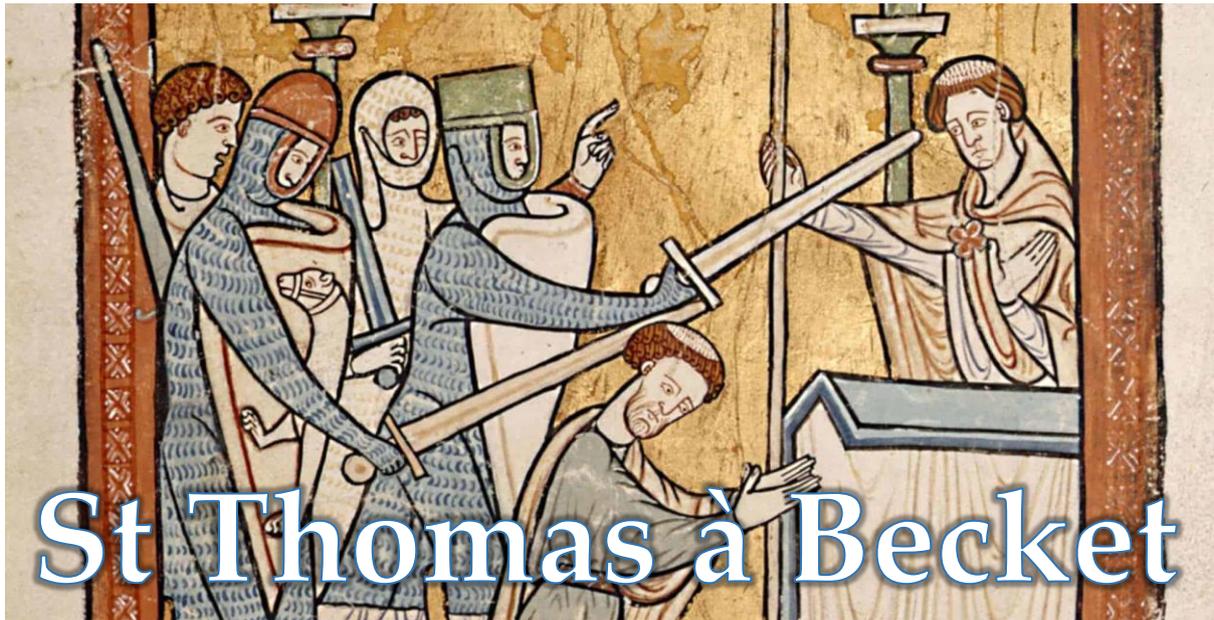


## Tuesday 29 December 2020



Thomas was born in London in 1118 into a family of merchants. He served as clerk then entered the service of Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury.

Thomas was an excellent administrator and skilled diplomat so, in 1155, King Henry II appointed him Chancellor. They worked harmoniously together for many years so, as a reward, the king nominated Thomas as Archbishop of Canterbury to succeed Theobald in 1161. From the start Thomas insisting on every privilege of the Church. The conflict worsened rapidly until 1164 when Thomas fled to France.

The Pope encouraged Thomas to pursue his arguments from exile. He returned in 1170 after an apparent reconciliation. Words of anger at court led four knights to journey to Canterbury. They chased Thomas into the cathedral and murdered him on the steps of the altar on this day in 1170.

Thomas' conflict with King Henry stemmed from their equal personal ambitions, exacerbated by the increasingly international claims of the papacy, played out in the inevitable tension between Church and State.

- All the Bible readings come from the *New Revised Standard Version*.
- The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration have been included at the end rather than in situ because many following the service will be in isolation and unable to celebrate the sacrament.
- 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

**HYMN 1 Teach me my God and King** (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

## 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.**

Christ calls us to share the heavenly banquet of his love with all the saints in earth and heaven. Therefore, knowing our unworthiness and sin, let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God’s commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

**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 à Becket**

Lord God,  
who gave grace to your servant Thomas Becket  
to put aside all earthly fear  
and be faithful even to death:  
grant that we, disregarding worldly esteem,  
may fight all wrong, uphold your rule,  
and serve you to our life's end;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**All Amen.**

### **First reading**

A reading from the First Book of Kings

Elijah came to a cave, and spent the night there. Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He answered, 'I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.' He said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.'

Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after

the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. *1 Kings 19:9–13a*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

## Second reading

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

We have an altar from which those who officiate in the tent have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also suffered outside the city gate in order to sanctify the people by his own blood. Let us then go to him outside the camp and bear the abuse he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. *Hebrews 13:10–16*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN 2 Give thanks with a grateful heart** ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

## Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

**All Glory to you O Lord.**

Jesus said to his disciples, 'Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted.' *Matthew 10:28–30*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**All Praise to you O Christ.**

## Sermon

At the risk of upsetting and startling people, I must warn everyone that an impostor is at loose. Having studied the church in this country for some time, it's clear this impostor is not only here, now, but has been for some time. He is influential

man and responsible for a subtle but very effective destruction of whole swathes of the Church. This man's name is Jesus.

Do not be alarmed! This man pretends to be the Jesus of the Gospels and is dangerous because some of the things he says are true and many of the other things he says are plausible. But he is an impostor: he is not the Jesus of the Gospels.

Let me explain. We heard the voice of the true Jesus—Jesus the Son of God—in today's Gospel reading. This Jesus is demanding loyalty to God. He also demands absolute cleanliness of life as a prerequisite to loving God with everything we have. The impostor Jesus never says things like that.

The confusion increases when we find these two Jesuses saying the *same* things. The impostor says we must be gentle but goes too far when says that being a Christian is all about being kind to people. It's true that a Christian will be kind because kindness is a fruit of the spirit, but that kindness is a by-product of being a Christian, not its focus. The impostor says a Christian is tolerant and then coined the phrase, 'Christian tolerance'. The real Jesus told us to choose between God and earthly powers and separate our loyalties, which is anything but tolerant.

The real Jesus says 'follow *me*'. He also said, 'Beware because many people will come claiming to be me'. If we are to be obedient to the real Jesus, we must follow *him*. Jesus said follow me, not 'follow people called Jesus,' nor 'follow anyone who talks about God', not 'if the guy has Jesus in his name then follow.' No. Jesus said, 'follow *me*'. So our first and most urgent task is to make sure we know who Jesus is.

So we need to understand what the real Jesus is like. In the parable of the Good Shepherd in John 10, Jesus points out that the sheep follow him *because they know him*. In other words, we see that following is the correct response to knowing Jesus; and that we will only follow Jesus insofar as we know him. If we do not know him, we will not follow; or, if we do follow, we will follow the Jesus we think him to be—which is surely a guarantee of failure.

We must follow the real Jesus so we need to find out who he is. To that end, it's good to routinely read one of the Gospels through from end to end, preferably in a single sitting. As we perform this exercise, it is difficult to take anything out of context; and we will see that Jesus—the *real* Jesus—is always uncompromisingly for God, always against sin; always against the world; and always against the devil.

We are to be disciples of Jesus, the Jesus who says 'Follow *me*'. Our first task is to make sure we *know* him in order that we follow the real Jesus. And as we find out who he is, we see that he demands that we go where he tells us to go. He demands that we must pray regularly, and we must be single minded and keep Jesus in our sights all the time. Jesus said, 'Follow *me!*' Will we?

## 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

Loving heavenly Lord, help us to follow the real Jesus. Give us the courage to leave behind all the many, many imposter Jesuses.

Lord in your mercy

**All Hear our prayer.**

Loving Heavenly Lord, help your Church to reflect you. Help us to put aside compromise with the world and return to you everything that is properly yours.

Lord in your mercy

**All Hear our prayer.**

Loving Heavenly Lord, help the world to stop worshipping itself and to transfer its worship to you. We pray for those who, like Caesar long ago, who take the glory that is yours.

Lord in your mercy

**All Hear our prayer.**

Loving heavenly Lord, we pray for those who are poorly, whether in body, mind, or spirit. We pray especially for those whose healing requires a readjustment of

life: show them how to turn to you.

Lord in your mercy

**All Hear our prayer.**

Loving heavenly Lord, we pray for those who have today passed from this world and into the next. We pray for their families, friends and all you mourn them.

Lord in your mercy

**All Hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father,

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

## **The peace**

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

**All And also with you.**

**HYMN 3 Father in Heaven**

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

## **The Dismissal**

May Christ who makes saints of sinners,  
who has transformed those we remember today,  
raise and strengthen you that you may transform the world;  
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 The King of love my shepherd is** [\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

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 à Becket 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**

God our Redeemer,  
whose Church was strengthened  
by the blood of your martyr Thomas à Becket:  
so bind us, in life and death, to Christ's sacrifice  
that our lives, broken and offered with his,  
may carry his death and proclaim his resurrection in the world;  
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.