



THE CATHEDRAL AND METROPOLITICAL CHURCH OF CHRIST, CANTERBURY

Memorial Service



Martyrdom of Thomas of Canterbury

29th December 2025

5.30pm

Nave

Welcome to Canterbury Cathedral on this Festal Day

We are grateful to Canterbury Chamber Choir for singing this service

Livestreaming

This service will be livestreamed and you may be seen on camera, although we will not deliberately take any close-ups of the congregation.

By attending you agree to be seen in this way.

If you have any concerns please speak to a member of the clergy.

Cover Image: The Martyrdom of Thomas, from the West Window, Chapter House

Health and Safety

Much of the present Cathedral was built hundreds of years ago. Whilst most of the parts of this ancient cathedral that are normally open to the public are easily accessible for all, the historic stone floor may be unpredictably uneven in places, entry to some parts is via stone steps or access ramps of varying gradients, and lighting levels may vary.

Please exercise due care and attention before, during and after the service and move around with regard for your safety. The Cathedral is unable to accept liability for any personal injury or damage to property unless this is due to our own negligence.



THE COLLECTION is an opportunity to give generously to Canterbury Cathedral in response to God's generosity, and there are many ways to give regularly. **Use this QR code** to make a donation.

By cash or cheques payable to 'Canterbury Cathedral' in Gift Aid envelopes - UK taxpayers please fill in the details on the envelope. Or you can give a one-off donation at one of our **contactless donation points** in the South Transept after the service.



Please ensure that mobile phones are switched off. No form of visual or sound recording, or any form of photography, is permitted during Services. Thank you for your co-operation.



An induction loop system for the hard of hearing is installed in the Cathedral. Hearing aid users should adjust their aid to T.



Large print orders of service are available from the stewards and virgers. Please ask.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Stand as the choir enters

Introit

Ave, verum corpus natum
de Maria Virgine:
vere passum, immolatum
in cruce pro homine:
cuius latus perforatum
fluxit sanguine:
esto nobis praegustatum,
in mortis examine.
O dulcis, O pie,
O Jesu Fili Mariae.
Miserere mei. Amen.

*Hail the true body, born
of the Virgin Mary:
truly suffering, was sacrificed on the
cross for mankind:
from whose pierced side
flowed blood:
Be for us a foretaste
in the trial of death.
O sweet one, O merciful one,
O Jesus, Son of Mary.
Have mercy on me. Amen.*

Words: 14th Century Eucharistic Hymn

Music: William Byrd (c. 1540-1623)

Welcome and Introduction

The Dean

The Cantor and choir sing the **Preces**

O Lord, open thou our lips
and our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

O God, make speed to save us.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Praise ye the Lord.
The Lord's name be praised.

Sit

The choir sings Psalm 2

Why do the heathen so furiously rage together :
and why do the people imagine a vain thing?

The kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together :
against the Lord, and against his Anointed:

Let us break their bonds asunder :
and cast away their cords from us.

He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn :
the Lord shall have them in derision.

Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath :
and vex them in his sore displeasure:

Yet have I set my King :
upon my holy hill of Sion.

I will preach the law :
whereof the Lord hath said unto me,
Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

Desire of me, and I shall give thee the nations for thine inheritance :
and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession.

Thou shalt bruise them with a rod of iron :
and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Be wise now therefore, O ye kings :
be learned, ye that are judges of the earth.

Serve the Lord in fear :
and rejoice unto him with reverence.

Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and so ye perish from the right way :
if his wrath be kindled, (yea but a little)
blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Stand

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son :
and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be :
world without end. Amen.

Sit

First Lesson Ecclesiasticus 2.1-11

My child, when you come to serve the Lord,
prepare yourself for testing.
Set your heart right and be steadfast,
and do not be impetuous in time of calamity.
Cling to him and do not depart,
so that your last days may be prosperous.
Accept whatever befalls you,
and in times of humiliation be patient.
For gold is tested in the fire,
and those found acceptable, in the furnace of humiliation.
Trust in him, and he will help you;
make your ways straight, and hope in him.

