

A Calendar of Middle East Saints

*Compiled by
Bishop Kenneth Cragg and Brother Gilbert Sinden
Edited by the Revd Matthew Rhodes 1998*

January 17

Antony of Egypt

(c 251-356)

Initiator of Religious Communities

Sentence	The righteous flourish like the palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the Lord. They flourish in the courts of our God (Psalm 92:12-13)
Collect	Almighty God our heavenly Father, you called Antony to renounce the world and to serve you in the solitude of Egypt's deserts. As we learn to deny ourselves and to love you above all things, grant us your wisdom and your peace. We ask this through your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.
Readings	Isaiah 62:6-12 Psalm 92:10-15 Ephesians 6:10-20 or Hebrews 13:17-21* Matthew 19:16-26 or Luke 6:17-23a*
Concluding sentence	Jesus said to the rich young man: "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." (Matthew 19:21)

* *These are the readings used in the Greek Orthodox tradition on the Feast day of St Antony the Great*

Antony was born in Egypt around the year 251 of Christian parents who were peasants. After their death, Antony heard Christ's words the rich young man read in church (Matthew 19:16-26). He gave his worldly goods to the poor and in 285 went into the desert to live a life of prayer. Many Christians consulted him and may settled near him as his disciples. In 305 Antony became their spiritual father. He supported Christians under persecution in the reign of Diocletian, and Saint Athanasius against the Arians. His group of disciples are regarded as the first Christian religious community.

Antony died at a great age. Bishop Athanasius wrote his *Life* and the book became was a powerful factor in spreading the ideals of monasticism throughout the world.

The *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, beginning with Antony, have become a treasure of spiritual education. They embody the tradition of a living wisdom that can be given to a seeker, not just as an explanation or a consolation, but as a firm directive which liberated and illuminates, without debate. Rather like the "word in season" of which Isaiah 50:4 speaks.

Among other things, these *Sayings* help to recognise and surmount the state of *Accidie*, or listlessness and distaste for life stemming from no clear reason. They teach *Hesychia*, or inner tranquility, the *Itmi'nan* of the Qur'an, the possession of inner peace, or guarding the mind by inner prayer and remembrance of God.

He added: "Without temptations, no one can be saved."

O God, who in the life of your servant Antony and from the sands of Egypt has given us a measure of our discipleship in Christ. Enable us in discipline to overcome despair and in recollection to find your promised peace, so that we may have the word that is in season in the occasions of our daily living, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

January 30

Samuel Gobat

(d 1879)

*Reformer Bishop in Jerusalem,
Who loved The Ancient Churches of the East*

Sentence	The Lord will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arms, he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young (Isaiah 40:11).
Collect	God our Father, you called Samuel Gobat to leave his own country and his own kindred to serve the Christians of the Middle East. Give us a measure of the same pastoral zeal for the Gospel and for the unity of your Church, that your Church may rejoice in continued growth in faith and hope and love. Grant this through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.
Readings	Genesis 12:1-3 Psalm 96:9-13 2 Timothy 4:1-5 John 2:1-11
Concluding sentence	At Cana in Galilee the Mother of Jesus said to the servants "Do whatever he tells you" (John 2:5)

Samuel Gobat was the longest serving Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem to date (1846-1879). During these years the Bishopric extended over almost the entire area of the present Province and beyond.

Gobat was born a French-speaking Swiss Lutheran. He was the only bishop to be nominated to the see by the Prussian Crown. He was an excellent Arabic scholar. Gobat was anxious to encourage loyalty to the Ancient Churches but those who responded to his message were often pressured or deprived by their own clergy and Gobat reasoned that he could not refuse to welcome them "without rejecting the Lord Himself." Against the grain he found himself developing Arab Anglican congregations. He was an inveterate traveler from Ethiopia to Turkey, and a great builder of schools, clinics and chapels. His last decade saw the beginning of the Anglican Church in Iran. Despite these developments, the latter part of his time as Bishop saw a happier relation of both pastoral harmony and doctrinal community with Eastern Orthodoxy.

