

Reflection Thursday Christmas Week St Thomas Becket 2022

St Thomas Becket (1118 - 1170) was born in London and became a close friend of King Henry II. He was only a deacon when appointed chancellor of England. When he was ordained as archbishop of Canterbury, he underwent an abrupt conversion of life and began to defend the Church's rights against the king. He had to take refuge in a French monastery for six years, and when he returned to his diocese four knights, inspired by careless words from the king, assassinated him in his cathedral on 29th December 1170. He was immediately acknowledged as a martyr and the king later did penance and endowed his shrine. He is remembered for his courage in defence of the rights of the Church.

Let Thomas Becket speak:

- *Remember the sufferings of Christ, the storms that were weathered... the crown that came from those sufferings which gave new radiance to the faith... All saints give testimony to the truth that without real effort, no one ever wins the crown.*
- *My hopes are laid up within my own bosom, for he is not alone with whom the Lord is; when he falls, he shall not be dashed to pieces, for the Lord sustains him in his hand.*
- *Many are needed to plant and water what has been planted now that the faith has spread so far and there are so many people... No matter who plants or waters, God gives no harvest unless what is planted is the faith of Peter and unless he agrees to his teachings.*
- *Thou knowest how long and loyally I served the king in his worldly affairs. For that cause, it pleased him to promote me to the office which now I hold. When I consented, it was for the sake of the king alone. When I was elected, I was formally acquitted of my responsibilities for all that I had done as a chancellor.*