

Wednesday 6 July 2022

Thomas More



Thomas More was born in London in 1478 and studied classics then law. He was called to the Bar at the young age of twenty-three years of age. His clear honesty and integrity impressed King Henry VIII who appointed Thomas as his Chancellor. He supported Henry's efforts to reform the clergy but disagreed over Henry's disputes with the papacy, caused by the king's desire to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon and to find another queen to provide him with a male heir.

Henry could stand no such act of defiance and imprisoned his chancellor in the hope that he would renege. Thomas refused to take the Oath on the Act of Succession, which declared the king to be the only protector and supreme head of the Church in England,

He was executed for treason on this day in 1535, declaring that he died 'the king's good servant but God's first'.

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The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.

The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,
<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 [Let all the world in every corner sing](#)

([please click on this link](#))

The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

The Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

The saints were faithful unto death

and now dwell in the heavenly kingdom for ever.

As we celebrate their joy,

let us bring to the Lord our sins and weaknesses,
and ask for his mercy.

All Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Gloria

This Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'. Click [here](#) for the tune.

All Glory be to God in Heaven,
Songs of joy and peace we bring,
Thankful hearts and voices raising,
To creation's Lord we sing.
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,
Glory be to God our King:
Glory be to God our King.

Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,
Bore the load of this world's sin;
Only Son of God the Father,
You have brought us peace within.
Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,
Now your glorious reign begin:
Now your glorious reign begin.

**You O Son of God are Holy,
You we praise with one accord.
None in heav'n or earth is like you,
Only you are Christ the Lord.
With the Father and the Spirit,
Ever worshipped and adored:
Ever worshipped and adored.**

The Collect for Thomas More

O God, who in martyrdom
have brought true faith to its highest expression,
graciously grant
that, strengthened through the intercession
of Thomas More,
we may confirm by the witness of our life
the faith we profess with our lips.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever..

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the book of the Prophet Hosea

¹ Israel was a spreading vine;
 he brought forth fruit for himself.
As his fruit increased,
 he built more altars;
as his land prospered,
 he adorned his sacred stones.
² Their heart is deceitful,
 and now they must bear their guilt.
The Lord will demolish their altars
 and destroy their sacred stones.
³ Then they will say, 'We have no king
 because we did not revere the Lord.
Ephraim will be disgraced;
 Israel will be ashamed of its foreign alliances.

⁷ Samaria's king will be destroyed,
swept away like a twig on the surface of the waters.

⁸ The high places of wickedness will be destroyed—
it is the sin of Israel.

¹² Sow righteousness for yourselves,
reap the fruit of unfailing love,
and break up your unploughed ground;
for it is time to seek the Lord,
until he comes
and showers his righteousness on you. *Hosea 10:1-3, 7-8, 12*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the First Letter of St John

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgement, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, 'I love God', and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also. *1 John 4:7-end*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 All creatures of our God and King ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))
All creatures of our God and King ([different version](#))

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax-collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' *Matthew 10:1-7*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

Thomas' More's most famous book is *Utopia* (literally 'good place') in which he tried to envisage an earthly paradise. More's book was the source of our modern use of this word. In fact, More's utopia describes life in a dictatorship where everyone is equal and all are subject to one person, the king (no doubt modelled on More's master, Henry VIII). It becomes clear that this place is no paradise because everything that deviates from the king's decrees is punished swiftly and savagely.

It's therefore a corrective that today's readings discuss a different paradise, the Kingdom of God. Why the differences?

All earthly attempts at 'paradise' are doomed to fail because they have humans at their core. Firstly, human leaders are automatically fallible because they tire easily and are rarely aware of everything. Power does horrible things to a human soul, so they become irritable and corruptible.

Secondly, it seems unwise to assume that all people can participate equally. A true community will always comprise weaker members as well as stronger. Some

will be ill while others have responsibilities that distract. A society like this cannot operate fairly without accommodating needs as well as elevating choice.

Which leads to the most obvious problem: how to choose between the person who leads and the majority who are led. Choosing the leader requires politics as well as ethics, philosophy, economics, and sociology. The result will always require compromises, and that result will shift and transmute according to circumstance.