*Do the work of an evangelist: make full proof of your ministry: feed the flock of God.
Lord, work in us the will so to do. Amen.*

February 4

Cornelius

Roman Centurion

*One of the First Gentile Christians,
Baptized at Caesarea Maritima by Saint Peter*

Sentence	You are our Father, though Abraham does not know us and Israel does not acknowledge us ; you, O Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name. (Isaiah 63:16)
----------	---

Collect Heavenly Father, your loving Spirit called both Cornelius and Peter to courageous obedience and strengthened them to obey gladly. We thank you for the revelation of your consistent love for every human being and ask that your Holy Spirit may enable us to live, proclaim, and extend your Gospel of universal grace across all barriers and frontiers. Grant this through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Readings Isaiah 63:15-19
Psalm 18:18-31
Acts 10
Luke 5:1-7

This Roman centurion in Acts 10 is a vital Biblical figure in our calendar. To him, under God, we owe the initiative whereby Peter the Galilean first overcame the Jewish taboo which forbade entering a non-Jewish home and eating there. Subsequently, 'Gentile' believers were incorporated by baptism into the Christian fellowship.

These were massive steps in the obedience of the Church. That others, like Philip the Deacon and nameless disciples in Cyprus, were doing the same around the same time (for we cannot be sure of Luke's chronology), does not make Cornelius less remarkable. He was humble enough to send for a native fisherman, while Peter was big enough to comprehend where the Holy Spirit was leading.

Later tradition sees Cornelius as a bishop, but we remember him with gratitude for his obedience to the Holy Spirit and for the part he played in prompting a similar momentous obedience on the part of Peter and the earliest Church.

Heavenly Father, we give thanks for the living, loving Spirit, releasing us from old fears and prompting us to new venture. Fit us by thy grace to realise more ardently the fellowship which is ours in Christ, and to extend it generously across all frontiers, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

March 29

Simon of Cyrene

The African who helped Jesus carry the Cross to Calvary

Sentence Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ (Galatians 6.2)

Collect Lord God, your Son our Saviour taught us that whenever we help the weak and helpless we serve him in love. We give you thanks for Simon from Africa; fill our hearts with love and compassion like his and open our eyes to see Jesus in those who ask for our love and our service. Grant this through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Readings Leviticus 19:15-18
Psalm 122
1 Corinthians 1:23-31
Mark 15:16-25

Concluding sentence The King will answer, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40)

Simon came from the North African town of Cyrene. He was almost certainly a Jew by faith but we do not know if his family had emigrated from the Holy Land or whether he was a convert from an African or Graeco-Roman family. In any event, he was a pilgrim in Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover when he

was conscripted to help Jesus carry the crossbeam of his cross (Mark 15:21). It seems that as a result of this experience, he came to follow Jesus "on the Way" so that he and his sons Alexander and Rufus were well known in the Church for which St Mark's Gospel was written, while Saint Paul regarded Simon's wife as his own mother (Romans 16:21).

Simon's day ought, perhaps, to be for us the festival of the passer-by, the feast of the unexpected. Imagine "coming out of the country" and being caught up in the redemption of the world. This is a parable of the truth of sainthood in people - the claim of the divine in the ordinary, the critical in the trivial, "the eternal moment which is always now".

Lord of Simon's calling-to-aid, hallow our every day with your need of us. Make us understand its meaning where-ever it meets us and give us readiness of heart and hand and mind.

April 23

George of Lydda

(d. ca. 303)

Martyr

- Sentence** Jesus said, "When they bring you to trial and deliver you up, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say; but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speaks but the Holy Spirit" (Mark 13:11).
- Collect** Lord our God, hear the prayer of those who praise your mighty power. As you strengthened your martyr George to follow Christ in suffering and death, so we ask you to strengthen us as we seek to follow Christ in our lives. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.
- Readings** Isaiah 43:8-13
Psalm 119:33-40
Philippians 3:17-21 or Acts 12:1-11*
John 15:17-16.1*
- Concluding sentence** No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; I have called you friends. (John 15:16)

"Among men my name is George. But my name before all else is 'Christian'." So wrote a Syrian of the second Christian century whose name, in so many different forms and languages, is favourite in many lands and, who through the crusaders, became the Patron Saint of England. The story of his sufferings has acquired a legendary quality, told as it is in all the tongues of our province: Syriac, Coptic, Greek, Amharic, Armenian and Arabic.

George's secretary, Pasicrates, is credited with the first narration of his story. George was going from Lydda to Tyre to claim his coming of age rights (his father having died when he was ten). He was confronted with a demand to sacrifice to the pagan gods and with a deadly array of torture instruments should he refuse. George did refuse and was executed for his faithful witness. He speaks to us of the multitude of faithful martyrs who fought valiantly against evil and gave their life for the truth. Two servants brought his body from Tyre to Jaffa and buried him at Lydda where Constantine ordered a great church to be built over his tomb, the remains of which can be seen today. There are innumerable churches hallowed in his name, including our own Cathedral in Jerusalem.

