a partner and fellow student with you." And that is how we remember Nicholas Ferrar today — not by himself but as "partner and fellow student" with all the rest of his family in their joint vocation, which was "the search and study of true wisdom and perfection in Christ Jesus."

Sentence

Whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.

Galatians 6.10

Collect

Lord God,
you gathered Nicholas Ferrar and his kinsfolk
in the household of Little Gidding,
and shaped their life as a family
into an image of your heavenly commonwealth.
May we follow their example by seeking true wisdom
and studying perfection in Christ Jesus,
not as masters
but as partners and fellow students with one other;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Job 1.1–5 Psalm 119.161–168

Refrain Seven times a day do I praise you, O Lord.

Luke 10.38–41

Prayer over the Gifts

Gracious God,
whose servants in the household at Little Gidding
had pleasure in the beauty of holiness,
cleanse our lives of all pride and discord,
that this table may become the place
where you delight to set your love.
We ask this through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Merciful Lord, you gather us at this table
to taste the banquet of your heavenly family.
Grant us the faithfulness of Nicholas Ferrar
and the household of Little Gidding,
that we may come to join with them in feasting on your glory.
This we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Clement of Alexandria

5 December

Priest, c. 210 — Commemoration

Clement of Alexandria was a second-century theologian who taught that God's Word was spoken not only in Scripture but also in the heritage of pagan philosophy. By this teaching he enabled the Church to see its gospel as the revelation and fulfillment of the true desire for God which was hidden in all human cultures.

Clement spent his youth wandering from one eastern city to another in search of a satisfying philosophy until he came to Alexandria, where he found what he was looking for in the teachings of the Christian Church. After his baptism he became a presbyter and around the year 190 was appointed head of the Christian academy at Alexandria — a school which not only instructed new converts in the Christian faith and prepared them for baptism, but also provided Christian thinkers with an opportunity for "advanced studies" in theology. Clement worked in this school for over a decade, but then renewed persecution of the Church forced it to close its doors and its principal to flee Alexandria. He made his way to Asia Minor, where he died around the year 210.

Clement's own history made him seek a way of bringing pagan philosophy home to Christ, in whom its whole purpose, which was the love of true wisdom, would be satisfied beyond measure. He once wrote: "Philosophy was necessary to the Greeks for righteousness, until the coming of the Lord; and even now it is useful for the development of true religion, as a kind of preparatory discipline for those who arrive at faith by way of demonstration. For God is the source of all good, either directly as in the Old and New Testaments or indirectly as in the case of philosophy. But it may even be that philosophy was given to the Greeks directly; for it was a schoolmaster to bring Hellenism to Christ, as the Law was for the Hebrews. Thus philosophy was a preparation, paving the way for the person who is brought to perfection by Christ."

Sentence

Wisdom is a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God, and an image of his goodness. *Wisdom 7.26*

Collect

Lord God,
you called your servant Clement of Alexandria
from the ways of pagan philosophy
to reflect the light of your saving wisdom
and kindle in the faithful
the knowledge of your truth.
Turn us, we pray, from worldly conceits
and shape our lives
to the likeness of your Son Jesus Christ;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Colossians 1.11–20 Psalm 103.1–4, 13–18
Refrain All that I am, bless God's holy Name.
John 6.57–63

Prayer over the Gifts

Immortal God,
who enlightened your servant Clement
by the truth of your holy Word,
grant us true discernment and a living faith,
that we may behold the presence of your Son
in all his saving power.
We ask this through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of Pentecost

Prayer after Communion

Sustain us, O God,
in the way of the one true Light
by which you led your servant Clement,
that we may learn your truth
and illumine this present age
with the knowledge of your glory.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Nicholas 6 December
Bishop of Myra, c. 342 — Commemoration

Nicholas was a fourth-century bishop of Myra, a town in what is now southwestern Turkey, and we remember him because of the stories which have given him “a perpetual name for deeds of kindness on land and sea.”

