



The Chapels Royal of St Peter ad Vincula and St John the Evangelist
HM Tower of London

Dear friends,

The Church of England Calendar shows that this past Monday 6th July we commemorated Thomas More and John Fisher, both of whom are interred beneath the Chapel of St Peter ad Vincula. Both are venerated as saints in the Roman Catholic Church but remembered on 22 June instead. The difference is simply that John Fisher was executed on 22 June 1535 and Thomas More on 06 July, so either date serves as a suitable occasion.

Our crypt houses a dignified memorial to Thomas More, created in 1970. Before the memorial are two *prie-dieux* or kneeling benches for the faithful to say prayers. Why two and not just one? To the best of my knowledge this is because the two were used simultaneously – and highly symbolically – by the then Church of England Bishop of London and Dean of the Chapels Royal, Richard Chartres, and the then Roman Catholic Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, Vincent Nichols, in October 2013. This was to mark the foundation of the 1535 Society, which aims to promote an understanding of the role within British history of More and the other Christian martyrs who lost their lives for their faith.



It may seem odd that these two men who died for their opposition to Henry VIII's proposed break with Rome should be commemorated in the Church of England. Indeed, it clearly puzzles some Roman Catholics, one of whom has speculated [as follows](#): 'Perhaps More and Fisher are proposed [*for commemoration in the Church of England*] —in characteristic postmodern fashion—as heroes of a kind of unbounded conscience whose value resides in itself alone. In other words, they may have been wrong, but we can celebrate their willingness to stand for what they believed.' That sounds about right to me. The Anglican resource '[Exciting Holiness](#)' says the following about More: 'Born in London in 1478, Thomas More studied classics and then the law, being called to the Bar at twenty-three years old. His clear honesty and integrity impressed Henry VIII and he appointed Thomas as his Chancellor. He

supported the king in his 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 who might 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, and was executed for treason on this day in 1535, declaring that he died "the king's good servant but God's first."

Less than 100 years ago we have the example of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, murdered by the Nazi régime for his opposition to their policies. A little over 30 years later we have the example of Archbishop Janani Luwum in Uganda, murdered for his outspoken opposition to the policies of the dictator Idi Amin. Three years later again, Archbishop Oscar Romero, who had spoken out against abuses by the military régime in El Salvador, was shot while celebrating mass. The list is depressingly long. Martyrs challenge us to reflect on the strength of our own faith and this, as in the case of More and Fisher, clearly goes beyond questions of denomination.

With my best wishes, thoughts and prayers for you all, Cortland.

Service details for Sunday 12th July 2026
The Sixth Sunday after Trinity

0915 Said Holy Communion (St Peter ad Vincula)

1115 Choral Matins (St Peter ad Vincula)

Responses: Reading

Psalm 119:105-112.

Jubilate: Purcell in D

Anthem: Thy word is a lantern (Purcell)

Readings: Genesis 25: 19-end and Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23.

Hymns 372, 407, 452.

Voluntary: Fugue, Ave Maris Stella (De Grigny)

Members of the RAF Regimental Association will be present.

Collect for The Sixth Sunday after Trinity

O GOD, who hast prepared for them that love thee

such good things as pass man's understanding;

Pour into our hearts such love toward thee,

that we, loving thee above all things,

may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Poem of the week

Summer is truly upon us, so I thought that we should have an appropriately seasonal poem. Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830–94) was an English poet known for her romantic, devotional and children's poetry, including works like *Goblin Market* and *Remember* (the latter often chosen at funerals and memorial services). Her poetry frequently draws on nature, faith and folklore. Her poem *Summer* exemplifies her keen observation of the natural world and her ability to convey its beauty and vitality through precise, lively imagery. Showing playful description and reflective insight, it remains appreciated for its evocative depiction of seasonal life and the timeless charm of the countryside. The first verse suggests that the poem will focus on contrasting summer with the other seasons, but the final verse marks a clear shift: it is not just summer in general that is to be celebrated but especially summer in the country. The lines set the peaceful, enriching experience of the countryside's busy, thriving activity of insects and plants against the dullness of urban life, suggesting that even a single day in nature surpasses extended time in the city. The poem's rhythm and repetition, particularly the repeated use of 'And' at the beginning of lines, create a sense of continuous motion and excitement, reflecting the energy of summer life in the countryside as against that in the city. It is interesting to speculate whether she wrote this in the country during summer; in the city during summer, dreaming of the country; or even in the city during winter, striving to evoke the warmth and beauty of a country summer's day. Perhaps the vividness of her imagery suggests that it was indeed written both in the summer and in the country, after escaping from the city and surrounded by the welcome sights and sounds of nature.

Summer

WINTER is cold-hearted,
Spring is yea and nay,
Autumn is a weather-cock
Blown every way:
Summer days for me
When every leaf is on its tree;

When Robin's not a beggar,
And Jenny Wren's a bride?
And larks hang singing, singing, singing,
Over the wheat-fields wide,
And anchored lilies ride.
And the pendulum spider
Swings from side to side,

And blue-black beetles transact business,
And gnats fly in a host,
And furry caterpillars hasten
That no time be lost,
And moths grow fat and thrive,
And ladybirds arrive.

Before green apples blush,
Before green nuts embrown,
Why, one day in the country
Is worth a month in town;
Is worth a day and a year
Of the dusty, musty, lag-last fashion
That days drone elsewhere.

Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830–94)

Jigsaw

This week's picture shows the memorial to Thomas More in our crypt. You can find the jigsaw [here](#).



Teazel and bee, Tracy's garden



Prayers

Please continue to remember those on our sick list, some of whom are very ill, amongst whom we name: Margaret, Louise, Rob, Kofi, Nick, John, Chris and Howard.

RIP

Dennis Lyne

Please continue to pray for peace in Ukraine and the countries of the Middle East:

God of peace and justice, we pray for the people of Ukraine and the Middle East today.

We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.

We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow,
that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.

We pray for those with power over war or peace,
for wisdom, discernment, and compassion to guide their decisions.

Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at risk and in fear,
that you would hold and protect them.

This we pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of peace. Amen.

With best wishes to all, Cortland.



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Donations to the Chapel

We are always grateful for financial contributions to help us in our work. If you would like to support the Chapels Royal, HM Tower of London by setting up a Standing Order, making a one-off donation to Chapel Funds or setting up a Direct Debit, this is how to do it.

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The HM Tower of London Chapels Royal Foundation



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Standing Order

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Please remit to: CAF Bank plc	Sort code	40-52-40
	Account number	00027597
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The HM Tower of London Chapels Royal Foundation



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