



Saint Thomas More

Feast Day: June 22

Birth: 1478

Death: 1535

Canonized: Pope Pius XI (1935)

The son of a well-known lawyer, Thomas More was given an excellent education as a young man and served as an assistant to the Archbishop of Canterbury while he was still a teen. Married, widowed, and remarried, he was the father of three daughters and a son. At the time when education was generally denied to women, Thomas broke with custom and ensured that all of his children were well versed in the classics and fluent in Greek and Latin.

As a public servant with a great reputation for honesty and fairness and considered one of the most brilliant men of his day, St. Thomas rose through the ranks to eventually become one of King Henry VIII's most trusted advisors. However, when Henry VIII declared himself the head of the Catholic Church in England (instead of the Pope) he demanded all the subjects of the realm swear an oath of submission to this law or face execution. St. Thomas More, an ardent defender of the Catholic Church, refused to take the Oath of Supremacy and so forfeited his life. Having served his king and his country in positions of great responsibility and authority St. Thomas nevertheless did not hesitate to choose the higher law of God over the laws of men. At his execution, he was reported to have said: "I die the King's good servant, and God's first."

Biography provided by: Dominican Sisters of St. Cecelia Congregation, Nashville, TN.