Nothing certain is known about his life, but the people of the Church held him in high honour from a very early date and many stories came to be told about him. The most famous of these legends tells of his merciful generosity. Once there were three sisters whose parents were so poor that they thought of selling them. Bishop Nicholas heard of the sisters’ plight and tossed three bags of gold onto their doorstep — thus providing them with dowries for marriage and saving them from a life of prostitution. That is why he is considered the special protector of children. In memory of his deed of mercy to the three sisters, the Dutch developed the custom of giving gifts to children on his feast-day. They brought this custom to America, where it became associated with Christmas rather than the feast of Nicholas — and where “Sant Nikolaas” was changed into “Santa Claus.”

Another story tells how a company of seafarers were caught in a storm off the coast of Asia Minor. The waves were swamping their ship, and the mariners were nearly at their wits’ end when they remembered what they had heard about the bishop of Myra. Though he was still alive, the sailors cried out his name and implored his help. The legend says that Nicholas himself suddenly appeared in the rigging of their ship and calmed the storm, so that the ship and all who were in it came safely to port.

Nicholas is considered the patron saint of many other groups besides children and sailors. The common thread in all these claims on his heavenly protection is his legendary kindness to those in need — and his special care of those who follow his storied example by aiding the desperate, the needy, and the sick.

Sentence

I myself will search for my sheep, and I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered.

Ezekiel 34.11, 12

Collect

Eternal God,
in your great love
you gave to your servant Nicholas
a perpetual name for deeds of kindness on land and sea.
Grant that your Church may never cease to work
for the happiness of children,
the safety of sailors,
the relief of the poor
and the help of those who are tossed
by tempests of doubt or grief;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

1 John 4.7–14 Psalm 107.33–43

Refrain He lifted the poor out of misery.

Mark 10.13–16

Prayer over the Gifts

O Lord our God,
grant us so to cherish
the example of your servant Nicholas,
that our offering may have justice as its consort
and mercy as its sovereign.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Source of all goodness,
grant us the fruits of this holy banquet,
that we may abide with you in faithfulness
and show forth in all our dealings
the love by which you first loved us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Ambrose

7 December

Bishop of Milan, Teacher of the Faith, 397 — Memorial

Ambrose was bishop of Milan and a great champion of the Catholic faith during the last quarter of the fourth century.

His election as bishop in the year 374 appeared to be a fluke of providence. Ambrose was the imperial governor of northern Italy, when rival factions in the church of Milan began to fight one another over the election of a new bishop. He called the people together and mustered all his eloquence in urging them to keep the peace. Suddenly, from the very back of the crowd, a child's voice was heard to cry: "Ambrose for bishop! Ambrose for bishop!" The whole crowd took up the cry — much to the horror and embarrassment of Ambrose himself, for he was not yet baptized. The crowd would not listen to his protests and a week later, after a hurried baptism, he was ordained bishop of Milan.

Ambrose became a convinced advocate of the Church party which confessed the true divinity of Christ. His position brought him into conflict with the emperor, who sympathized with the opposing party. At one point the emperor had his legion of bodyguards surround the basilica of Milan while Ambrose and his congregation were celebrating the liturgy. It looked as if they would all be massacred, but Ambrose kept up his people's courage by preaching to them and leading them in the singing of psalms and hymns. At nightfall the emperor finally ordered his troops to withdraw. This event gave Ambrose enormous prestige, which continued into the reign of the next emperor. When the people of Thessalonika were massacred on imperial orders, Ambrose excommunicated the emperor himself and compelled him to do public penance for his atrocity.

Because of his orthodoxy and his courage in speaking up for the oppressed, Ambrose became a hero of the western Church long before his death in 397. These same qualities are the reason why we still honour him to this day, which is the anniversary of his ordination as bishop of Milan.

Sentence

O God, let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, the one you have made so strong for yourself. *Psalm 80.16*

Collect

God of grace and faithfulness,
by the power of your Word
your holy servant Ambrose
subdued the fury of princes
and sustained the faith of your people.
Remember us in our needs
and grant us strength in our weaknesses,
that we may serve you with confidence
and rejoice in your mighty salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

2 Corinthians 6.1–13 Psalm 27.5–11

Refrain Your face, O Lord, will I seek.

