

Festivals and Saints' Days (w/c 5th July)

6th July

Saint Thomas More - *martyr*



Thomas More was born on 7th February 1478 the son of a London lawyer. He followed his father into the legal profession rising to be Lord Chancellor from 1529 to 1532. He was a polymath and something of a Renaissance humanist whilst also a devout Catholic. This last brought him into conflict when the then King, Henry VIII, wished to divorce his wife, Queen Catherine (of Aragon) and divorce the English Church from the authority of the Papacy. More would not yield to the King and express his support, refusing to take an oath prescribed by law (the Act of Succession). There followed a sequence of spurious criminal prosecutions, which saw More taken to languish in the Tower of London. His steadfast refusal to submit, however, to the king's wishes meant that his fate was never really in doubt. He was executed on 6th July 1535.

11th July

Saint Benedict - *religious*

Benedict was born into an aristocratic family of Nursia (in Umbria) around AD480. He was sent to school in Rome; but abandoned his studies at about the age of twenty and, with his former nurse, retreated from the city to find peace. He subsequently spent three years living as a hermit, having met a monk from Subiaco. At some point, an Abbot of Subiaco died and the monks asked Benedict to replace him; this did not work out and ended in acrimony. He left Subiaco and founded twelve monasteries in the area, culminating in the great abbey of Monte Cassino. He died of a fever in AD547. One of his legacies is the Rule of Saint Benedict, which is a manual for monastic life, which is still in use today.

