



## **Saint Alban**

**Feast Day: 22nd June**

**Patron: Converts and Refugees**

St. Alban was the first martyr of England. During a persecution of Christians, Alban, though a pagan, hid a priest in his house. The priest made such a great impression on him that Alban received instructions and became a Christian himself.

The governor had been told that the priest was hiding in Alban's house, and he sent his soldiers to capture him. But Alban changed clothes with his guest, and gave himself up in his stead. The judge was furious when he found out that the priest had escaped and he said to Alban, "You shall get the punishment he was to get unless you worship the gods." The Saint answered that he would never worship those false gods again.

The judge had Alban whipped. Then he commanded him to be beheaded. On the way to the place of execution, the soldier who was to kill the Saint was converted himself, and he too became a martyr.

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## **Saint Bede the Venerable**

**Feast Day: 25th May**

**Patron: English writers and historians and Jarrow**

Saint Bede is known as Venerable Bede. Bede was born near St. Peter and St. Paul monastery at Wearmouth-Jarrow, England. He became a monk at the monastery, was ordained when thirty, and except for a few brief visits elsewhere, spent all of his life in the monastery, devoting himself to the study of Scripture and to teaching and writing.

His best-known work is *Historia Ecclesiastica*, a history of the English Church and people. He was a careful scholar and distinguished stylist, the "father" of English history, the first to date events *anno domini* (A.D), and in 1899, was declared the only English doctor of the Church.

He is considered one of the most learned men of his time and a major influence on English literature.

Parish Church in Chadwell Heath building named in his honour



### **Saint Margaret Clitherow**

**Feast Day: 26th March**

**Patron: English Martyrs**

St. Margaret Clitherow was born in Middleton, York, England, in 1555, of protestant parents. Possessed of good looks and full of wit and merriment, she was a charming personality.

In 1571, she married John Clitherow, a well-to-do grazier and butcher, and a few years later entered the Catholic Church. Her zeal led her to harbor fugitive priests, for which she was arrested and imprisoned by hostile authorities.

Finally, she was condemned to death on March 25, 1586. She was stretched out on the ground with a sharp rock on her back and crushed under a door over laden with

unbearable weights. Her bones were broken and she died within fifteen minutes.



### **Saint John Fisher**

**Feast Day: 22nd June**

**Patron: Diocese of Rochester**

St. John Fisher was born in Beverly, Yorkshire, in 1459, and educated at Cambridge, from which he received his Master of Arts degree in 1491. In 1497, he was appointed confessor to Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII, and became closely associated in her endowments to Cambridge. In 1504, he became Bishop of Rochester and Chancellor of Cambridge, in which capacity he also tutored Prince Henry who was to become Henry VIII.

From 1527, this humble servant of God actively opposed the King's divorce proceedings against Catherine, his wife in the sight of God, and steadfastly resisted the encroachment of Henry on the Church. Unlike the other Bishops of the realm, St. John refused to take the oath of succession which acknowledged the issue of Henry and Anne as the legitimate heir to the throne, and he was imprisoned in the tower in April 1534. The next year he was made a Cardinal by Paul III and Henry retaliated by having him beheaded within a month.



### **Saint Anne Line**

**Feast Day: 27th February**

**Patron: English Martyrs**

English martyr from Dunmow, Essex. The daughter of William Heigham, she was disowned by him when she married a Catholic, Roger Line. Roger was imprisoned for being a Catholic and was exiled and died in 1594 in Flanders, Belgium. Anne stayed in England where she hid Catholic priests in a London safe house. In this endeavor she aided Jesuit Father John Gerard until her arrest. She was tried at the Old Bailey 26 Feb., 1601, for harbouring a priest, though this could not be proved. The next day she was led to the gallows, and bravely proclaiming her faith, achieved the martyrdom for which she had prayed. Her fate was shared by two priests Mark Barkworth and Roger Filcock, who were executed at the same time. Anne was hanged at Tyburn on February 27,

1601. Pope Paul VI canonized Anne Line in 1970 as one of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales.



### **Saint Thomas More**

**Feast Day: 22nd June**

**Patron: Adopted children, lawyers and civil servants**

Thomas More was born in London on February 7, 1478.

