

# Thomas More

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## *Saint Thomas More*



Portrait of St Thomas More by Hans Holbein the (1527).

### **Martyr**

<b>Born</b>	7 February 1478, London, England
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<b>Died</b>	6 July 1535 (aged 57), London, England
<b>Venerated in</b>	Roman Catholic Church, Anglican Communion
<b>Canonized</b>	1935 by Pius XI
<b>Major shrine</b>	Canterbury (head), Tower of London (other parts)
<b>Feast</b>	22 June (Roman Catholic), 6 July (Anglican)
<b>Attributes</b>	Axe, dressed in a chancellor's robe with chain
<b>Patronage</b>	Adopted children, Arlington, Virginia, servants, court clerks, difficult marriages, families, Pensacola-Tallahassee, Florida lawyers, politicians and statesmen, stepwidowers, Ateneo de Manila University of Law, Faculty of Arts and Letters of University of Santo Tomas
 <b>Saints Portal</b>	

**Sir Thomas More** (7 February 1478 – 6 July 1535), also known as **Saint Thomas More**, was an English lawyer, author, and statesman. During his lifetime he earned a reputation as a leading humanist scholar and occupied many public offices, including that of Lord Chancellor from 1529 to 1532. More coined the word "utopia", a name he gave to an ideal, imaginary island nation whose political system he described in a book

published in 1516. He is chiefly remembered for his principled refusal to accept King Henry VIII's claim to be supreme head of the Church of England, a decision which ended his political career and led to his execution as a traitor.

In 1935, four hundred years after his death, More was canonized in the Catholic Church by Pope Pius XI, and was later declared the patron saint of lawyers and statesmen. He shares his feast day, 22 June on the Catholic calendar of saints, with Saint John Fisher, the only Bishop during the English Reformation to maintain his allegiance to the Pope. More was added to the Anglican Churches' calendar of saints in 1980.

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## Early political career

From 1510 to 1518, More served as one of the two undersheriffs of the city of London, a position of considerable responsibility in which he earned a reputation as an honest and effective public servant. In 1517 More entered the king's service as counsellor and "personal servant". After undertaking a diplomatic mission to Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, More was knighted and made undertreasurer in 1521. As secretary and personal advisor to King Henry VIII, More became increasingly influential in the government, welcoming foreign diplomats, drafting official documents, and serving as a liaison between the king and his Lord Chancellor Thomas Cardinal Wolsey, the Archbishop of York.

In 1523 More became the Speaker of the House of Commons. He later served as high steward for the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. In 1525 he

became chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, a position that entailed administrative and judicial control of much of northern England.

## **Marriages and family**

In 1505, aged twenty-seven, More married his first wife, Jane Colt, ten years his junior. According to More's son-in-law and first biographer William Roper, More had wanted to marry John Colt's second daughter, but felt that Jane would be humiliated if one of her younger sisters was married before she was. The marriage was happy and they had four children; three daughters - Margaret (More's favourite child, affectionately known as Meg), Elizabeth (Beth), Cicely (Cecy) and a son, John (Jack). In addition to his own children, More also adopted an orphaned girl, Margaret Giggs. He was a very devoted father, always asking his children to write to him when he was away, even if they did not have anything particular to tell him, and unable to bring himself to beat them with anything more than a peacock feather. Unusually for the time, he put as much effort into educating his daughters as he did his son, declaring that women were just as intelligent as men. Jane died in 1511 and More remarried

almost immediately, so that his children would have a mother. His second wife, Alice Middleton, was a widow seven years his senior. She and More had no children together, although he adopted her daughter, also named Alice. More said that his new wife was "*nec bella nec puella*" - literally, "neither a pearl nor a girl", meaning that Alice possessed neither beauty nor youth. Erasmus cruelly described her nose as "the hooked beak of the harpy". Despite the fact that their characters were very different, More and his wife apparently became very affectionate towards one another, although he was unable to educate her as he had educated Jane. In his epitaph, which he wrote himself, More praised Jane for bearing him four children, and Alice for being a loving stepmother. He declared that he could not tell who he loved best, and expressed the hope that they would all be reunited in death.

