

March 10

St. Thomas More

Good day, good people! May the Lord give you peace!

Thomas More was a secular Franciscan. When someone is a secular member of a religious organization, it means they live outside of the religious community, in the world and either single or married. It does not mean they are worldly and not spiritual.

The purpose these brief encounters with Franciscan saints does not allow one to share much about the extraordinary life that Thomas More led. Thomas More's life spanned the late 15th and early 16th centuries, a time when the Catholic Church was forced to confront the wave of reform overtaking Western Europe. Franciscan scholar, Dominick Monti, writes that "Thomas More was immersed in humanism, studied law, led a deeply spiritual and ascetic lifestyle, wrote a famous work entitled Utopia, stood strong as a defender of Catholic doctrine and the sacraments." But for our reflections we recognize him as company because he is an example of someone who put first things first. He was loyal and faithful in his service to King Henry VIII until he had to make a conscientious choice between King Henry and God. Making the choice for God led to his imprisonment and tragic execution.



Thomas More is perhaps most recognized as a person of conscience. The question he asks of everyone who shares company with him is this. Are there convictions we have or matters of conscience that will not be compromised? As a husband, father, and man of honor and integrity, who enjoyed the good things life had to offer, what things of heaven are worth the ultimate sacrifice? There are no easy or immediate answers. It is for each of us to ponder. It is for each of us to consider in that "most secret core and sanctuary" we call conscience. The responsibility of our baptism and the call to "put on Christ" not only makes the choice for God edifying; it is the proclamation that there is "no greater love than to lay down one's life" to pursue the lasting and good.

Let us pray.

Holy witness for the Church, you used your talents to bring God's love and mercy to earth. Yet you realized that human fame and glory were momentary and fleeting. In your practice of law, you understood and were loyal first to God's eternal law spoken through the successors of the Apostles. While a servant of the king, you were a servant to the Church first. Help me to see that loyalty to God's laws must be the first part of my ties and responsibilities with others. Strengthen me to seek out what the Church teaches. Give me the wisdom to make the right choice, and the fortitude to carry it out. This I ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. **-prayer in praise of Thomas More's life of conscience**

Thomas More is a friend of God, the company we welcome today.