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# The Carmelite News

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## Our Martyrs

**T**HIS year marks the 8th Centenary of the Martyrdom of St. Thomas a Becket who was cruelly put to death in Canterbury Cathedral on 29th December, 1170. Two years after his death he was canonised.

Thomas belonged to a merchant class family in London. He was well educated having studied in Oxford, Paris and Bologna Universities. At about the age of 30 he was made Chancellor to King Henry II and became his close friend and adviser. He worked hard to bring peace and order to the kingdom. Even though he held a very high office in the land and lived in the atmosphere of a very immoral court his personal life was pure and blameless and free from corruption and bribery. Not even his worst enemies could find fault with him.

When Thomas was 40 years old he was made Archbishop of Canterbury. He did not want to accept this high office as he felt he was unworthy of it and he was afraid it would mean trouble between himself and Henry as the King wanted to get complete control over the Church. His eight years as Archbishop were bitter and sorrowful ones. His worst fears came true.

Henry wanted to have complete control over the Church and Thomas resisted him. This brought Thomas disgrace at the Royal Court, criticisms from unworthy fellow Bishops, interference in his work as Archbishop, all sorts of unjust demands for money

payments to the King, petty persecutions which by degrees became so severe that at length he was forced into exile. The real cause of the trouble between the King and Thomas was the spiritual freedom of the Church which Thomas upheld.

After some time Thomas was allowed to return to Canterbury and in a short time matters grew worse. On the evening of 29th December, 1170, four knights of the Royal household followed Thomas into the Cathedral as he was about to start Vespers or evening office, shouting threats and demands which Thomas could not yield to without disobeying the Pope. He turned and said to them "I am no traitor but a priest of God. I am willing to die for the rights of the Church of God." Then the soldiers struck him with their swords and he fell dying to the ground and one of his murderers scattered Thomas' brains across the floor.

Almost immediately miracles began to take place and people flocked from all over Europe to his tomb to pray to him and to ask his intercession. The spot where he died is still marked in that magnificent Cathedral which escaped destruction during the wars down the centuries.

I was present at the Solemn Mass celebrated by the Catholic Archbishop of the Diocese and six other bishops in the Cathedral grounds on 7th July. The Mass was offered in the

presence of the Apostolic Delegate, three Archbishops, eight Bishops, hundreds of priests and religious and thousands of lay people. It was a magnificent sight to see the Bishops in their purple and lace and all the different religious in their habits of brown and white and black going in procession through the town to the Cathedral grounds, which were packed. For such a big gathering there was a great feeling of unity and of fervent faith and this was made all the stronger by one of Paisley's followers when he shouted over the microphone: "No popery! Betrayal," at the sacred moment of the Consecration. It was the first Mass celebrated there for over 400 years and it was wonderful to see so many Faithful present and receiving Holy Communion.

As we know, on 25th October His Holiness Pope Paul VI will canonise forty of the English and Welsh martyrs in a solemn ceremony in St. Peter's. There will be a very large number of people going from this country to Rome for this joyful occasion. It is so large that one of the English papers has called it the "English Armada." I hope to be there leading a group of approximately 100 pilgrims.

We will visit many of the Churches and shrines including the English College where some of the new saints were trained for the priesthood. Needless to say, while we are in the Eternal City I will pray for you and your intentions.

We have concentrated so much on the forty martyrs that we need to remind ourselves of the others whose cause will, we hope, be advanced in the not too distant future. There are 155 secular clergy, 82 regular clergy, 75 laymen and four laywomen giving a grand total of 316, and there are 44 others whose cause has been postponed for the time being for further evidence of actual martyrdom. Even during the persecution times more than one attempt was made to begin the Cause of their Beatification but it was

not until the 29th December 1886 that Pope Leo XIII beatified 63 of them. The remainder of them were beatified by Pope Pius XI, after a formal process, on the 15th December, 1929. On the 27th April, 1960 the Bishops of England and Wales asked Pope John XXIII for permission to take up again the cause of Canonisation of 40 of the martyrs. These 40 were selected because there was a long-standing and growing devotion to these forty more than to the remaining martyrs.

A martyr is someone who suffers death rather than deny the Faith. The martyrs died for the Catholic Faith. According to the law of the land at the time they were guilty of High Treason and suffered the penalties of High Treason but their treason was their Religion. Under Henry VIII anyone who denied that he was Head of the Church in England was guilty of treason. Under Elizabeth the First, to be a priest in England, or to receive the Sacraments, or to go to Mass, or even to help a priest was treason. "A layman in Yorkshire was hanged for giving a priest a pot of ale on a journey," Lady Babthorpe tells us. Blessed Margaret Ward and Ann Lynn were hanged for helping a priest. On the scaffold Ann Lynn said: "I am sentenced for harbouring a Catholic priest. So far I am from repenting for having so done that I wish, with all my soul, that where I have entertained one I could have entertained a thousand."

A thing that struck me about the martyrs was the joy and courage with which they went to their death. Blessed Swithun Wells, on the way to the scaffold, said "Farewell all hawking, hunting and old pastimes. I am now going a better way." "I shall shortly be above yonder fellow" said Blessed Ralph Sherwin, pointing to the sun. Blessed John Kemple, who was 80 years old, asked for time to say his prayers, smoke his last pipe, and have a drink of ale before going to his execution. On the scaffold, seeing the executioner hesitate, he said "Do not

be afraid to do your duty. I forgive you with all my heart. You will do me a greater favour than a discourtesy."