Lord, behind the accretions of celebratory tradition, we learn the reality of steadfast witness. Grant that we who invoke the name of your servant George, the martyr, may faithfully fulfill the calling that is ours as 'Christian', through the same saving grace of Christ. Amen.

May 2

Athanasius of Alexandria

(c 296-373)

Bishop and Teacher

- Sentence In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself; not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5.19).
- Collect Almighty Father, you raised up Athanasius the bishop to be an outstanding defender of the truth of Christ's divinity. Help us to bear witness to the Word made flesh and to grow in the knowledge and love of the same your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.
- Readings Genesis 1:26-28
 Psalm 8
 Hebrews 7:26-8.7*
 John 10:7-16*
- Concluding sentence I lay down my life for the sheep; and I have other sheep that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd. (John 10:15-16).

In 325, Athanasius accompanied his bishop Alexander to the Council of Nicea as his theological advisor. At the Council and subsequently as Bishop of Alexandria (his birthplace) he was a staunch defender of the orthodox understanding of God in Christ against the Arian heresy. Religious controversy was tied up with political intrigue. Athanasius became its victim on more than one occasion, incurring the wrath of the Emperor Julian, who sought to restore Roman paganism, and suffering banishment three times. "Athanasius contra mundum" was the phrase coined by his friends. Gregory of Nazianzen called him "a second John the Baptist".

Lord of the Church, we pray that we may have a right mind and a loyal grace in the present trust of the faith. Enable us to commend the mystery of your Incarnation in careful openness of heart to those who do not recognise it, whether out of jealousy for your transcendence or doubt of your reality as love, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

May 6

Aristoo and Bahram

(d.1979 and 1980)

Martyrs in Iran

- Sentence Jesus said, "I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (John 15:19).
- Collect God our Father, giver of strength to all your saints, you led Aristoo and Barham through their generous loving witness and death to the joy of eternal life. Heal the pain of those who loved them; grant us all forgiving hearts and loyal faithfulness like theirs; and give your joy and peace to the people of Iran. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.
- Readings Isaiah 42:(1-)5-9
 Psalm 35:20-26
 1 Peter 4:12-14
 Matthew 10:24-32

Concluding sentence You have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.

On February 19, 1079, Aristoo Sayyeh, senior priest of the Iranian Church and pastor at St Simon the Zealot Church, Shiraz, was found murdered in his study after two 'enquirers' had visited him and asked for a talk.

On 6th May, 1980, Bahram Dehqani-Tafti, only son of the Bishop President, was waylaid on his way home from his teaching work in Tehran by two men who took him away to a desert place and there murdered him. He was twenty four with all his great promise before him, a proven steadfast love for Iran and already rich in service.

Thus was the Church in Iran tragically bereaved. The murderers have never been identified. Their crimes are joined to the long saga of enmity by which, down the centuries, Christ's Church has been assailed. The story of their martyrdom during the Iranian revolution has been vividly and movingly told by Bishop Hassan Dehqani Tafti in *The Hard Awakening*.

How shall the blood of the innocent serve the Church in Iran? Bishop Hassan answers in his own diary of prayer of May 17, 1980:

This has always been your method, Lord... and ever shall be. We must bear the suffering without hatred. Those who killed.....really did not know what they were doing, therefore we must pray for them from the bottom of our hearts:

Give me Thy joy, O wounded man of Sorrows. Thy joy filled full in those dark hours of pain. Joy in Thy fellowship, despised, rejected.

Bearing all grief that love may live again.

So Christ stands over against history and in its darkest and most dangerous moments we receive a new revelation of His power.

Glory be to Thee, O Lord most high.

May 22

Temple Gairdner

(d. 1928)

Joyful servant of the Church in Egypt

Sentence Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves.
(Genesis 12:1, 3).

Collect God of love, your servant temple Gairdner joyfully gave all that he had in the service of your Church in Cairo for the love you gave him for Egypt, its people, and Arabic culture. May we share his love for you, his dedication to the service of the Gospel, his concern for the building up lively Christian communities, and his joy in finding your heavenly Kingdom. We ask this through Jesus Christ, your son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

Reading Jeremiah 1:4-10
Psalm 67
1 Corinthians 12:12-27
Matthew 13:44-46

Concluding sentence As in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another (Romans 12:4-5).

The son of an eminent professor of medicine at the University of Glasgow, Temple Gairdner was a joyous gift of Christ to his Church in Egypt. His skills in music and languages, his lively mind and eager spirit, were all recruited by the Holy Spirit in a warm, evangelical discipleship and were vigorously spent in the pastoral care of Old Cairo and devoted study of Islam.

