

All Saints Parish Paper

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The Group preparing to visit the Becket Exhibition in the British Museum (See Page 2)

THE VICAR WRITES:

Dear friends,

This August many of us will not be able to travel or holiday in quite the way we have in the past because of COVID. However, if this means you will be in or near London this summer, I urge you to make a virtue of this situation by attending our keeping of the Assumption on Sunday August 15th at 6.00 pm.

There will be Evensong followed by our traditional procession around our parish and along Oxford Street, returning to church for Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. There will then be a parish party in the courtyard. I hope it will be a joyous occasion when we will be able to celebrate not just Our Lady's Assumption but also our coming out of COVID restrictions.

The feast of the Assumption is one in which we celebrate at the same time the fragility and glory of the human life. Mary's life in the New Testament is frequently one characterised by danger, uncertainty, and the dangers of human sickness and death.

Throughout her son's earthly ministry, however, she remains faithful to him despite the times of confusion and worry that clearly afflicted her. In this way, she shares in our experiences and is our fellow traveller in this vale of tears.

Yet Mary's life was also characterised by extraordinary events that set her apart from us, and give us hope. God had chosen Mary to be the ark of his new covenantal presence amongst his people. He prepared her to receive in her own flesh the Eternal Word. As a result of this, he would not allow the Mother of his Son to know death and took

her body and soul into heaven at the end of her earthly life.

In Mary, we see what God promises us as the goal and fruit of our Christian discipleship: life with him for ever. In Our Lady we see the triumph of grace as she is saved and glorified through the actions of her Son. She experiences in a unique way the Resurrection life which God promises us all. She is the exemplar of what we hope for.

How appropriate that this feast should be our focus this August. All too often over the past eighteen months, we have known intimately the fragility of our human condition. We have not felt in control of our lives, and have been afflicted by fear and worry.

Yet God calls us out of that place of anxiety to trust in him, as we now move to rebuild our parish's life together and plan for

the future. Mary is to us a model of what it means truly to be human and a child of God, trusting in Christ's power to save.

So, I urge you to make time in your diaries to attend our evening celebration of the Assumption. The procession that night will be a wonderful opportunity to proclaim our Christian faith to the world in which we live, and especially in the exciting and energetic part of London in which our church is situated.

As we carry the image of Our Lady of Walsingham with her divine son, we present Christ to the world, as our only hope for salvation and life, a sign that in the midst of the fragility and complexity of human life, we can know that we are loved and destined for glory in the life of God's heavenly kingdom.

Fr Peter

BECKET EXHIBITION

What a joy and a delight it was for a group of All Saints' parishioners to visit the recently opened exhibition focused on Thomas Becket at the British Museum. For many of us it was the first time we had been out to an "in person" event in a very long time! Our visit to the Museum was then followed by a slap-up dinner at *Le Beaujolais*, which was a splendid event.

We were lucky enough to be met by one of the curators of the exhibition, Dr Lloyd de Beer, who explained to us some of the thinking behind the objects the British Museum had drawn together. It was interesting to hear how the logic, sequence, and flow of the exhibition from room to room formed such a crucial part of the way the story we were learning

about was presented. Each space focuses on different aspects of Becket's life and "after-life", constructing a narrative of the man's story and influence.

Indeed, this notion that Becket's story has been told and retold through the centuries was a fascinating one in itself. At the heart of Becket's cult and fame lie the events of the day he was murdered. Yet, those events



go on to be re-told, re-depicted, re-received, and re-interpreted in a large number of very different contexts as people see their own lives and situations through the lens of Becket's life.

A good example of this is the way in which Becket's life is used and appropriated by people for theological and political purposes in many contexts where there is tension between the Church and the secular power. Henry VIII sought to stamp out devotion to Becket as part of his assertion of royal control over the Church, for example. By contrast, recusant English Catholics discovered a renewed devotion to Becket precisely because of the way in which he defended the rights of the Church in the face of secular power. Other figures themselves started to be seen as latter day Becket, not least Thomas More and John Fisher.

The artefacts exhibited were breath taking. The highlight for many of us was the stained glass which has come from Canterbury Cathedral, displaying the many miracles



associated with Becket's intercession. There were also items revealing the spread of Becket's cult exceptionally soon after his martyrdom into Scandinavia and continental Europe, including an enormous solid stone font from Norway.

A large number of reliquaries were also to be seen. Production of these beautiful objects seems to have centred on Limoges.