You who fear the Lord, wait for his mercy;
do not stray, or else you may fall.

You who fear the Lord, trust in him,
and your reward will not be lost.

You who fear the Lord, hope for good things,
for lasting joy and mercy.

Consider the generations of old and see:

has anyone trusted in the Lord and been disappointed?

Or has anyone persevered in the fear of the Lord and been forsaken?

Or has anyone called upon him and been neglected?

For the Lord is compassionate and merciful;
he forgives sins and saves in time of distress.

Reading *A reading from T.S. Eliot's 'Murder in the Cathedral':*

Thomas reflects on his vocation.

Please stand as the choir sings

Magnificat *during which the Dean censes the Nave Altar*

My soul doth magnify the Lord :
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
For he hath regarded :
the lowliness of his handmaiden.
For behold, from henceforth :
all generations shall call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath magnified me :
and holy is his Name.
And his mercy is on them that fear him :
throughout all generations.
He hath shewed strength with his arm :
he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their seat :
and hath exalted the humble and meek.
He hath filled the hungry with good things :
and the rich he hath sent empty away.
He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel :
as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son : and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be :
world without end. Amen.

Thomas Tallis (c. 1505-85), in the Dorien Mode

Please sit

Second Lesson 1 Peter 4.12-19

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice in so far as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed.

If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief-maker. Yet if any of you suffers as a Christian, do not consider it a disgrace, but glorify God because you bear this name.

For the time has come for judgement to begin with the household of God; if it begins with us, what will be the end for those who do not obey the gospel of God?
And

'If it is hard for the righteous to be saved,
what will become of the ungodly and the sinners?'

Therefore, let those suffering in accordance with God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator, while continuing to do good.

Reading *A reading from T.S. Eliot's 'Murder in the Cathedral':*

Thomas commands that the doors be unbarred, despite the urgent warnings of the monks.

The doors burst open

Silence is kept

During the Nunc Dimittis the ministers move to the Martyrdom to lay red roses at the site of Thomas's murder and the cense the Altar of the Swordpoint.

Please stand as the choir sings

Nunc Dimittis

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace :
according to thy word.

For mine eyes have seen : thy salvation;
Which thou hast prepared : before the face of all people;
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles :
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son : and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be :
world without end. Amen.

Thomas Tallis (c. 1505-85), in the Dorian Mode

Sit or kneel

Prayers for the Departed The Dean

Eternal God, our maker and redeemer,
grant our Brother Thomas and all the faithful departed
the sure benefits of your Son's saving passion and glorious resurrection:
that, in the last day,
when you gather up all things in Christ,
we may with them enjoy the fullness of your promises;
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.

Amen.

Father in heaven,
we thank you because you made us in your own image
and gave us gifts in mind, body and spirit.
We thank you now for Thomas.
As we honour his memory,
make us more aware that you are the one
from whom comes every perfect gift,
including the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Almighty God,
we come before you, the supreme judge,
and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant,
and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect;
we give you thanks for giving us an unshakeable kingdom
and we worship you in reverence and awe,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Libera Me, Domine

During which the ministers return from the Martyrdom bringing the light from the candles round the site of Thomas's death and sharing this light with the congregation. The Dean lights the Amnesty Candle by the Nave Altar in solidarity with all who are oppressed and treated unjustly today.

Libera me, Domine,
de morte aeterna
in die illa tremenda
quando coeli movendi sunt et terra
dum veneris judicare saeculum per
ignem.

*Deliver me, O Lord,
from eternal death,
on that fearful day
when the heavens are moved and the
Earth when you will come to judge the
world through fire.*

Tremens factus sum ego et timeo,
dum discussio venerit
atque ventura ira.

*I am made to tremble, and I fear,
when the desolation shall come,
and also the coming wrath.*

Dies irae, dies illa,
calamitatis et miseriae,
dies magna et amara valde.