After Oxford and ordination, with Douglas Thornton as his colleague, Gairdner made Cairo his home until his death. He left only for a sabbatical in the States and Syria and to attend the famous Edinburgh Conference of 1910, of which he wrote a popular report which bore much fruit. Thornton's early death was a heavy blow and Gairdner himself succumbed from overwork and steady self-giving while still only in his mid fifties. His passing in May 1928 bereaved the Egyptian Church of a servant and a lover of souls whose quality has few parallels.

Everything Gairdner did and wrote was with the Church, the people of God in Old Cairo and beyond in mind. People, he knew, would be the ultimate witnesses to Islam. His plays from Biblical themes were meant to kindle the imagination and draw out discipleship. He had a special concern for the young and the intelligent and spent long hours talking and writing about Christ for their minds and hearts. 'Conversion' for him, had to be embodied in a society, Christ's Gospel alive in people. In the magazine *Orient and Occident* he inaugurated a literary witness which still endures.

O Lord Christ, whose kingdom is like to treasure hid in a field which a man for joy thereof might go to purchase by selling all that was his. We give thanks for thy servant, Temple Gairdner, who for joy of thy truth and grace gave all that he had for the field he made his own. He found the treasure of his joy in the love of Egypt, in the wealth of Arabic, in the Church of Cairo. Ever give us this joy.

June 1

Justin of Nablus

(c. 100-165)

Martyr of Rome

Sentence	The proud dug pitfalls for me in defiance of your Law; I have spoken of your commands before kings and shall not be put to shame (Psalm 119:85,46 adapted)
Collect	Almighty Father, through the folly of the cross you taught Justin the sublime wisdom and courtesy of Jesus Christ: may we too reject falsehood and remain loyal to our Lord. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.
Readings	Job 28: (12-) 20-28 Psalm 1 1 Corinthians 2:1-10a or Acts 17:22-31 John 4:39-42
Concluding sentence	Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent; for I am with you and no man shall attack you to harm you (Acts 18:9-10).

Born in Nablus at the turn of the first century, Justin the Palestinian was among the first in the early Church to apply himself to systematic and reasoned defence of the faith of Christ. He searched long for truth and conviction but they eluded him until one day, meeting an old man who commended the "simplicity of Christ," he found, and was found by, the Lord. It was about the year 133.

As a Christian, he went on wearing his philosopher's robe in token of his confidence that Christ was truly "the wisdom of God." As his Christian encounters deepened, he began a lively series of writings about Christ. In writing to the Emperor, he fully described the Holy Communion. In Apology, he was anxious

to recruit all the truth he could from those he addressed. In dialogue at Ephesus with Trypho the Jew he exemplified all the due courtesies and frustrations of such a discussion.

Denounced as a Christian in Marcus Aurelius' reign, Justin was beheaded in 165. In life and death, in thought and authorship, Justin is the most winsome of secondary leaders. From his writings come our clearest knowledge of the Christian mind of that era, both in worship and in teaching, in Biblical interpretation and sacramental life.

O Thou, whom truly to know is everlasting life, grant us, with all Thy servants of very age, sufficient grace, a lively mind, a seasoned spirit, a sure devotion and a ripe judgement, that we may serve Thee loyally till the end of the day, through Christ our master and Lord.

June 25

John Ethelstan Cheese

(d. 1958)

Priest, Wanderer for Christ in the Middle East

Sentence	Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. (Luke 12:6)
Collect	God and Father of all, you care for the smallest of sparrows and invite men and women to simple trust in your providence. In your love pour upon us a measure of the gentle, trusting, open spirit you gave so generously to your servant Ethelstan, and build up your Church in holiness and faith. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.
Readings	Song of the Three Young Men 35-65 (= ASB "A Song of Creation"; AAPB "Song of Creation", longer form; BCPECUSA, Canticle 12) Psalm 8 1 Corinthians 3:6-9 Matthew 6:19-22 (-34)
Concluding sentence	Do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day (Matthew 6:34).

J. E. Cheese first arrived in Jerusalem in 1912, a quiet curate on sick leave. He died aboard ship in the Mediterranean in 1958, worn out by years of travel, mostly on foot, a wandering pilgrim to the last. He was spartan, quixotic, unpredictable, yet deceptively resilient and dauntless beneath his gentle exterior. He blessed all who knew him with his Christian fidelity even when he challenged them with his utter simplicity of life or exasperated them with his idiosyncracies.