Luke 12.35–37, 42–44

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
who consecrated us in baptism
and made us a new creation,
clothe us with virtues fit for this banquet
and satisfy our hunger for your glory.
We ask this through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Almighty God,
who made your servant Ambrose
strong in the cause of righteousness,
guide us by his example and witness,
that we may be steadfast
in the truth of your gospel
and secure in the hand of your saving power;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

8 December — Memorial

Today we commemorate the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a feast which has its origins in a legend from the second century. The story goes like this:¹

In Israel there lived a husband and wife named Jo'-a-chim and Anne; they were righteous and kept all the commandments of God, but they had not been able to have any children. Their neighbours reproached them for their childlessness and even refused to let Jo'-a-chim present his sacrifices in the Temple, saying, "It is not fitting for you to offer your gifts first, because you have begotten no offspring in Israel." Jo'-a-chim admitted the justice of this reproach and in his grief departed into the wilderness to fast for forty days and forty nights.

Meanwhile his wife Anne remained at home and carried her own grief in her heart. One afternoon she went into her garden and sat down beneath a laurel tree. She looked up and, seeing a nest of sparrows, uttered this lament: "Woe is me, to what may I be likened? I am not like the birds of heaven, for even the birds of heaven are fruitful before you, O Lord. Nor may I be likened to this earth, for even this earth brings forth its fruit in due season and praises you, O Lord."

Immediately an angel visited her with this message: "Anne, Anne, the Lord has heard your prayer, and you shall conceive and bear a child, and your offspring shall be spoken of in all the world." True to God's word, she conceived and gave birth to Mary — who did indeed come to be spoken of in all the world as the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹ See "A Note Concerning Legendary Material" on page 22.

Sentence

The Lord has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness. *Isaiah 61.10*

Collect

O God,
who appointed the Blessed Virgin Mary
while yet in her mother's womb
to be the Mother of our Lord,
grant that with her
we may share full adoption
into the life of your heavenly family;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Isaiah 49.1b–3 Psalm 139.1–12

Refrain You knit me together in my mother's womb.

Luke 1.34–38

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
who prepared your servant Mary
to be the loving Bearer of your Word,
grant us so to offer this sacrifice of praise
that your Son may nurture his life in us;
We ask this through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of the Incarnation

Prayer after Communion

Heavenly Father,
keep us in the power of this life-giving mystery,
that with the Blessed Virgin Mary,
we may bring the needs of this world
to the healing presence of Jesus Christ our Lord,
who reigns over all creation, now and for ever.

Prophets of the Old Testament

9 December

Memorial

Today we remember the prophets of the Old Testament and number them among the true saints and witnesses of Christ — not because some of their sayings may be construed as foretelling his birth, but because they recalled Israel and Judah to God's covenant and uttered the word of God's justice so that the people might return and seek redemption from the Lord.

Prophecy took many forms in ancient Israel and was specially associated with "speaking in tongues," or the gift of ecstatic speech which could often sound like nothing more than musical babbling but was in fact uttering praise to God in the power of the Spirit. The first two kings of Israel, Saul and David, manifested this form of prophecy. But so did the prophets of the gods of the heathen — and, as a result, Israel began to look for more in the prophets of the one true God. They sought qualities like faithfulness to the inner meaning of God's covenant with Moses and the ability to relate Israel's contemporary experience of defeat and exile to the great passover out of Egypt into the Promised Land.

These were precisely the qualities found in the writings of the prophets which are included in the canon of the Old Testament; and we honour them during this season of Advent, because they show us how to expect the coming of Christ — in justice, in mercy, and as the fulfilment of the great passover of all creation, when we shall finally return from our exile and enter the true promised land, which is the glory of God and the kingdom of Christ.

Sentence

I will stand at my watch post and station myself on the rampart, I will keep watch to see what the Lord God will say to me. *Habakkuk 2.1*

Collect

Almighty God,
who raised up your servants the prophets
to recall the children of Israel
to faithfulness in the way of your covenant,
grant us your Spirit, we pray,
that we may hear their witness
and offer to you the oblations of compassion and mercy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Hosea 14.1–7 Psalm 103.6–14

Refrain The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

Mark 1.1–11

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God of the prophets,
grant that we who offer this service of praise
may walk in their tradition
and be renewed in the life to which you call us,
for the sake of him who was,
and who is, and who is to come,
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of the Reign of Christ

Prayer after Communion

Father of the Word made flesh,
you shower your love upon us
as dew upon a parched and weary land.
Grant us a continual thirst
for the restoration of all things
in Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Simon Gibbons

15 December

First Priest from the Inuit, 1896 — Commemoration

On this day we commemorate Simon Gibbons, who was the first of the Inuit nation to be ordained as an Anglican priest and whose ministry in the diocese of Nova Scotia gave the rest of our Church a wonderful example of vitality.

