

**The Catholic Parish
of
Our Lady of the Annunciation
King's Lynn
Norfolk**

Daily Mass Readings for
Monday, 22nd June 2020
St John Fisher and St Thomas More
(Memorial)

Week 12 in Ordinary Time

Liturgical Colour: Red

Parish of Our Lady of the Annunciation - King's Lynn

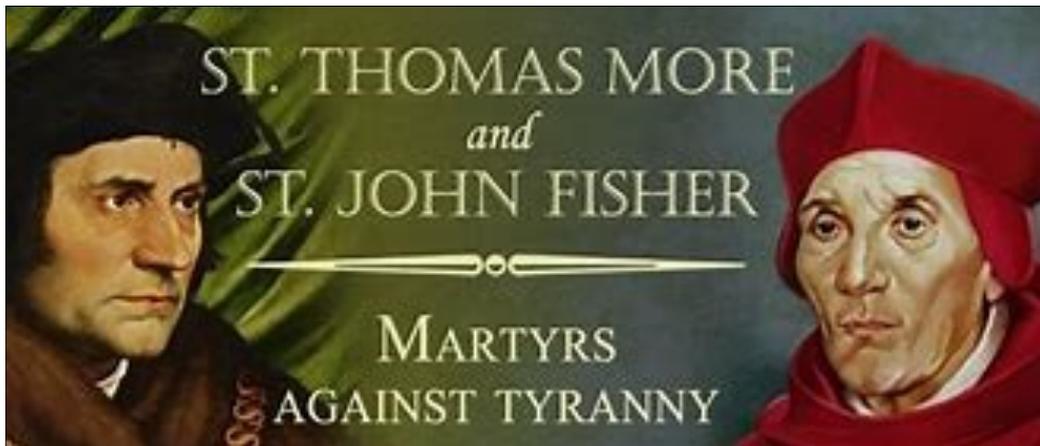
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Monday, 22nd June 2020

Daily Mass Readings for Monday of Week 12 in Ordinary Time *Memorial of*



First reading - Maccabees 6:18, 21, 24-31

I am glad to suffer because of the awe which he inspires in me

Eleazar, one of the foremost teachers of the Law, a man already advanced in years and of most noble appearance, was being forced to open his mouth wide to swallow pig's flesh. Those in charge of the impious banquet, because of their long-standing friendship with him, took him aside and privately urged him to have meat brought of a kind he could properly use, prepared by himself, and only pretend to eat the portions of sacrificial meat as prescribed by the king.

'Such pretence' he said 'does not square with our time of life; many young people would suppose that Eleazar at the age of ninety had conformed to the foreigners' way of life, and because I had played this part for the sake of a paltry brief spell of life might themselves be led astray on my account; I should only bring defilement and disgrace on my old age. Even though for the moment I avoid execution by man, I can never, living or dead, elude the grasp of the Almighty. Therefore if I am man enough to quit this life here and now I shall prove myself worthy of my old age, and I shall have left the young a noble example of how to make a good death, eagerly and generously, for the venerable and holy laws.'

With these words he went straight to the block. His escorts, so recently well disposed towards him, turned against him after this declaration, which they regarded as sheer madness. Just before he died under the blows, he groaned aloud and said, 'The Lord whose knowledge is holy sees clearly that, though I might have escaped death, whatever agonies of body I now endure under this bludgeoning, in my soul I am glad to suffer, because of the awe which he inspires in me.'

This was how he died, leaving his death as an example of nobility and a record of virtue not only for the young but for the great majority of the nation.

The Word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm - Psalm 30(31):2, 6, 12-13, 15-17, 25

Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

In you, O Lord, I take refuge.

Let me never be put to shame.

In your justice, set me free,

Into your hands I commend my spirit.

It is you who will redeem me, Lord.

Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

You who have seen my affliction,

and taken heed of my soul's distress,

have not handed me over to the enemy,

but set my feet at large.

Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

But as for me, I trust in you, Lord;

I say: 'You are my God.

My life is in your hands, deliver me

from the hands of those who hate me.

Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

Let your face shine on your servant.

Save me in your love.'

Be strong, let your heart take courage,

all who hope in the Lord.

Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

Happy the man who stands firm when trials come.

He has proved himself,

and will win the crown of life.

Alleluia!

Gospel - Matthew 24:4-13

You will hear of wars and rumours of wars

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Take care that no one deceives you; because many will come using my name and saying, "I am the Christ," and they will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumours of wars; do not be alarmed, for this is something that must happen, but the end will not be yet. For nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes here and there. All this is only the beginning of the birth-pangs.

'Then they will hand you over to be tortured and put to death; and you will be hated by all the nations on account of my name. And then many will fall away; men will betray one another and hate one another. Many false prophets will arise; they will deceive many, and with the increase of lawlessness, love in most men will grow cold; but the man who stands firm to the end will be saved.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

St. Thomas More & St. John Fisher (Feast: June 22)

The lives of St. Thomas More and St. John Fisher are very closely linked, and thus it is quite appropriate that the Church celebrate their feasts together.

They are both renowned Englishmen martyred within two weeks of each other for the same cause of defending religious liberty, the sanctity of marriage and Papal authority against State usurpation. They were both associates of King Henry VIII before his apostasy, and it was at his hands that they both suffered martyrdom.



Sir Thomas More was a distinguished statesman in the English Parliament. First and foremost, however, he was a faithful Catholic, a loving husband, and a devoted father. More was widely known for his “unfailing moral integrity, sharpness of mind, his open and humorous character, and his extraordinary learning.” He was a close friend and confidant of Henry VIII, and the King himself eventually promoted Thomas to the prominent office of Lord Chancellor.

However, the two were alienated when Thomas refused to compromise his conscience and faith when Henry openly defied Church teachings and divorced his wife to marry Anne Boleyn, choosing instead to renounce the King’s friendship, his own public career, wealth and worldly prestige. Thomas

was consequently imprisoned in the Tower of London and eventually condemned and beheaded on July 6, 1535. He was named patron saint of statesmen and politicians by Pope John Paul II.

A friend of St. Thomas More’s, St. John Fisher also had a close connection to Henry VIII, having once been his tutor, and was a friend of the royal family. As the Bishop of Rochester, he was known as a man of great leaning and deep and unshakable faith. He was supported by the King and appointed to the lifetime position of Chancellor of the University of Cambridge.

However, he too fell into disfavour with Henry when he also opposed the King’s unlawful divorce of Queen Catherine of Aragon. Bishop Fisher courageously warned Parliament of Henry’s encroaching powers over the Church in England in direct disregard of the Papal audit, and publicly preached against the divorce from the pulpit at the same time as Sir Thomas More was resigning his



high office. By thus calling down the King's fury on himself, the holy Bishop of Rochester suffered multiple imprisonments in the Tower, during which time he was made a Cardinal by the authority of Pope Paul III – and appointment which Henry rejected.

Fisher was condemned to be hung, drawn and quartered; and, although originally sentenced to be killed on June 24, the feast of St. John the Baptist, the King had a superstitious fear of executing him on that feast because of the strong resemblance of the deaths of these two saints, and instead had him beheaded – ironically just like John the Baptist after all – two days earlier, on June 22, 1535.

Thomas More and John Fisher were beatified together by Pope Leo XIII in 1886, and canonized together by Pius XI in 1935. One a layman and statesman, the other a priest and bishop – they stand together as models and heroes of religious freedom against encroaching government powers.

In the Diocese of East Anglia, there are two schools named after each of these saints: St Thomas More Primary School (4 to 11 years of age) and St John Fisher Catholic High School. Ironically, they are located next to each other in Peterborough.
