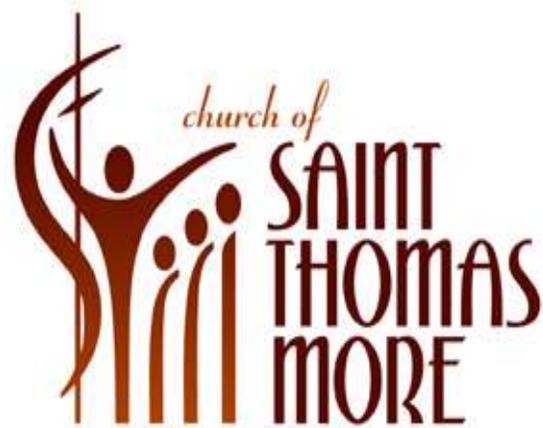


June 22 – Feast of St. Thomas More

Wednesday June 22nd is the feast of our patron, St. Thomas More.

St. Thomas More was born in London in 1478. In his youth, he considered a monastic vocation before deciding that he was called to serve God in the world. He studied law at Oxford and embarked on a legal career which eventually took him to Parliament. While outwardly he enjoyed a life of comfort, in the privacy of his spiritual life, More wore a hair shirt, attended daily mass, and practiced a strict discipline of prayer.



A wit and a reformer, More numbered Bishops and scholars among his friends, and in 1516 wrote his famous book "Utopia". He attracted the attention of Henry VIII who appointed him to a succession of high posts and finally made him Lord Chancellor in 1529.

More resigned in 1532, at the height of his career and reputation, when Henry ignored church teaching and declared his marriage to Catherine of Aragon annulled so he could marry Anne Boleyn. More tried to retire to the country and ignore the controversy, but was drawn back in when he refused to render allegiance to the King as the head of the Church of England and remained loyal to the supremacy of the Pope.

He felt that if the Church of England were to break away from Rome, it would not be able to hear the voice of God, which More believed was spoken through the Church.

In 1534, he was arrested and confined to the Tower of London. Fifteen months later, he was tried, convicted of treason and beheaded. Just before his execution on July 6, 1535, he told the crowd of spectators: "I die as the King's true servant, but God's first."

His statement is an inspiration to us, who serve many "kings" in our lives — to make sure we serve God first.

A patron of lawyers, St. Thomas More was a fierce advocate for justice. May we who meet weekly on Utopia Road (a street which shares its name with the most famous of Thomas More's books) also work for justice for those less fortunate. May we share the courage of conscience that this saint showed in his life.

St. Thomas More, pray for us!

Steve Raml
Director of Liturgy & Music