Ethelstan Cheese represents many other holy and humble members of our Church. Others have been more able, more expert, more predictable than he. Few have been more dogged, more self-effacing, more spartan. Constance Padwick wrote, "he was one of God's mystery men." Truly he travelled light. Money was nothing to him, nor ease, nor fame. With stooping gate and a tawny beard, he was looked on as a *wali*, or holy man, as he walked over the countryside. Ain anoub in Lebanon, Hargesia in Somalia, Aden, Mombassa, Cairo, Muscat, Damascus, Addis Ababa - wherever it might be - he came and went, happy to fill a gap, to act as chaplain, to befriend the needy, to share his faith and compassion. His ways disconcerted some officials. But ordinary people loved him for his transparent honesty and his rugged gentleness.

Of such was, and is, the kingdom of heaven.

O ye holy and humble men of heart, bless ye the Lord, praise Him and magnify Him for ever. In fire and heat, ye bless the Lord: in winter and summer ye praise His name: by night and by day ye magnify Him: o'er mountains and hills ye bless ye the Lord, ye spirits and souls of the righteous.

July 2

Constance Padwick

Biographer, who opened to Christians the riches of Muslim Spirituality

Sentence	I have calmed and quieted my soul like a child quieted at its mother's breast; like a child that is quieted is my soul (Psalm 131:2)
Collect	Holy Trinity, One God, your servant Constance was content with the honour of being your servant and looked for the signs of your graciousness in the prayer of devout Muslims. We give you thanks for all who serve you in humility and simplicity, and ask you to give us open hearts to recognise other's love for you whatever name they use to call upon you. Grant this through Our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.
Readings	Amos 9:5-8 Psalm 131 Romans 2:12-16 Matthew 8:5-13
Concluding sentence	I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. (John 10:16).

Biography has often been a spur to devotion and theology. Constance Padwick wrote several life stories including those of Henry Martin of Shiraz and Temple Gairdner of Cairo who feature in this calendar. She would have insisted that her own biography deserved no mention. Her career in the Middle East had a pioneer Anglican quality in its concern for Muslim spirituality .

As with J. E. Cheese, it was a chance to visit Palestine which bound her life with Arab and Muslim interests for Christ's sake. Literature was her chosen field: her pen was lively, busy and imaginative. She had a great genius for friendship - witness her *Call to Istanbul*, a life of Lyman MacCallum, and her collection from the Journals of Liliat Trotter of Algiers. But it was the *Awrad and Ahzab*, manuals of Sufi prayer, which she made her special care. She bought them in bazaars and from mosque bookstalls everywhere from Damascus to Tangier, from Lahore to Nicosia. After years of study, she distilled them into *Muslim Devotions*, published in 1961, in which she mediated into Christian understanding the vocabulary and spirit of day-to-day Islamic spirituality.

After long service in Cairo and Jerusalem, Constance volunteered to help produce Arabic textbooks in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan. She died in her early eighties in the peace of a Somerset village. It is fitting to remember her in the petitions of her own translation from *Taharat al-Qulub and Hirz al-Jawshan*.

*Lord, it is enough for me of honour that I should be your servant:
it is enough for me of grace that you should be my Lord
O Thou unto whose company is all desire
O Thou in thanks to whom is the triumph of the faithful.*

July 15

Thomas Valpy French

(1825-1898)

Bishop of Lahore, India and missionary in Muscat

- Sentence God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control; do not be ashamed then to testify to our Lord (2 Timothy 1.7,8)
- Collect Heavenly Father, you chose Thomas French to be an outstanding teacher, bishop and evangelist and to be a true fool for Christ. Renew in your Church today the loving zeal and grace you gave to him that the example of those whom you call to be shepherds in your Church may bring every man and woman and child in joyous worship before your throne. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.
- Readings Isaiah 6:1-8
Psalm 8
1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1
John 20:19-23
- Concluding sentence As for you, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. (2 Timothy 4:5)

Born in 1825, the son of a vicarage, Thomas French had a brilliant career at Oxford before volunteering to teach in India at the age of twenty six. He helped found St John's College, Agra, which became one of the greatest Christian institutions in Indian education.

French was also a keen evangelist and spent some time on the borders of Afghanistan before ill-health compelled him to withdraw. Physical frailty dogged him for many years but did not impeded his vigorous leadership from 1878 to 1888, a the first Bishop of the vast Dioceses of Lahore. There he built the splendid Cathedral in the Mall and left a living legacy of pastoral vision and saintly simplicity.