He was born in Labrador, the son of a white settler and an Innu mother. Both of his parents died before he was six years old, and he was placed in an Anglican orphanage in Newfoundland. The Church nurtured his intelligence, and he was encouraged to train for ordination. He eventually went to King's College in Nova Scotia, where he was ordained to the priesthood in 1878. Gibbons began his ministry as a travelling missionary in Cape Breton and laboured in conditions which taxed his physical endurance to the limit. He regularly walked a hundred-mile circuit to conduct services in isolated communities. He made his rounds even in the depths of winter, just to bring the comfort of Christ to the sick and dying; and in so doing he risked his life in blizzards or while crossing inlets whose frozen surfaces often gave way beneath his feet. Yet in all his exertions, despite fatigue, pain, and danger, Gibbons never failed in joy or in his ability to communicate the gladness of his service to the people he visited.

After seven years in this work he was appointed rector of Lockport; in 1888 he moved to the mainland parish of Parrsboro. In both parishes he supervised building campaigns and joined in the manual labour of raising the church frames, nailing the clapboards, putting in the windows, and moving the furniture into place. But it soon became clear that the strain of his earlier ministry had destroyed his physical resilience, and though his spiritual joy was unabated, his health steadily declined. He died at the age of forty-six on this date in 1896.

Sentence

As the rain and the snow come down from the sky, so it is with the word that goes from my mouth: it will not return to me unfulfilled. *Isaiah 55.10, 11 (NJB)*

Collect

Lord God,
who gave to Simon Gibbons
both righteousness in the ministry of a priest
and faithfulness in the work of a pastor
among a people not his own,
kindle the whole body of your Church
with a fervent love of your Word,
that we may serve you in one another
and learn your salvation in Jesus Christ;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Isaiah 61.1–3 Psalm 23

Refrain I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Luke 10.1–9

Prayer over the Gifts

Lord God,
from every family, language, people, and nation
you have made us a kingdom of priests
to serve you night and day.
Teach us to remember Simon Gibbons,
that we may share in the one sacrifice
of Jesus Christ our Saviour, who stands at your right hand,
now and for ever.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Grant us, Lord God,
such faithfulness in our callings,
that following the example of Simon Gibbons,
we may have the gift of unquenchable gladness
in the service of Jesus Christ our Lord,
who reigns with you in glory, now and for ever.

The Birth of the Lord

25 December

Christmas Day — Principal Feast

When Saint Luke recounted the birth of Christ, he meant to inspire awe, even that “fear of the Lord” which Scripture calls “the beginning of wisdom.” The event itself may have been as full of human tenderness as Christian devotion has felt, but that did not interest the evangelist. He focused his story on the mighty acts which revealed the divine purpose and manifested its almighty power. The miracle of a virgin giving birth, the visitation of angels, the adoration of the shepherds: all these signs and wonders attested that Jesus was the Son of God in a unique way — not merely “by adoption and grace,” as baptized people are made children of God, but by his very nature.

The prologue to the Fourth Gospel, which is the other Gospel reading for this day, has a similar purpose, even as it works from an altogether different perspective. Saint John does not focus his prologue on the divine power revealed at the birth of Christ, but on the divine glory which Christ has had from all eternity. Jesus is identified with the Word who existed in the beginning, who was what God was, and who in these last days “became flesh and lived among us.” It is from John’s prologue that the Church learned to talk about the Incarnation, the “enfleshing” or even the “embodying” of God. This does not mean that the divine Word donned human flesh the way an actor or actress puts on makeup and a wardrobe to play a part. It means that the Son of God united human nature to himself and became a complete human being; he possessed a human soul, a human mind and will, as well as flesh and blood, so that his humanity is for ever the sacrament of his divine glory.

Yet another perspective on the divine origin of Christ appears in Saint Paul’s Letter to the Philippians, where he quotes a hymn which Christians were already singing. This hymn acclaims Christ as the Son

Who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
something to be exploited,
But emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.

