

THE WIT AND WISDOM OF ST. THOMAS MORE

I die the king's good servant and God's first.

- Last words on the scaffold, July 6, 1535

Nothing can come except what God wills. And I make me very sure that whatsoever that be, even if nothing has ever appeared so bad, it shall indeed be the best....

- To his daughter, in prison, 1534

You must not abandon the ship in a storm because you cannot control the winds.... What you cannot turn to good, you must at least make as little bad as you can. - From his *Utopia*, 1516

We can not go to heaven in featherbeds.

- To his children, c. 1512

On Two Beggars, One Lame, One Blind

*There can be nothing more helpful than a loyal friend,
who by his own efforts assuages your hurts.*

Two beggars formed an alliance of firm friendship

*- a blind man and a lame one. The blind man said to the lame one,
"You must ride upon my shoulders." The latter answered,
"You, blind friend, must find your way by means of my eyes."*

*The love which unites shuns the castles of proud kings
and rules in the humble but.*

- Epigram 32, c. 1508

*You shall no pleasure comparable find
To the inward gladness of a virtuous mind.*

- From "Twelve Weapons of Spiritual Battle," c. 1501

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ST. THOMAS MORE'S LAST PRAYER (excerpts)

- Written in prison, just before his execution -

Almighty God, "Teach me to do Your will. Take my right hand, and lead me in the right path. Draw me after You. With bit and bridle bind fast my jaws when I come not near to You."
[Ps 143:10; Ps 73:23, 27; Ps 32:9]

Give me, good Lord, a full faith, a firm hope, and a fervent charity; a love for You, good Lord, incomparably above the love of myself; and that I love nothing to Your displeasure, but everything ordered to You.

Give me warmth, delight, and quickness in thinking upon You, and give me Your grace to long for Your holy sacraments and, with tender compassion, to remember and consider Your most bitter passion.

Lord, give me patience in tribulation, and grace in everything to conform my will to Yours, that I may truly say: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

The things, good Lord, that I pray for, give me thy grace to labor for. Amen.

A devoted husband and father, **St. Thomas More** was at the same time a dedicated statesman of his country and of his faith. Through study and hard work, More rose in prominence as a writer, lawyer, judge, diplomat, and member of Parliament, achieving the highest office of the land next to King Henry VIII. Nonetheless, Sir Thomas resigned as Lord Chancellor of England in defense of church and country and was eventually imprisoned and martyred, his last words being, "I die the King's good servant and God's first." He was canonized in 1935 and made "**Patron of Statesmen**" in 2000.

Front: Hans Holbien's *Thomas More*, © The Frick Collection, NY

ST. THOMAS MORE: LIFE OF A STATESMAN

- 1477/8, February 7 - Born in London to John and Agnes More
1489-91 - Page to Lord Chancellor and Archbishop Morton
1492-1501 - Student at Oxford, Inns of Court, called to the bar
1501-1518 - Active involvement in London's commercial, civil, legal, and cultural life; intense study and writing
1505, 1510 - Elected to Parliament
1505 - Married Jane Colt; first of four children born
1511 - Jane died; married Alice Middleton
1516 - *Utopia* published; international reputation established
1518 - Joined King Henry VIII's service
1521 - Knighted; made undertreasurer and ambassador
1523 - As Speaker of the House, proposed free speech and defended the liberty of the House of Commons
1525 - Appointed Chancellor, Duchy of Lancaster
1525, 1527, 1529 - Served as peace ambassador to France
1526 - Appointed to Royal Council's executive committee
1529 - Appointed Lord Chancellor of England
1529-35 - Undertook a massive writing campaign addressing the major controversies of his age
1532, May 16 - Resigned his office
1534, April 17 - Imprisoned for refusing to sign the oath
1535, July 1 & 6 - Trial and execution
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- 1935 - Canonized by Pius XI
1966 - Acclaimed worldwide through the stage play and film, *A Man for All Seasons*
1980 - Included in the Anglican calendar of saints
1997 - Yale UP published last of More's *Complete Works*
1999 - Voted "Lawyer of the Millennium" by the Law Society of Great Britain
2000 - Proclaimed "Patron of Statesmen" by John Paul II