Though the CMS would not support him, French volunteered at sixty-six for evangelism in Muscat. On arrival he was invited to have his quarters in the British Consulate but he declined. He did not wish his mission for Christ to be identified with British 'interest'. His decision cost him his life. The world might say that in his state of health it was a foolish gesture. But his example inspired two young Americans, Zwemer and Cantine, to begin the Arabian mission in the Gulf.

With the holy and humble of heart, we bless the Lord, rejoicing in their fellowship: among them your servant Thomas French, teacher, bishop, evangelist, shepherd and seeker of souls. Renew in your Church today the same loving zeal and grace, through the indwelling of Christ as Lord.

July 29

Mary and Martha of Bethany

- Sentence Martha received Jesus into her house; she had a sister called Mary who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching (Luke 10:38-39).
- Collect Almighty Father, your Son honoured Mary and Martha of Bethany by coming to their house as a guest. May we learn of him, serve him in our brothers and sisters, and be welcomed by him into our heavenly home. We ask this through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who now reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, God for all eternity. Amen.

Readings Proverbs 3:13-18
 Psalm 16
 Philippians 4:4-7
 Luke 10:38-44

Concluding Martha said to Jesus: "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is
sentence coming into the world." (John 11.27).

The home of Mary and Martha seems to have been a familiar one to Jesus. He enjoyed their hospitality, especially in the last week of his life, and it seems it was customary for their friends and his disciples to gather there in the evenings to hear him teach. The moving story of the death of their brother Lazarus and the way Jesus walked into danger to comfort them and to raise Lazarus from the dead is told in John's Gospel. Above all their home is a model for every Christian home where Jesus is loved, his teaching is given and received joyfully, and open hospitality reflects the prodigal love of God.

August 28

Augustine of Hippo
(354-430) in North Africa
Bishop and Teacher

Sentence Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires
(Romans 13:14).

Collect Lord, renew in your Church the spirit you gave to Augustine. May we thirst for you alone
as the fountain of wisdom and seek you as the source of eternal love. We ask this through
our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God
for ever and ever. Amen.

Readings Jeremiah 10:1-10
 Psalm 119:17-24
 Revelation 21:1-4 (22-27)
 Luke 12:32-43

Concluding Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.
sentence (Luke 12:32)

Augustine was born at Thagaste in North Africa. After a mis-spent youth he was converted to Christianity under the influence of the preacher-bishop Saint Ambrose of Milan in 387 at the age of thirty two. He returned to North Africa and within a decade was elected Bishop of Hippo. As a bishop, he was a great administrator and teacher. His Confessions, Sermons and Treatises, and the famous *City of God* shaped the future of the western Church more than any other single influence outside the Scriptures.

Thanks be to God.

September 13

Cyprian of Carthage
(d. 258)
Bishop and Martyr

Sentence Holy Father, keep those whom thou hast given me in thy name, that they may be one,
even as we are one (John 17:11).

Collect God our Father, in Cyprian of Carthage you have given your people an inspiring example
of dedication to the pastoral ministry and constant witness for Christ in his suffering.

Grant to your Church faithful pastors and that unity which is according to your will. Grant this through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Readings Ezekiel 2:1-7
Psalm 19:7-14
1 Corinthians 12:27-31
1 John 17:6-19

Concluding sentence I have manifested thy name to the people thou gavest me out of the world; they are not of the world even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; thy word (John 17:6,16,17).

Of pagan parents, Cyprian was converted to Christ when he was in his mid-forties and became Bishop of Carthage only three years later in 248. He was greatly concerned to preserve the Church from heresy and schism and was eventually martyred in the persecution of Valerian.

Cyprian's early training had been in law. Much of his gift was for organisation. There were problems in Cyprian's Carthage, both from lapsed Christians and wild charismatics. He was responsible for a development in the concept of authority which, in some ways, belongs more with 'empire' than with grace. He developed the moral ministry of the earlier Church into a more official system, restricting access to the sacraments. Like many administrators, he ignored deeper questions or tried to absorb them into matters of Church order alone. Thus the Cyprianic temper is not uniformly admirable or right.

Lord of all the crises of thy Church, grant to all who have the trust of ministry, a sound mind and a ready will. Teach them rightly to magnify their office so that they ever serve the Gospel of grace. Make them to know when by patience and when by impatience they can serve Thee best. In all pastoral perplexity give them the wisdom which is pure and peaceable through Christ our Saviour.

September 30

Jerome

(c. 342-420)

Biblical scholar in Bethlehem

Sentence Thy words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I am called by thy name, O Lord, God of hosts (Jeremiah 15:16).