The focus of this hymn is neither the power nor even the pre-existent glory of Christ, but the humility of the Son of God — as if he never revealed his divinity so truly as when he chose to become a human and feel all the constraints of our condition.

The theme of divine humility has shaped the Christian tradition of Christmas at least as much as Luke's account and John's prologue. Indeed, since ancient times, Christian preachers have used it to harmonize the story that Luke tells with the theology that John intones. It has also let them discover the human tenderness of the nativity scene, and to dwell on the image of a Saviour whose care for the world allowed him to be held in the caring arms of his Virgin mother.

At Midnight

Sentence

I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day a Saviour, Christ the Lord.

Luke 2.10–11

Collect

Eternal God, this holy night is radiant
with the brilliance of your one true light.

As we have known the revelation of that light on earth,
bring us to see the splendour of your heavenly glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Isaiah 9.2–7 Psalm 96

Refrain All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Or v. 2 or CR 3

Titus 2.11–14 Luke 2.1–20

Optional Readings

Isaiah 62.6–7, 10–12 Psalm 97

Refrain As above *Or v. 11 or CR 3*

Titus 3.4–7 Luke 2.8–20

Or Isaiah 52.7–10 Psalm 98

Refrain As above *Or v. 5 or CR 3*

Hebrews 1.1–12 John 1.1–14

Prayer over the Gifts

Source of light and gladness,
accept all we offer on this joyful feast.

May we grow up in him who unites our lives to yours;
for he is Lord now and for ever.

Preface of Christmas

Prayer after Communion

Father of all, tonight you have united earth and heaven
in sending your Son to take our nature.

May we who have tasted heavenly things
share in the life of his eternal kingdom.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

In the Early Morning

Sentence

I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day a Saviour, Christ the Lord.

Luke 2.10–11

Collect

O God our Father,
whose Word has come among us
in the Holy Child of Bethlehem,
may the light of faith
illumine our hearts
and shine in our words and deeds;
through him who is Christ the Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

As above

Prayer over the Gifts

Generous Creator,
in faith and joy
we celebrate the birth of your Son.
Increase our understanding and our love
of the riches you have revealed in him,
who is Lord now and for ever.

Preface of Christmas

Prayer after Communion

Source of truth and joy,
may we who have received the gift of divine life
always follow the way of your Son.
This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

During the Day

Sentence

I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day a Saviour, Christ the Lord.

Luke 2.10–11

Collect

Almighty God,
you wonderfully created
and yet more wonderfully restored our human nature.
May we share the divine life of your Son Jesus Christ,
who humbled himself to share our humanity,
and now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

As above

Prayer over the Gifts

God of peace,
your Son Jesus Christ has reconciled us to you.
May all we offer you today
renew us as members of your household.
We ask this in his name.

Preface of Christmas

Prayer after Communion

Father of all,
the child born for us is the Saviour of the world.
May he who made us your children
welcome us into your kingdom,
where he is alive and reigns with you now and for ever.

December 26 — Saint Stephen,

Deacon and Martyr (HD)

See August 3

December 27 — Saint John,

Apostle and Evangelist (HD)

See May 6

December 28 — The Holy Innocents (HD)

See January 11

Thomas Becket

29 December

Archbishop of Canterbury, 1170 — Commemoration

Today we remember Thomas Becket, a twelfth-century archbishop of Canterbury who was murdered within his own cathedral because he resisted the will of King Henry II.

Becket's fate was all the more tragic because he had been a bosom friend of the king as well as his chief adviser. Henry had been trying to curb the privileges of the Church in England, so he arranged for Becket to be elected archbishop of Canterbury in 1162 as a way of ensuring its cooperation with his policies. But he was bitterly disappointed when Thomas changed his allegiance and became a stiff-necked defender of the Church's rights. One thing led to another, and within two years the new archbishop felt he had no choice but to flee England and become an exile in France. Both men appealed to the Pope, who patched together an agreement which satisfied neither party but at least allowed Thomas to return from exile in December of 1170.