All martyrs teach us the vital lesson of a true and loyal obedience to the Holy Father. All of them had a strong, unwavering belief in the Mass and the Blessed Sacrament, a pure, gentle and courageous devotion to our Blessed Lady, and a very practical charity towards those in need. I will offer up a special Novena in honour of the newly canonised Saints starting on the 21st November and ending on the 29th which is the feast day of Blessed Cuthbert Mayne and his companions who are among the forty martyrs. I will offer it up for you and your intentions and also for an increase of vocations to the Carmelite Order, to help spread the faith the martyrs died for.

### ST. TERESA OF AVILA

On 27th September the Holy Father, in a special Papal Ceremony, will declare St. Teresa of Avila a doctor of the Church. She is the first woman to get this special title which is given to only a few of the Saints.

This special title is given to those who are noted for their holiness and sound teaching.

St. Teresa was born in Avila, in Spain, on the 28th March, 1515. At the age of 21 she joined the Carmelite Order of nuns. During her life she wrote quite a lot about the spiritual life, and prayer, and how to serve God—five big volumes in all. Even though she wrote four hundred years ago her teaching is very suitable and applicable to-day. In an age of change and renewal she teaches us how to renew our spiritual life, which is, of course, the most important thing in life, and is what the recent Vatican Council wants us to do. She was so conscious of her world-wide mission that she used to refer to herself as a daughter of the Church.

Although St. Teresa was a great writer she was very practical in the

advice she gave to her nuns and gives to us. She says : " From foolish devotions may God deliver us." She was a great worker for the Church and she taught all her nuns to do the same.

Although St. Teresa was a great writer she made time to found seventeen Convents in 20 years. Just think of all the work and the negotiations needed to buy each one, repair them, and set them up as suitable Convents. In all her difficulties she prayed to St. Joseph and she said that although at times he could be exasperatingly slow he never failed her.

In her lifetime St. Teresa did quite a lot to spread devotion to St. Joseph in the Western Church.

We have a Convent of nuns in Blackburn and, like St. Teresa, they are a very hardworking and happy community. I was up to see them recently, after my holidays, and I was struck by the contentment of the nuns. Their happiness and hearty laughs would give anybody an uplift if they needed it. Of course, there are not as many nuns there as we would like and we are hoping and praying that God will send suitable girls to join them. Like St. Teresa, they pray for the Church and for the success of its missions ; and they pray for all their benefactors. There is no doubt about it that though they are enclosed the world is their mission field and they pray for everybody. It is really heartening to talk to them and to hear the various intentions for which they pray. Because they are not too well off financially I offered them a little financial aid and they were most grateful and delighted to receive it. (I am sure you would not begrudge them this money which I gave them out of your donations.)

### REMEMBER THE HOLY SOULS

" Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you, my friends, for the hand of the Lord is upon me." With these words of Job the Church pleads,

during the end of November, the cause of the poor souls in purgatory, and asks us to pray for them. As you know, Mass is offered up every day of the year for those whose names are entered on our Dead List. Not just in November only. There is no prayer, no sacrifice, more pleasing to God than the Mass because it is the prayer, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ Himself. In this world we help people out of pain and suffering when we can; surely we should show our charity to those who cannot help themselves. When we help a man in this life, if he is worth his salt at all, he will thank us for our help. Surely we can confidently expect that the Holy Souls, when they get to Heaven, will remember us and help us.

### ST. JUDE STILL WORKS

This is a true story. A man who had taken a few drops too much called to see the priest. He had not been to the Sacraments for years. The priest heard his confession, fixed him up, and suggested that he take the pledge for a month. The man did this and as he was leaving the priest said to him: "You should pray to St. Jude. He is the patron saint for difficult cases." The man replied: "I've tried him before and he is no good." The priest suggested that he should give St. Jude another trial. He did this and a month later the man was back to say he had not touched a drop in the

meantime and that he did not intend to touch it again. His parting words were: There is no doubt about it, St. Jude is *the* man—a *powerful* man."

## Don't Forget Our Coming Novenas

ST. TERESA (*Little Flower*)  
September 25th—October 3rd

ST. JUDE  
October 20th—October 28th

FORTY MARTYRS  
November 21st—November 29th

## Thanks

To the Sacred Heart, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, S.S. Anne, Joseph, Jude and Anthony for two favours received, M. D. Crumpsall; To St. Martin de Porres for favour received, J. S. Preston. To the Sacred Heart, Our Lady of Lourdes, S.S. Teresa and Jude for many favours received, T. W. Welling; To St. Jude for many favours received, M. K. Athenry; To St. Anne and St. Jude, M. C. Brentford.

*Our Lady Keep You!  
Yours in Carmel,*

*A. A. Brennan  
O. Carm.*

## Please read on . . .

Printing and paper costs have risen sharply in the last few months, and now we face another increase in the postage rates! You can help in various ways, (but then you always do help) so here are a few suggestions—

1. Pray for the success of our work.
2. Send us a few stamps, or a small donation, if you can afford it, now and then.
3. Pass this letter on to a friend.
4. Join the St. Jude Society.

5. At the worst you could return your envelope marked "unwanted" This will cost you about sixpence but it will save us several shillings a year, besides several hours spent in printing, packing & dispatching. This last is only a desperate attempt to cut costs. You have been hearing from us for a long time now and we don't want to lose a friend. So now, get out that pen and paper and let us know that you are "alive and kicking"—as they say in Ireland! Spare us the kicks though—we get enough of those already. God bless you.