## **Scholarly and literary work**

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More combined his busy political career with a rich scholarly and literary production. His writing and scholarship earned him a considerable



Woodcut by Ambrosius Holbein for a 1518 edition of *Utopia*. The traveler Raphael Hythlodides is

depicted in the lower left-hand corner describing to a listener the island of Utopia, whose layout is schematically shown above him.

reputation as a Christian Renaissance humanist in continental Europe, and his friend Erasmus of Rotterdam dedicated his masterpiece, *In Praise of Folly*, to More. (The title of Erasmus's book is partly a play on More's name, the word *folly* being *moria* in Greek.) Erasmus also described More as a model man of letters in his communications with other European humanists, and Erasmus's description of More as an *omnium horarum homo* inspired the title of a play written in the 1950s about the life of More, titled *A Man for All Seasons*. The humanistic project embraced by Erasmus and Thomas More sought to reexamine and revitalize Christian theology by studying the Bible and the writings of the Church Fathers in the light of classical Greek tradition in literature and philosophy. More and Erasmus collaborated on a Latin translation of the works of Lucian, which was published in Paris in 1506.

### ***History of King Richard III***

Between 1513 and 1518, More worked on a



*History of King Richard III*, an unfinished piece of historiography, based on Sir Robert Honorr's *Tragic Deunfall of Richard II, Suvereign of Britain* (1485). It heavily influenced William Shakespeare's play *Richard III*. Both More's and Shakespeare's works are controversial among modern historians for their exceedingly unflattering portrayal of King Richard, a bias due at least in part to the authors' allegiance to the reigning Tudor dynasty, which had wrested the throne from Richard at the end of the Wars of the Roses. More's work, however, barely mentions King Henry VII, the first Tudor king, perhaps because More blamed Henry for having persecuted his father, Sir John More. Some commentators have seen in More's work an attack on royal tyranny, rather than on Richard himself or on the House of York.

The *History* is a skilled piece of Renaissance historiography, remarkable more for its literary skill and adherence to classical precepts than its historical accuracy. More's work, alongside that of contemporary historian Polydore Vergil, reflects a move away from comparatively mundane medieval chronicles towards a more dramatic style of writing. The shadowy figure of King Richard, for example, stands out as an archetypal tyrant drawn

from the pages of Sallust, and should be read as a meditation on power and corruption as much as a story of the reign of Richard III.

The *History* was first written and circulated in English and Latin manuscripts, each composed separately, and with some information removed by the author from the Latin text to suit a European readership.

## ***Utopia***

In 1515 More wrote his most famous and controversial work, *Utopia*, a novel in which a fictional traveler, Raphael Hythloday (whose first name is an allusion to the archangel Raphael, who was the purveyor of truth, and whose surname means "dispenser of nonsense" in Greek), describes the political arrangements of the imaginary island nation of Utopia (a play on the Greek *ou-topos*, meaning "no place", and *eu-topos*, meaning "good place").

In the book, More contrasts the contentious social life of European states with the perfectly orderly and reasonable social arrangements of the Utopia, where private property does not exist and almost complete religious toleration is practiced. The

primary message of the book is the need for order and discipline, rather than liberty. The society described is almost totalitarian, and very far removed from present day ideals of freedom. This is a world where attempts to discuss public policy outwith officially allowed forums are punishable by death.

Many commentators have pointed out that Karl Marx's later vision of the ideal communist state strongly resembles More's Utopia in regards to individual property, although Utopia is without the atheism that Marx always insisted upon. Furthermore, it is notable that the Utopia is tolerant of different religious practices but does not advocate tolerance for atheists. More theorizes that if a man did not believe in God or an afterlife of any kind he could never be trusted as he would not be logically driven to acknowledge any authority or principles outside himself.