The archbishop was greeted by cheering crowds all along his route back to Canterbury, but in a sermon on Christmas Day he foretold that his blood would be shed. Reports are confused but it seems that, a day or two later, King Henry became drunk and cried out, "Who will rid me of this meddlesome priest?" Four barons took him at his word and rode to Canterbury. On the afternoon of December twenty-ninth they strode into Becket's chambers and demanded satisfaction; when he refused to heed their ultimatum they left, but returned a short while later with murder in their hearts. They broke into the cathedral and found Becket standing before one of the side altars. An angry exchange ended with one of the barons swinging his sword and slicing into the archbishop's head. As Thomas collapsed he said, "I accept death for the Name of Jesus and his Church." All four barons then fell upon him with their swords and finished him off.

Sentence

Zeal for your house has eaten me up; O Lord, be swift and answer me, for I am in distress. *Psalm 69.10a, 19b*

Collect

O God,
whose servant Thomas Becket
was zealous even unto death
for the rights of your Church,
grant that, after his example,
we may live in your fear,
die in your favour,
and rest in your peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

2 Chronicles 24.17–22 Psalm 69.7–14, 19–22
Refrain Draw near to me and redeem me, O God.
Matthew 10.34–39

Prayer over the Gifts

O God, our Maker and our Strength,
grant us so to stand at this table
and offer the service of our praise,
that we may be at peace
with all your people
and at one with your saving justice.
We ask this in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Loving Redeemer,
you join us at this table
to the priestly sacrifice of your only Son.
Turn our wills and hands to deeds of justice
and make us bearers of your mercy
in a troubled and angry world.
This we ask through Jesus Christ the Lord.

John West 31 December
Missionary in the Red River District, 1845 — Commemoration

John West came to this country in 1820 and spent three years preaching the gospel among the traders and native peoples in the Red River Settlement, which eventually became Winnipeg.

He was educated at Oxford, ordained, and settled into the life of a typical English clergyman — a rural parish, marriage, and children. But West had been touched by the Evangelical Revival and yearned to spread the gospel in foreign lands. At the age of forty-five he resigned his parish and accepted a chaplaincy with the Hudson's Bay Company, which sent him and his family to its trading post at Red River.

West was expected to officiate at services of public worship and otherwise keep out of the way, but his missionary fervour led him to range far and wide on the prairies and make contact with the native peoples. His sense of the gospel made him object to the Company's exploitation of the first nations, and though he soon left its employment to become a worker for the Church Missionary Society, his situation became increasingly difficult. In 1823 the Hudson's Bay Company used its influence to have him recalled to England. Two years later West came back to Canada as a missionary to native people in the Atlantic provinces, but returned to England again within twelve months. He accepted a parish in rural Dorset, where he died on this date in 1845.

Sentence

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, and do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus. *Colossians 3.16, 17*

Collect

Lord God,
who entrusted your servant John West
with bearing the gospel of Christ
to native and merchant and trapper
on the prairies of this nation,
grant that, after his example,
we may hasten the glad tidings of your Word
to every heart oppressed by sorrow
and to every life imprisoned by sin;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Colossians 3.1–4, 12–17 Psalm 23

Refrain The Lord guides me along right pathways.

Luke 10.1–9

Prayer over the Gifts

Eternal God,
who uttered your Word in our flesh,
guide our remembrance of your servant John West,
that with ready faith and glad obedience
we may render the service
which you call us to offer.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Grant us, O God of mercy,
after the example of your servant John West,
so to bear the seed of your Word
into all our dealings with the world,
that the cities and plains of this present age
may be planted with the Tree of life.
This we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Appendix

Recent Additions to the Calendar

Florence Li Tim-Oi *February 26*

First woman priested in the Anglican Communion, 1944 *Com*

At her birth in 1907 Li Tim-Oi's father called her "Much Beloved." When she was baptized as a student, Tim-Oi chose the name Florence from "The Lady of the Lamp." Florence is celebrated worldwide for the witness to Christ that she lived out as the first female priest in the Anglican Communion. In 1931, at the ordination of a deaconess, she heard and responded to the call to ministry. She was made deacon in 1941, and was given charge of the Anglican congregation in the Portuguese colony of Macao, thronged with refugees from war-torn China.