Collect Heavenly Father, you gave Jerome delight in his study of Holy Scripture. May your people find in your Word the food of salvation and the foundation of life. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Readings Jeremiah 15:15-21
Psalm 119:105-112
Romans 8:1-11
John 1:1-18

Concluding sentence The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; and from his fulness have we all received grace upon grace. (John 1:14,16).

Born in Dalmatia in 345 and baptised in Rome, Jerome was intensely proud of his classical Latin scholarship and an ardent admirer of the great Cicero. In his youth he had a vision of Christ who said to him: "You are a Ciceronian, not a Christian." whereupon he withdrew into the Syrian desert and set himself to learn

Hebrew, which he thoroughly mastered. But he did not abandon his natal heritage and returned to Rome to work with Bishop Damascus in the revision of the Latin Bible, the Vulgate.

In his early forties, he came east again and settled at Bethlehem where he had the financial help of a rich widow named Paula. He wrote innumerable letters and received a stream of visitors and scholars. His later years were overshadowed by the Fall of Rome in 410, when, as he said, "a whole world perished in one city."

Jerome is the likeliest of all the Fathers to disabuse us of the idea that sainthood means perfection. He has been well described as "a good hater." He had a sharp tongue in denunciation as at the Synod at Lydda in 415 over that bothersome British 'heretic' Pelagius. He could be childishly feeble in his allegorical reading of Scripture. He did not suffer fools gladly nor always realise when he was one of them. But his industry was splendid. For a Latinist in his day to become a proficient Hebraist was rare indeed.

Lord, your instruments are of your patient choosing. Grant us the vision that rebukes our cultural pride. Enable us to belong with the heritage of others. Make us wise readers and able ministers of your Word that its meaning may prosper in our care and by your grace correct our faults of character through Christ our Saviour.

October 4

Francis of Assisi

(1181-1226)

Friar, Preacher, and founder of the Franciscan Order

Sentence	Jesus said to the rich young man: One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me. (Luke 18:22).
Collect	Almighty Father, you helped Francis of Assisi to become the image of Christ through a life of poverty and humility. May we learn from his example the way to follow your Son, to be instruments of your peace, and to imitate his joyful love. Grant this through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.
Readings	Isaiah 42:1-4 Psalm 96:1-9 Ephesians 3:7-13 Luke 6:20-23
Concluding sentence	Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons and daughters of God. (Matthew 5:9).

It was in 1219 that Francis made his celebrated journey to Egypt and crossed from the camp of the Crusaders at Damietta, to the camp of the Fatimid (Shi'ah) Sultan Malik al-Kamil. The Sultan seems to have been moved by the evident concern for his soul which Francis showed rather than any intelligible communication.

Where there is enmity, Lord let us sow peace. Give us the will and the wisdom to go to meet our neighbour. Where there is estrangement, let us reconcile: where there is incomprehension, let us interpret. Teach us to serve your truth in love.

October 15

Henry Martyn of Shiraz

(1781-1812)

Missionary and Bible Translator in India and Persia

- Sentence I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.
(2 Timothy 4:7)
- Collect Lord God, you called Henry Martyn to serve you as a missionary to teach his fellow men and women the way of salvation. Inspire us by his example: teach us to love the Bible, to follow Christ our teacher, and to lead our brothers and sisters to faith in him. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.
- Readings Jeremiah 1:4-12
Psalm 108:1-6
Romans 8:31-39
Matthew 13:31-32
- Concluding sentence Every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old (Matthew 13:52).

Henry Martyn was born in Cornwall, England and highly revered at Cambridge. He arrived in Calcutta in 1806 as a chaplain to the East India Company. He is one of the tenderest and staunchest figures in the entire history of modern Christian mission and truly a saint of our Church. He exemplifies with deep pathos how strenuous is the business of the Christian mind in the world of Islam. His instinctive response was to translate the Gospels which, he believed, could then do their own work. He translated biblical books into Hindi, Arabic and Persian. He completed his translation of the New Testament into Arabic and Persian in an orchard beside the road leading under the famous Qur'an Gate into Shiraz.

Martyn suffered exquisitely not only from physical exhaustion but from the oppressiveness of the spiritual burden. "Where in all this," he cried, referring to his beloved New Testament, "may I find India?" The Journals to which he confided his innermost thoughts and his wistful Letters are among the richest documents of personal discipleship and spiritual devotion. Like Jeremiah, he let even his bewilderments, and there were many, carry him further into consecration. He died of tuberculosis and the rigours of his ministry at Tokat in Armenia en route overland to England with his precious translations. He was only forty-one. His desire "to burn out for God" was richly fulfilled.