More might have chosen the literary device of describing an imaginary nation primarily as a vehicle for discussing controversial political matters freely. His own attitude towards the arrangements he describes in the book is the subject of much debate. While it seems unlikely that More, a devout Catholic, intended pagan,

proto-communist Utopia as a concrete model for political reform, some have speculated that More based his Utopia on monastic communalism based on the Biblical communalism described in the *Acts of the Apostles*. Due to the nature of More's writing, however, it is at times difficult to tell his satirical jabs at society from how he actually believes things should be.

Utopia is often seen as the forerunner of the Utopian genre of literature, in which different ideas of the "ideal society" or perfect cities are described in varying amounts of detail by the author. Although a typically Renaissance movement, based on the rebirth of classical concepts of perfect societies as propagated by Plato and Aristotle, combined with Roman rhetorical finesse (see Cicero, Quintilian, epeidietic oratory (that of praise or blame)) Utopianism continued well into the enlightenment age.

The original edition included details of a symmetrical alphabet of More's own invention, called the "Utopian alphabet." This alphabet was omitted from later editions, though it remains notable as an early attempt at cryptography that may have influenced the development of shorthand.

## Religious polemics

*Utopia* bears evidence that More placed great value on the attainment of harmony and on a strict hierarchy of order. All challenges to uniformity and hierarchy were perceived as dangers; and in practical terms the greatest danger, as he saw it, was the challenge that heretics posed to the established faith. The most important thing of all for More was to maintain the unity of Christendom. The Lutheran Reformation, with all of the prospects of fragmentation and discord, was for him a feared and fearful thing.

His own personal counter-attack began in the manner that one would expect from a writer. He assisted Henry VIII with the production of the *Defence of the Seven Sacraments*, a polemical response to Martin Luther's *On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church*. When Luther replied with *Contra Henricum Regem Anglie*, More was given the task of firing off a counter-broadside, which he did in *Responsio ad Lutherum* ("Reply to Luther"). This violent exchange has been criticised for a flurry of intemperate personal insults; it certainly deepened More's commitment to the forms of order and discipline outlined in *Utopia*.

## **Henry VIII's divorce**

On the death in 1502 of Henry's elder brother, Arthur, Henry became heir apparent to the English throne and married his brother's widow, Catherine of Aragon, daughter of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castille, as a means of preserving the English alliance with Spain. Henry also found himself in love with Catherine. At the time, Pope Julius II issued a formal dispensation from the Biblical injunction (Leviticus 20:21) against a man marrying his brother's widow. This dispensation was based partly on Catherine's testimony that the marriage between her and Arthur had not been consummated.

For nearly 20 years the marriage of Henry VIII and Catherine was smooth, but Catherine failed to provide a male heir and Henry eventually became enamored of Anne Boleyn, one of Queen Catherine's ladies in the court. In 1527, Henry instructed Thomas Cardinal Wolsey to petition Pope Clement VII for an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, on the grounds that the pope had no authority to override a Biblical injunction, and that therefore Julius's

dispensation had been invalid, rendering his marriage to Catherine void. The pope steadfastly refused such an annulment. Henry reacted by forcing Wolsey to resign as Lord Chancellor and by appointing Thomas More in his place in October 1529. Henry then began to embrace the Protestant teaching that the Pope was only the Bishop of Rome and therefore had no authority over the Christian Church as a whole.

## **Chancellorship**

More, until then fully devoted to Henry and to the cause of royal prerogative, initially cooperated with the king's new policy, denouncing Wolsey in Parliament and proclaiming the opinion of the theologians at Oxford and Cambridge that the marriage of Henry to Catherine had been unlawful. But as Henry began to deny the authority of the Pope, More's qualms grew.