For all these reasons, earthly paradises are impossible to achieve. As it says in the ordination of a priest, 'We cannot bear this weight [of responsibility] in our own power alone.' We therefore need help.

That help can come from God—the Kingdom of God, which is the centrepiece of much of Jesus' preaching. For Jesus, this Kingdom is a paradise because God is in control rather than human beings. God is all-knowing, incorruptible, and power infinite. We need His strength and will to achieve this vision of an earthly utopia. The challenge for Christians wanting to build this new, better world is therefore getting to know God so we can discern His will. Only then can the adventure begin.

Jesus was clear that everyone should seek to build this Kingdom. The Sermon on the Mount, for example, is a catalogue of metaphor and example that explores what this Kingdom of God will look like. Jesus also taught in parables 'The Kingdom of God is like ...' to explore trademark Kingdom traits like forgiveness and mercy.

Jesus describes this God-based Utopia but didn't give too many clues on how to be the kind of people this Kingdom requires. Today's middle reading from St John's First Letter is one of the better descriptions saying how we can be Kingdom people. It requires that we are people of love; and, here, 'love' is not the same love as practiced in the world (with its overtones of romance or emotion) but is charity embodied in a human life. It's always shared, always practical, always lived.

We also come to know God through this love. Indeed, we can *only* know God when we become willing to live that Godly love. As a medieval book on prayer, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, says, 'For [God] can well be loved, but he cannot be thought. By love he can be grasped and held, but by thought, neither grasped nor held.' St John says much the same: 'No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.' That 'perfecting' occurs as God first occupies us and changes us from the inside out. By trailing this love wherever we go, we share God, change barriers into bonds of love and community. This spiritual love shares of itself and almost by accident creates a good society. It becomes the kind of utopia that Jesus envisages wants because it's based on and empowered by God's love.

Perhaps that's why Jesus (in today's Gospel passage) appointed his first disciples and told them to make the centrepiece of their teaching the phrase, 'the Kingdom of God has come near.' It's near because genuine disciples live the life and

love of their Lord and master. And perhaps that's what Hosea foresaw when he prophesied, 'Sow righteousness for yourselves, reap the fruit of unfailing love ... for it is time to seek the Lord, until he comes and showers his righteousness on you.' He was referring to a God-focussed utopia—Jesus' Kingdom.

The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
the source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Prayers of intercession

We pray for strength to follow Jesus.
Saviour, we hear your call.

All Help us to follow.

Jesus said: 'Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant.'
Saviour, we hear your call.

All Help us to follow.

Jesus said: 'Unless you change
and become humble like little children,
you can never enter the kingdom of heaven.'
Saviour, we hear your call.

All Help us to follow.

Jesus said: 'Happy are the humble;
they will receive what God has promised.'
Saviour, we hear your call.

All Help us to follow.

Jesus said: 'Be merciful as your Father is merciful;
love your enemies and do good to them.'
Saviour, we hear your call.

All Help us to follow.

Jesus said: 'Love one another, as I love you;
there is no greater love than this,
to lay down your life for your friends.'
Saviour, we hear your call.

All Help us to follow.

Jesus said: 'Go to people everywhere
and make them my disciples,
and I will be with you always, to the end of time.'
Saviour, we hear your call.

All Help us to follow.

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The peace

Once we were far off,
but now in union with Christ Jesus we have been brought near through the
shedding of Christ's blood,
for he is our peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 Wine of the Kingdom

(please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

God give you grace to follow his saints
in faith and love and steadfastness
and the blessing of God the Almighty:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 [Seek ye first](#)
[Seek ye first](#)

(please click on this link to hear the hymn)
(different version)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
And now we give thanks, most gracious God,
surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses
and glorified in the assembly of your saints.
The glorious company of apostles praise you.
The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.
The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.
We, your holy Church, acclaim you.
In communion with angels and archangels,
and with all who served you on earth and worship you now in heaven,
we raise our voice to proclaim your glory,
for ever praising you and saying:

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.

He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with Thomas More and all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

All **Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

All **Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

All **Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us. Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God,
who gave us this holy meal
in which we have celebrated the glory of the cross
and the victory of your martyr Thomas More:
by our communion with Christ
in his saving death and resurrection,
give us with all your saints the courage to conquer evil
and so to share the fruit of the tree of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.