Who is sufficient for these things?" Truly love is better than knowledge. Give me humility. If Thou, Lord, had travelled in a sedan chair, how would the woman have touched thy garment's hem?

October 25

Stephen the Sabite of Mar Saba

(725-794)

- Sentence Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving; and pray for us also. (Colossians 4:2-3).
- Collect God of all, we give you special thanks for your servant Stephen, who lived a life which pleased you by its humility and its devotion to prayer and praise. Teach us to love and serve you in a simplicity like his and to share with him the joy of your approval. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Readings Isaiah 45:1-4
 Psalm 131
 Philippians 2:5-11
 Matthew 6:5-8 (1-13)

Concluding My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it (Luke 8:21)
sentence

A nephew of the great John of Damascus, Stephen followed his uncle into the monastic life as a monk in the same desert monastery of Mar Saba near Bethlehem. Like his better-known uncle, Stephen wrote hymns which reveal his deep love for Jesus crucified but for the most part, his life was lived in obscurity and prayer.

November 10

Raymond Lull of Tunis

(1235-1315)

Sentence Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.
(John 15:13).

Collect God of love, you gave your only Son to sing your song of love for us in his life, his death and his resurrection; and you called Raymond Lull to be troubadour of that same love. Grant to your Church an ever-increasing love for our Muslim brothers and sisters, and many mebers to sing your love by our lives. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Readings Hosea 2:14-20
 Psalm 145:8-16
 1 John 4:7-12
 John 10:7-18

Concluding God is love, and those who live in love live in God and God lives in them (1 John 4:16)
sentence

“There is but one way of conquest... namely by love and prayers, and the pouring out of tears and blood. For he who loves not lives not....” So wrote the great medieval Spanish Christian, Raymond Lull. There was much about him that was of his age yet, he rejected the Crusading instinct and insisted that it must be replaced by genuine scholarly evangelism.

Like Francis, to whose Order he belonged, he had been initially profligate; of welathy family and proud spirit. But a vision of Jesus arrested him while composing a love lyric with the amorous phrase: “Why art thou to thy friend unkind?” The sense of the Cross gave the question back to him. He made his life the answer to the love of Christ.

Islam fascinated him. He established a College of Arabic at Miramar in his native Majorca. He travelled to Europe and the East, stimulating concern for Muslims. He wrote numerous books and treatises, with highly elaborate imagery. *The Book of the Lover* was his manual of devotion. But his deepest creation of love was his own lonely and insistent heroism in Tunis, defying deportation and ridicule and finally almost couring martyrdom as, to his mind, the ultimate gesture of Christian devotion. He died at Bijaya in Tunis, aged eighty. Centuries were to elapse before his example was emulated.

Lord of the lovers of mankind who, for your sake, break the alabaster box of life, quicken your Church today with the ardour of the saints, so that by prayer and scholarship, by discipline and sacrifice, your Name may be made truly known.

December 1

Clement of Alexandria

(c.150 -)

Priest and Scholar

- Sentence At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:10-11).
- Collect God of all wisdom and love, by the power of your Spirit you called your servant Clement to faith in your Son Jesus Christ and to be a faithful and wise commender of that faith. Stir up in us the power of your Holy Spirit of wisdom that we may understand your truth more deeply, live in its light more fully, and commend it to our neighbours more effectively. Grant this through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.
- Readings Proverbs *:1-12
 Psalm 47:5-10
 James 3:13-18
 Luke 19:11-26
- Concluding sentence The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty or insecurity. (James 3:17).

Clement was one of the earliest lights of the great School of Alexandria where Origen was his pupil. A Greek by birth, of heathen parents, he searched for truth in many lands and finally discovered it in Alexandria where, at length, he became a priest and a scholar. He lived by and for an intellectual faith. Like Justin Martyr, he was by instinct a philosopher and he remained one throughout his life. He extended Paul's metaphor about the law as schoolmaster to contemporary philosophical wisdom. In combatting the Gnostics he did not shrink from recruiting the themes of Plato and the ethics of the Stoics. He saw truth as a river with many tributaries. He was a thinker of wide sympathies rather logical precision.

Clement wrote widely for both pagans and Christians. He is noteworthy for giving us the first Christian hymns extant outside the New Testament. Here is one verse:

Be ever near our side, our Shepherd and our guide, our staff and song. Jesus, Thou Son of God, by Thy perennial word, lead us where Thou hast trod. Make our faith strong.