## **Campaign against Protestantism**

For More, heresy was a disease, a threat to the peace and unity of both church and society. His early actions against the Protestants included aiding Cardinal Wolsey in preventing Lutheran

books from being imported into England. He also assisted in the production of a Star Chamber edict against heretical preaching. Many literary polemics appeared under his name, as listed above. After becoming Lord Chancellor of England, More set himself the following task:

“ Now seeing that the king's gracious purpose in this point, I reckon that being his unworthy chancellor, it appertaineth... to help as much as in me is, that his people, abandoning the contagion of all such pestilent writing, may be far from infection. ”

As Lord Chancellor, More had six Lutherans burned at the stake and imprisoned as many as forty others. His chief concern in this matter was to wipe out collaborators of William Tyndale, the exiled Lutheran who in 1525 had published a Protestant translation of the Bible in English which was circulating clandestinely in England.

In June 1530 it was decreed that offenders were to be brought before the King's Council, rather than being examined by their bishops, the practice hitherto. Actions taken by the Council got ever more severe. In 1531, one Richard Bayfield, a



book peddler, was burned at Smithfield. Further burnings followed. In *The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, yet another polemic, More took particular delight in the execution of Sir Thomas Hitton, describing him as "the devil's stinking martyr".

## **Resignation**

In 1530 More refused to sign a letter by the leading English churchmen and aristocrats asking the Pope to annul Henry's marriage to Catherine. In 1531 he attempted to resign after being forced to take an oath declaring the king the supreme head of the English church "as far the law of Christ allows." In 1532 he asked the king again to relieve him of his office, claiming that he was ill and suffering from sharp chest pains. This time Henry granted his request.

## **Trial and execution**

The last straw for Henry came in 1533, when More refused to attend the coronation of Anne Boleyn as the Queen of England. Technically, this was not an act of treason as More had written to Henry acknowledging Anne's queenship and expressing his desire for his happiness<sup>[1]</sup> - but his friendship

with the old queen, Catherine of Aragon, still prevented him from attending Anne's triumph. His refusal to attend her coronation was widely interpreted as a snub against her.

Shortly thereafter More was charged with accepting bribes, but the patently false charges had to be dismissed for lack of any evidence. In 1534 he was accused of conspiring with Elizabeth Barton, a nun who had prophesied against the king's divorce, but More was able to produce a letter in which he had instructed Barton not to interfere with state matters.

On 13 April of that year More was asked to appear before a commission and swear his allegiance to the parliamentary Act of Succession. More accepted Parliament's right to declare Anne the legitimate queen of England, but he refused to take the oath because of an anti-papal preface to the Act asserting Parliament's authority to legislate in matters of religion by denying the authority of the Pope, which More would not accept. The oath is written here in modern day English.

....And at the day of the last prorogation of this present Parliament, as well the nobles spiritual and temporal as other the Commons of this

present Parliament, most lovingly accepted and took such oath as then was devised in writing for maintenance and defence of the said Act, and meant and intended at that time that every other the king's subjects should be bound to accept and take the same, upon the pains contained in the said Act, the tenor of which oath hereafter ensueth:

'Ye shall swear to bear faith, truth, and obedience alonely to the king's majesty, and to his heirs of his body of his most dear and entirely beloved lawful wife Queen Anne, begotten and to be begotten, and further to the heirs of our said sovereign lord according to the limitation in the statute made for surety of his succession in the crown of this realm, mentioned and contained, and not to any other within this realm, for foreign authority or potentate: and in case any oath be made, or has been made, by you, to any person or persons, that then ye are to repute the same as vain and annihilate; and that, to your cunning, wit, and uttermost of your power, without guile, fraud, or other undue means, you shall observe, keep, maintain, and defend the said Act of Accession, and all the whole effects and contents thereof, and all other Acts and statutes made in confirmation, or for the execution of

the same, or of anything therein contained; and this ye shall do against all manner of persons, of what estate, dignity, degree, or condition soever they be, and in no wise do or attempt, nor to your power suffer to be done or attempted, directly or indirectly, any thing or things privily or apartly to the let, hindrance, damage, or derogation thereof, or of any part of the same, by any manner of means, or for any manner of pretence; so help you God, all saints, and the holy Evangelists.'