When a priest could no longer travel from Japanese-occupied territory to preside for her at the eucharist, the Bishop of Hong Kong asked her to meet him in Free China, where on January 25, 1944 he ordained her "a priest in the Church of God." To defuse controversy, in 1946 she surrendered her priest's license, but not her Holy Orders, the knowledge of which carried her through Maoist persecution. For the next 39 years, she served faithfully under very difficult circumstances, particularly after the Communists took over mainland China. In 1983, arrangements were made for her to come to Canada, where she was appointed as an honorary assistant at St. John's Chinese congregation and St. Matthew's parish in Toronto.

The Anglican Church of Canada had by this time approved the ordination of women to the priesthood, and in 1984, the 40th anniversary of her ordination, Ms. Li was, with great joy and thanksgiving, reinstated as a priest. This event was celebrated not only in Canada but also at Westminster Abbey and at Sheffield in England, even though the Church of England had not yet approved the ordination of women.

From that date until her death in 1992, she exercised her priesthood with such faithfulness and quiet dignity that she won tremendous respect for herself and increasing support for other women seeking ordination. She was awarded Doctorates of Divinity by General Theological Seminary, New York, and Trinity College, Toronto.

The very quality of Ms. Li's ministry in China and in Canada, and the grace with which she exercised her priesthood, helped convince many people throughout the Communion and beyond that the Holy Spirit was certainly working in and through women priests. Her contribution to the Church far exceeded the expectations of those involved in her ordination in 1944. She died on February 26, 1992.

Sentence

I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord. *Psalms 116.11 (BAS)*

Collect

Loving God, giver of all good gifts,
fill us with your grace,
that we, like your servant Li Tim-Oi,
first woman to be ordained an Anglican priest,
may entrust you with our destiny.
May we, with her same forbearance in the face
of adversity, witness to you in all things;
through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the
Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen.

Readings

Psalms 116.1–12

Refrain Common Refrain 7: Behold, I come to do your will, O God.

Galatians 3.23–28 Luke 10.1–9

Prayer over the Gifts

God of mercy,
accept all we offer you this day.
May we who celebrate this Eucharist
be constant in our service to you
and to each other,
as we follow Jesus Christ,
the One in whom we have our life. Amen.

Proper Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Gracious God,
you gather us to be your holy people,
the body of Christ in the world.
Increase in us the virtues of patience and devotion that,
like Li Tim-Oi, we may live always in your radiance.
We pray in Jesus' name.

Mother Emily Ayckbowm 5 April

Foundress of the Community of the Sisters of the Church, 1870 Mem

Mother Emily Ayckbowm founded the Community of the Sisters of the Church (C.S.C.) in 1870 to proclaim the love of God to the people of God. She was a pioneer who challenged Victorian society for the sake of all who were seen as marginal. She offered dignity as well as practical help, and became a controversial figure in her day for doing so. Under the patronage of St. Michael and the Angels, the Sisters of the Church are reminded that their calling is both to prayer and active ministry, giving witness to God's concern for the whole of human life—women, men, and children—and the reconciliation and redemption of all God's creation.

The C.S.C. is a religious community for women in full communion with the Anglican Church, with a Mother House at Ham Common, Richmond, in England. Women in Canada, England, Australia, and the Solomon Islands blend the richness of their different cultures in the Provinces of C.S.C. The community has pioneered work in Christian education, childcare, social welfare, and mission work. In Canada today, Mother Emily's vision is lived out in St. Michael's House in Burlington, where the Sisters of the Church blend contemplation and action in their lives of individual and corporate prayer, and by their ministries of hospitality, education, retreats, and pastoral support.

Sentence

Those who lead many to righteousness shall shine like the stars forever. *Daniel 12.3*

Collect

O God, by whose grace Emily Ayckbowm became a light in your Church:
may we like her devote ourselves
to the fulfillment of your will
in a life of adoration and service;
through Jesus Christ your Son,
our Lord, who lives and reigns
with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Readings

I John 4.7–12 Psalm 34.1–8

Refrain: Taste and see that the Lord is good.

Matthew 25.31–40

Prayer over the Gifts

Eternal God,
grant that we who hear your word
may be always faithful to our vocation and ministry
for the Church of God.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Proper Preface of a Saint

Prayer after Communion

Loving God,
may we, like Emily,
see the face of your Son in all whom we meet,
worshipping and serving you until that day
when we see you face to face.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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