*That day, the day of wrath,
calamity, and misery,
that terrible and exceedingly bitter day.*

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

*Rest eternal grant them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine on them.*

Music: Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Sermon

The Bishop of Richborough

Please stand to sing



In our day of thanksgiving one psalm let us offer
For the saints who before us have found their reward;
When the shadow of death fell upon them, we sorrowed,
But now we rejoice that they rest in the Lord.

In the morning of life, and at noon, and at even,
He called them away from our worship below;
But not till his love, at the font and the altar,
Had girt them with grace for the way they should go.

These stones that have echoed their praises are holy,
And dear is the ground where their feet have once trod;
Yet here they confessed they were strangers and pilgrims,
And still they were seeking the city of God.

Sing praise then, for all who here sought and here found Him,
Whose journey is ended, whose perils are past:
They believed in the Light; and its glory is round them,
Where the clouds of earth's sorrows are lifted at last.

Words: William Draper (1855-1933)

Tune: ST CATHERINE'S COURT

Sit or kneel

Prayers The Canon in Residence

You sent your Son to bring good news to the poor,
sight to the blind, freedom to captives
and salvation to your people:
anoint us with your Spirit;
rouse us to work in his name.
Father, by your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Send us to bring help to the poor
and freedom to the oppressed.
Father, by your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Send us to tell the world
the good news of your healing love.
Father, by your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Send us to those who mourn,
to bring joy and gladness instead of grief.
Father, by your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Send us to proclaim that the time is here
for you to save your people.
Father, by your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Lord of the Church,
**hear our prayer, and make us one in mind and heart
to serve you in Christ our Lord. Amen.**

As we join our prayers with the Church Universal, we say, each in our
own language, the prayer that Jesus taught us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Notre Père...

Vater Unser...

Onze Vader...

Padre Nuestro...

Ojcze Nasz...

Baba Yetu...

E to matou Matua...

Ein Tad...

Lux aeterna

Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine,
cum sanctis tuis in aeternum,
quia pius es.

*Let perpetual light shine upon them, O
Lord, with your saints for ever,
for you are merciful.*

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.

*Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.*

Music: John Rutter (b. 1945)

Almighty God,
by whose grace and power your holy martyrs
triumphed over suffering and were faithful unto death:
strengthen us with your grace,
that we may endure reproach and persecution
and faithfully bear witness to the name
of 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. **Amen**

Stand

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Blessed be God for ever.

Father, this Christmastide, we have sung your praise with shepherds and angels: may Christ be born in our hearts today.

Praise to Christ our light.

We have heard of the joy of your holy martyrs in paradise;
help us, like them, to trust your word.

Praise to Christ our light.

We have greeted Jesus, the light of the world;
may we be filled with the light of your love.

Praise to Christ our light.



Christ is the King! O friends rejoice;
brothers and sisters with one voice
tell all the world he is your choice.
Alleluia.

²O magnify the Lord, and raise
anthems of joy and holy praise
for Christ's brave saints of ancient days.
Alleluia.

³They with a faith for ever new
followed the King, and round him drew
thousands of faithful hearts and true.
Alleluia.

⁴O Christian women, Christian men,
all the world over, seek again
the Way disciples followed then.
Alleluia.

⁵Christ through all ages is the same:
place the same hope in his great name,
with the same faith his word proclaim.
Alleluia.

⁶Let love's unconquerable might
your scattered companies unite
in service to the Lord of light.
Alleluia.

⁷So shall God's will on earth be done,
new lamps be lit, new tasks begun,
and the whole church at last be one.
Alleluia.

Words: George K A Bell (1883-1958)

Tune: VULPIUS

AM 486

Blessing

God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, to know the hope to which he has called you. **Amen.**

God, who has shown you a pattern of holy living and holy dying in the lives of Thomas and all the saints, bring you to share their glorious inheritance. **Amen.**

God, who calls you no longer strangers but fellow citizens with the saints, set your hearts and minds on things above, where Christ is seated at God's right hand. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Organ Voluntary

Please remain standing while the choir and clergy depart

There will be a retiring collection for the work of the cathedral.

It costs £30,000 a day to keep the building open.

Please be as generous as you can.

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