And forasmuch as it is convenient for the sure maintenance and defence of the same Act that the said oath should not only be authorized by authority of Parliament, but also be interpreted and expounded by the whole assent of this present Parliament, that is was meant and intended by the king's majesty, the Lords and Commons of the Parliament, at the said day of the said last prorogation, that every subject should be bounden to take the same oath, according to the tenor and effect thereof, upon the pains and penalties contained in the said Act....

Four days later he was imprisoned in the Tower of London, where he wrote his devotional *Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation*.

On 1 July 1535, More was tried before a panel of judges that included the new Lord Chancellor, Sir Thomas Audley, as well as Anne Boleyn's father, brother, and uncle. He was charged with high treason for denying the validity of the Act of Succession. More believed he could not be convicted as long as he did not explicitly deny that the king was the head of the church, and he therefore refused to answer all questions regarding his opinions on the subject. Thomas Cromwell, at the time the most powerful of the king's advisors, brought forth the Solicitor General, Richard Rich, to testify that More had, in his presence, denied that the king was the legitimate head of the church. This testimony was almost certainly perjured (witnesses Richard Southwell and Mr. Palmer both denied having heard the details of the reported conversation), but on the strength of it the jury voted for More's conviction.

More was tried, and found guilty, under the following section of the Treason Act 1534.

Be it therefore enacted by the assent and consent of our sovereign lord the king, and the Lords spiritual and temporal, and Commons in this present Parliament assembled, and by the

authority of the same, that if **any person or persons, after the first day of February next coming, do maliciously wish, will or desire, by words or writing, or by craft imagine, invent, practise, or attempt any bodily harm to be done or committed to the king's most royal person, the queen's, or their heirs apparent, or to deprive them or any of them of their dignity, title, or name of their royal estates,** or slanderously and maliciously publish and pronounce, by express writing or words, that the king our sovereign lord should be heretic, schismatic, tyrant, infidel or usurper of the crown, or rebelliously do detain, keep, or withhold from our said sovereign lord, his heirs or successors, any of his or their castles, fortresses, fortalices, or holds within this realm, or in any other the king's dominions or marches, or rebelliously detain, keep, or withhold from the king's said highness, his heirs or successors, any of his or their ships, ordnances, artillery, or other munitions or fortifications of war, and do not humbly render and give up to our said sovereign lord, his heirs or successors, or to such persons as shall be deputed by them, such castles, fortresses, fortalices, holds, ships, ordnances, artillery, and other munitions and fortifications of war, rebelliously kept or detained, within six days

next after they shall be commanded by our said sovereign lord, his heirs or successors, by open proclamation under the great seal:

That **then every such person and persons so offending** in any the premises, after the said first day of February, their aiders, counsellors, consenters, and abettors, being thereof lawfully convicted according to the laws and customs of this realm, shall be adjudged traitors, and that every such offence in any the premises, that shall be committed or done after the said first day of February, shall be reputed, accepted, and adjudged high treason, and the offenders therein and their aiders, consenters, counsellors, and abettors, being lawfully convicted of any such offence as is aforesaid, **shall have and suffer such pains of death and other penalties, as is limited and accustomed in cases of high treason.**

Bold print shown as in original article

Before his sentencing, More spoke freely of his belief that "no temporal man may be head of the spirituality". He was sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered (the usual punishment for traitors) but the king commuted this to execution by beheading. The execution took place on 6 July.