At one point there will have been hundreds of them throughout Europe. The image so many of these reliquaries uses of the murder of Becket is also of note. The image of a knight bearing down on the saintly bishop, smashing his skull open, and striking so hard that the tip of his sword sheers off, probably stems from historical fact and is associated with the very earliest depictions and accounts of the murder. These two crucial iconographic elements, the broken sword tip and the sheered-off cranium, then become crucial parts of how Becket is regularly depicted. The English religious psyche labours so frequently under the tired protestant historiography that mediaeval depiction of saints' lives is fanciful and



*An alabaster panel from 1425 – 50
made for an altarpiece, showing
Becket's murder*

inaccurate. However, this is a good example of the way in which living artistic tradition often perpetuates incredibly accurately elements from a saint's life, and shows that unfortunate Reformation perspective to be fanciful and inaccurate itself.

The final object one encounters in the last room is a remarkable baroque Flemish reliquary containing one of the last known

fragments of Becket's cranium. The relic had been spirited out of England at the Reformation and continued to be the focus of devotion in a country many miles away from Canterbury several centuries later. Such is the power of Becket's story and prayers that it is said the cleaning staff spend hours each evening carefully wiping the lipstick marks from the glass case containing this relic. Visitors can't help but touch, kiss, and venerate it, even in these days of COVID, so moving is the saint's story and so powerful the sense of his presence to those who come to see his relics and learn about his life.

It has to be said that many corners of the exhibition had a hushed, church-like feel to

them. The dimmed lighting, stained glass, and quiet reverence of the visitors made the exhibition hall feel somehow like a liminal place of encounter with the deeply holy. Indeed, the curator told us of stories of miracles and inexplicable events that visitors have reported. These might only be the return of a lost spectacle case, or bumping into a friend one hadn't seen for years, but it is interesting that people should attribute these simple blessings and happenstances of daily life to the saint's presence. So often we read our culture through the lens of secular assumptions about post-modern society and the rôle of religion. Yet, it doesn't take long for much more deeply rooted ancient truths about our world and its maker to come bubbling to the surface.



This exhibition was an excellent account of the way in which the events of one remarkable man's life and heroic death have lived on and continue to speak to later generations about ideas of universal human value, such as courage, justice and the complexities of speaking truth to power.

Fr Peter

AN UPDATE ON CORONAVIRUS RESTRICTIONS

Now formal government COVID restrictions are no longer legally binding on us in quite the way that they have been over the past few months, and having had the opportunity to reflect on the latest Church advice on public worship, I am pleased to be able to share with you a number of changes to our liturgy which have been effective from Sunday 25th July onwards.

I hope these changes will be a relief to those who have found COVID restrictions

burdensome. However, I want to emphasise how much I want our liturgy to remain as inclusive as possible for those who still need to be careful or who may prefer to socially distance and wear a mask. I hope these changes will enable us to move forward into the "new normal" whilst enabling people to feel safe. I propose that we have a review of these new conventions in September to see how they are going, and whether further relaxation is wise or not.

We will now apply the following conventions to our celebration of the Mass at All Saints:

You will no longer be required to wear a face mask in church. If you wish to wear one, you are, of course, more than welcome to, but this will no longer be a requirement.

You will still be recommended to sanitise your hands upon entering the church.

It will not be necessary to socially distance in church. You may sit wherever you like in the nave, and the chairs will be returned to their former arrangement. It is hoped, however, that people will naturally space themselves out as well as possible.

The north aisle, however, will be kept as a space for anyone who wishes formally to socially distance. If you choose to sit there, please keep a distance of at least two metres from anyone else.

Congregational singing will return at the Mass on Sunday 25th July. From then on, all are welcome to sing hymns and the sung responses in the liturgy as before the Pandemic.

The High Mass will return on Sunday 15th August for the Feast of the Assumption and the 11.00 am Mass each Sunday will be a High Mass with our accustomed ceremonial from then on.

Our Director of Music will gradually bring choir numbers back to full strength from 8 singers to 11 on a Sunday morning over the coming months.

The daily Mass at 12 noon each day will move from the High Altar to the Lady Chapel. This will happen in the next week or two when filming equipment has been installed to allow us to continue to broadcast the Mass each day. We will review whether the time is right to re-introduce an additional

evening daily Mass in September.

We will continue to broadcast the 11.00 am Mass on a Sunday and the 12 noon Mass each day. This way of allowing many more people to participate in our liturgy will become a permanent part of our parish's life.

We will continue not to exchange the peace by touching. This decision will be reviewed in September.

We will continue to administer communion in one kind and at the chancel step with the celebrant wearing a mask for the rest of the summer. This will allow those who are still clinically vulnerable or anxious to receive communion safely. This decision will be reviewed in September.