Thomas More entered Oxford in 1492, where he would learn Latin, Greek and prepare for his future studies. In 1494, he became a lawyer and he trained in London until 1502.

Almost as soon as More became a lawyer, he found himself contemplating another path in life. For two years More lived next to a Carthusian monastery and he found himself called to follow their lifestyle of simple piety. By 1504, More had decided to remain in the secular world, and stood for election to

Parliament. But he did not forget the pious monks who inspired his practice of the faith.

From 1517, Henry VIII took a liking to Thomas More, and gave him posts of ever increasing responsibility. In 1521, he was knighted and made Under-Treasurer of the Exchequer. In 1532, More found himself unable to work for Henry VIII, whom he felt had lost his way as a Catholic. In 1533, More refused to attend the coronation of Anne Boylen, who was now the Queen of England.

Saint Thomas More was found guilty of treason and was beheaded. On July 6, 1535, joking to his executioners to help him up the scaffold. He then made a final statement, proclaiming that he was "the king's good servant, but God's first."



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### **Saint Bernadette**

**Feast Day: 16th April**

**Patron: of illness, people ridiculed for their piety, poverty, shepherds, shepherdesses, and Lourdes, France**

St. Bernadette was born in Lourdes, France on January 7, 1844. Her parents were very poor and she was the first of nine children. On Thursday, February 11, 1858, fourteen-year-old Bernadette was sent with her younger sister and a friend to gather firewood, when a very beautiful lady appeared to her above a rose bush in a grotto called Massabielle. St Bernadette had 18 visions of Our Lady of Lourdes, one of the most famous was to dig the ground where now the miraculous spring of Lourdes is, where 70 miracles have been recorded. Saint Bernadette is often depicted in prayer with a rosary or appealing to the Holy Virgin. She was beatified in 1925 and

canonized by Pope Pius XI in December 1933.



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### **Saint Maximilian Kolbe**

**Feast Day: 14th August**

**Patron: of drug addicts, prisoners and families**

St. Maximilian Kolbe was born as Raymund Kolbe on January 8, 1894, in the Kingdom of Poland, part of the Russian Empire. He was a Polish Conventual Franciscan friar and a martyr in the German death Camp of Auschwitz during World War II. St Kolbe had visions of Our Lady and said: "That night I asked the Mother of God what was to become of me. Then she came to me holding



two crowns, one white, the other red. She asked me if I was willing to accept either of these crowns. The white one meant that I should persevere in purity, and the red that I should become a martyr. I said that I would accept them both."

During the war St Kolbe kept safe 2000 Jews from persecution until he was eventually caught and on February 17, 1941, the monastery was shut down; Kolbe was arrested by the German Gestapo and taken to the Pawiak prison. Three months later, he was transferred to Auschwitz. St Kolbe was executed not for his own crime but because he took the place of a man with a family. It is said during the last days of his life Kolbe led prayers to Our Lady with the prisoners and remained calm. He was the last of the group to remain alive, after two weeks of dehydration and starvation. The guards gave him a lethal injection of carbolic acid. The stories tell that he raised his left arm and calmly awaited death. St. Maximilian Kolbe died on August 14 and his remains were cremated on August 15, the same day as the Assumption of Mary feast day.

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### **Saint Teresa (Mother Teresa)**

**Feast Day: 5th September**

**Patron: of World Youth Day**

The remarkable woman who would be known as Mother Teresa began life named Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu. At the age of 18 to join the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, known as the Sisters of Loreto, in Ireland. She received the name Sister Mary Teresa after St. Therese of Lisieux. In December of 1929, she departed for her first trip to India, arriving in Calcutta. On October 7, 1950 the new congregation of the Missionaries of Charity was officially established in the Archdiocese of Calcutta. Mother Teresa's inspiration was not limited to those with religious

vocations.

She formed the Co-Workers of Mother Teresa and the Sick and Suffering Co-Workers, people of many faiths and nationalities with who she shared her spirit of prayer, simplicity, sacrifice and her apostolate of humble works of love. On September 5, Mother Teresa's earthly life came to an end. She was given the honor of a state funeral by the Government of India and her body was buried in the Mother House of the Missionaries of Charity. Her tomb quickly became a place of pilgrimage and prayer for people of all faiths, rich and poor alike.