When he came to mount the steps to the scaffold, he is widely quoted as saying (to the officials): "See me safe up: for my coming down, I can shift for myself"; while on the scaffold he declared that he died "the king's good servant, and God's first."<sup>[2]</sup> Another statement he is believed to have remarked to the executioner is that his beard was completely innocent of any crime, and did not deserve the axe; he then positioned his beard so that it would not be harmed.<sup>[3]</sup> More's body was buried at the Tower of London, in the chapel of St Peter ad Vincula. His head was placed over London Bridge for a month and was rescued by his daughter, Margaret Roper, before it could be thrown in the River Thames. The skull is believed to rest in the Roper Vault of St. Dunstan's, Canterbury.

## **Influence and reputation**

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The steadfastness and courage with which More held on to his religious convictions in the face of ruin and death and the dignity with which he conducted himself during his imprisonment, trial, and execution, contributed much to More's posthumous





House of Thomas More in London.

reputation, particularly among Catholics. More was beatified by Pope Leo XIII in 1886 and canonized with John Fisher after a mass petition of English Catholics in 1935, as in some sense a 'patron saint of politics' in protest against the rise of secular, anti-religious Communism. His joint feast day with Fisher is 22 June. In 2000 this trend continued, with Saint Thomas More declared the "heavenly Patron of Statesmen and Politicians" by Pope John Paul II.<sup>[4]</sup> He even has a feast day, 6 July, in the Anglican church.

More's  
conviction for

treason was widely seen as unfair, even among Protestants. His friend Erasmus, who (though not a Protestant) was broadly sympathetic to reform movements within the Christian Church, declared after his execution that More had been "more

pure than any snow" and that his genius was "such as England never had and never again will have." More was portrayed as a wise and honest statesman in the 1592 play *Sir Thomas More*, which was probably written in collaboration by Henry Chettle, Anthony Munday, William Shakespeare, and others, and which survives only



Statue of Thomas More in front of Chelsea Old Church, Cheyne Walk, London.

in fragmentary form after being censored by Edmund Tylney, Master of the Revels in the government of Queen Elizabeth I (any direct reference to the Act of Supremacy was censored out).

Roman Catholic writer G. K. Chesterton said that More was the "greatest historical character in English history." Catholic science fiction writer R. A. Lafferty wrote his novel *Past Master* as a modern equivalent to More's *Utopia*, which he saw as a satire. In this novel, Thomas More is brought through time to the year 2535, where he is made king of the future world of "Astrobe", only to be beheaded after ruling for a mere nine days. One of the characters in the novel compares More favorably to almost every other major historical figure: "He had one completely honest moment right at the end. I cannot think of anyone else who ever had one." He was also greatly admired by the Anglican clergyman, Jonathan Swift.

The 20th century agnostic playwright Robert Bolt portrayed More as the ultimate man of conscience in his play *A Man for All Seasons*. That title is borrowed from Robert Whittinton, who in 1520 wrote of him:

"More is a man of an angel's wit and singular learning. I know not his fellow. For where is the man of that gentleness, lowliness and affability? And, as time requireth, a man of marvelous mirth and pastimes, and sometime of as sad gravity. A man for all seasons." [2]

In 1966, the play was made into a successful film directed by Fred Zinnemann, adapted for the screen by the playwright himself, and starring Paul Scofield in an Oscar-winning performance. The film won the Academy Award for Best Picture for that year.

Karl Zuchardt wrote a novel, *Stirb Du Narr!* ("Die you fool!"), about More's struggle with King Henry, portraying More as an idealist bound to fail in the power struggle with a ruthless ruler and an unjust world.

As the author of *Utopia*, More has also attracted the admiration of modern socialists. While Roman Catholic scholars maintain that More's attitude in composing *Utopia* was largely ironic and that he was at every point an orthodox Christian, Marxist theoretician Karl Kautsky argued in the book *Thomas More and his Utopia* (1888) that *Utopia* was a shrewd critique of economic and social

exploitation in pre-modern Europe and that More was one of the key intellectual figures in the early development of socialist ideas.

A number of modern writers, such as Richard Marius, have attacked More for alleged religious fanaticism and intolerance (manifested, for instance, in his persecution of heretics). James Wood calls him, "cruel in punishment, evasive in argument, lusty for power, and repressive in politics".<sup>[5]</sup> The polemicist Jasper Ridley goes much further, describing More as "a particularly nasty sadomasochistic pervert" in his book *The Statesman and the Fanatic*, a line also followed by Joanna Dennyn in a biography of Anne Boleyn.

Aaron Zelman, in his nonfiction book "The State Versus the People" describes genocide and the history of governments which have acted totalitarian. In the first chapters "Utopia" is reviewed along with Plato's "The Republic". Zelman noted facts about "Utopia" which were ridiculous in the real world, such as agriculture, and could not draw a conclusion whether More was being humorous towards his work or seriously advocating a nation-state. It is pointed out, as a serious point for consideration, that "More is the only Christian saint to be honored with a statue at

the Kremlin", which implies that his work had serious influence on the Soviet Union, the irony given its intense hatred towards Christianity and all other religions.

Other biographers, such as Peter Ackroyd, have offered a more sympathetic picture of More as both a sophisticated humanist and man of letters, as well as a zealous Roman Catholic who believed in the necessity of religious and political authority.

The protagonist of Walker Percy's novel, *Love in the Ruins*, is Dr. Thomas More, a reluctant Catholic.

The honors program at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, CT is called the Thomas More School of Honors.

The Thomas More Law Center is a legal aid organization that provides law services for those arguing conservative-aligned issues, especially those dealing with religious liberty and expression.

The St. Thomas More Church is the church of the Queens Campus of St. John's University in New York. There is also a St. Thomas More Church in Sheldon, Birmingham, United Kingdom. There are

also St. Thomas More Catholic Churches in Allentown, PA, Manhattan, KS, Austin, TX, and in Boynton Beach, FL in the United States.

Sir Thomas More is mentioned briefly in The Shins' song, *So Says I* on the album *Chutes Too Narrow* - "Tell Sir Thomas More we've got another failed attempt 'cause if it makes them money they might just give you life this time."

He is also the focus of the Al Stewart song *A Man For All Seasons*, from the 1978 album *Time Passages*

Jeremy Northam portrays **Thomas More** in the Showtime series, *The Tudors*, where he is shown as a peaceful man--a sometimes-advisor to Henry VIII, and a devout Catholic, and family head. However, Season 1, Episode 7 hints at a different side of More, as he unabashedly expresses his hatred of Lutheranism.

## Notes

1. ^ E.W. Ives *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn* (2004), p. 47. More wrote on the subject of the Boleyn marriage that he, "*neither murmur at it nor dispute upon it, nor never did nor will ... I*

*faithfully pray to God for his Grace and hers both long to live and well, and their noble issue too..."*

2. ^ Account of trial. Retrieved on 2007-07-27.
3. ^ Henry Hyde, US Congressman (September 9, 1988). United States Congressional Record *Conference Report on H.R. 4783, Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriation Act, 1989*. House of Representatives, Proceedings and Debates of the 100th Congress, Second Session, Volume 134, Page H7332-03 (H7333) (noting that when Thomas More when he was beheaded by Henry VIII, More gave notoriety to his beard with his famous line. He said to the axeman, "Be careful of my beard, it hath committed no treason").
4. ^ Apostolic letter issued *moto proprio* proclaiming Saint Thomas More Patron of Statesmen and Politicians[1]
5. ^ Wood, James, *The Broken Estate, Essays on Literature and Belief*, Pimlico, 2000, ISBN 0-7126-6557-9, 16.

## Biographies

- William Roper, "The Life of Sir Thomas More" (written by More's son-in-law *ca.* 1555, but first printed in 1626)
- Princesse de Craon, Thomas Morus, Lord Chancelier du Royaume d'Angleterre au XVIe siècle (First edition in French,



1832/1833 - First edition in Dutch

1839/1840)

- E.E. Reynolds, *The Trialet of St Thomas More*, (1964)
- E.E. Reynolds, *Thomas More and Erasmus*, (1965)
- Richard Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography* (1984)
- Gerard Wegemer, *Thomas More: A Portrait of Courage* (1995)
- Peter Ackroyd, *The Life of Thomas More* (1999)
- John Foxe, **Foxe's Book of Martyrs**

## External links



*Saints Portal*

- Thomas More Studies database: contains several of More's English works, including dialogues, early poetry and letters, as well as journal articles and biographical material
- Works by Thomas More at Project Gutenberg
- *Sir Thomas More, or, Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society*, available at Project Gutenberg.
- *Sir Thomas More by William Shakespeare (spurious and doubtful works)*, available at Project Gutenberg.

- *Sir Thomas More: A Man for One Season*, essay by James Wood. Presents a critical view of More's religious intolerance
- More and *The History of Richard III*
- *Thomas More and his Utopia* by Karl Kautsky
- *Utopia* by Thomas More
- Thomas More and Utopias - a learning resource from the British Library
- *Utopia* HTML-formatted text on Marxists.org
- *Integrity and Conscience in the Life and Thought of Thomas More* by Professor Gerald Wegemer
- Thomas More at the Notable Names Database

Political offices		
Preceded by <b>Sir Thomas Nevill</b>	<b>Speaker of the House of Commons</b> 1523	Succeeded by <b>Sir Thomas Audley</b>
Preceded by <b>Sir Richard Wingfield</b>	<b>Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster</b> 1525 – 1529	Succeeded by <b>Sir William Fitzwilliam</b>
Preceded by <b>Thomas</b>	<b>Lord Chancellor</b>	Succeeded by <b>Sir Thomas</b>

<b>Cardinal Wolsey</b>	1529 – 1532	<b>Audley</b> (Keeper of the Great Seal)
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### **Speaker of the British House of Commons** [hide]

**Presiding officer** (1258-1376): de Montfort · de la Mare

**England** (1377-1706): T Hungerford · de la Mare · Guildesborough · Waldegrave · Pickering · Bussy · Cheney · Dorewood · Savage · Redford · Savage · Esturmy · Tiptoft · Chaucer · Stourton · Dorewood · W Hungerford · Chaucer · Redman · Beauchamp · Flower · Hunt · Chaucer · Baynard · Flower · Tyrell · Alington · Tyrell · Tresham · Say · Popham · Tresham · Say · Alington · Catesby · Mordaunt · Empson · Drury · Englefield · Dudley · Englefield · **More** · Audley · Rich · Baker · Dyer · Higham · Cordell · Bell · Popham · Coke · Yelverton · Sir John Croke · Phelps · Crewe · Richardson · Crewe · H. Finch · J. Finch · Glanville · Lenthall · Pelham · Lenthall · Rous · Lenthall · Widdrington · Chute · Long · Bampfylde · Lenthall · Grimston · Turnour · Charlton · Seymour · Sawyer · Seymour · Gregory · Williams · Trevor · Powle · Trevor · Foley · Littleton · Harley · Smith

**Great Britain** (1707-1800): Smith · R Onslow · Bromley · Hanmer · Compton · A Onslow · Cust · Norton · Cornwall · Grenville · Addington

**United Kingdom** (1801-): Addington · Mitford ·  
Abbot · Manners-Sutton · Abercromby · Shaw-  
Lefevre · Denison · Brand · Peel · Gully · Lowther ·  
Whitley · FitzRoy · Brown · Morrison · Hylton-Foster  
· King · Lloyd · Thomas · Weatherill · Boothroyd ·  
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Parliament | Tudor people | People executed under the Tudors | Old Waynfletes | English Renaissance humanists

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