We will continue to follow the precautions which we have observed for the past eighteen months concerning the preparation of the gifts for the Mass. The hosts to be administered at each Mass will remain in a covered ciborium, whose lid will not be removed until the people's communion.

We will return to serving refreshments in the courtyard from Sunday 25th July 2021. The bar will be open from the evening of Sunday 1st August 2021 onwards.

When the kneelers were removed from the nave 18 months ago because of COVID, they were found on inspection to be a fire hazard, and had to be disposed of. The purchase of a new set of safer kneelers is already in hand, but may take a few weeks yet to arrive.

I hope these arrangements will make a significant, positive difference to our worshipping life together. However, I hope they also mean that those who consider themselves clinically vulnerable, or who need to take special care for whatever reason, will feel safe in our church. It will,

of course, be necessary to see how we get on through the summer and how infection and hospitalisation rates develop.

Please join me in praying for those who

are anxious at this time, but also for a renewal and rejuvenation in the liturgical and social life of our parish as we are now able to interact in person much more freely.

Fr Peter

SAINT OF THE MONTH — 18 AUGUST

S ALBERTO HURTADO CRUCHAGA (PADRE HURTADO)

A few years ago at this time of year I was travelling in Chile.

Everywhere you go in Chile you see bread: for sale on street corners and markets, in shops and stalls. As soon as you sit down to eat, in the simplest diner or bar and in the most sophisticated restaurant, you will immediately be presented with at least one type of bread, possibly two or three. It is the foundation of the meal, the necessary beginning. It is emphatically not a side dish.

So when I went to church at the Shrine of Chile's new saint, St Alberto Hurtado (canonized 2005), I was listening carefully to what the priest might have to say about bread (the Sunday Gospel was one of those from the bread of heaven discourse in St John that we are hearing again this August). My Spanish is limited, but attendance at many Masses attunes your ears to the familiar vocabulary of Christian worship. And I felt sure that bread would strike a chord with a Chilean preacher, especially in this particular church.

St Alberto Hurtado, who is buried nearby, was a Jesuit who in only twenty years of active ministry changed the Church in Chile. He challenged both the Church and wider Chilean society about the centrality of Christian faith to a just society; he was dedicated to showing that the Church was



for all; that, far from being the preserve of the powerful and the rich, it was the natural home of the poor and the worker; that if people had really been offered Christ as Christ meant himself to be offered, they would not need Marx; that the Church should be the sort of institution that would challenge socialism with action, not the politics of reaction.

He began as an educator and writer, challenging the narrative of Chile as a Catholic country when it had so few priests per head of population (one per 10,000) and the people were so poorly catechized. Ever



optimistic and joyful, he had an attractive personality that brought many people to Christ and the Catholic Church, young and old, intellectuals and manual workers.

Struck by a chance encounter with a sick homeless man, suffering from acute tonsillitis and shivering with the cold, approached him saying he had nowhere to find shelter. The man's misery left Fr Hurtado shaken. A few days later, while giving a retreat to a group of wealthy women, he began to speak, on the spur of the moment, about the misery that existed in Santiago and the need to respond to it. "Christ roams through our streets in the person of so many suffering poor, sick, dispossessed and people thrown out of their miserable slums; Christ huddled under bridges, in the person of so many children who lack someone to call father, who have been deprived for many a year of a mother's kiss upon their foreheads... Christ is without a home! Shouldn't we want to give him one, those of us who have the joy of a comfortable home, plenty of good food, the means to educate and assure the future of our children? 'What you do to the least of my brothers, you do to me', Jesus has said." It is reported that the women at the retreat gave him all their jewellery — so watch what you wear to church!

There are times when only action will do: Hurtado began by acquiring a now-famous green Ford truck, driving through the streets and picking up those who he found sleeping rough and bringing them home, a home which swiftly became his new institution, the Home of Christ (*Hogar de Cristo*), where they were sheltered and fed: children and old people, sick and undernourished (later there would also be a women's refuge), all came to the new 'Home of Christ'. It is calculated that 850,000 children have

been helped out of poverty by the network he created. In a society which then had no welfare system his organisation became a significant pioneer contributor to alleviating the sufferings of those in need. Women's shelters and simple prefabricated houses for the homeless are among the services the *Hogar de Cristo* continues to provide.

In the centre of this 'Home of Christ' he naturally built a church, dedicated to Christ the Worker, and it was here that I had gone to join in worship. So on that Sunday in 2005 I wanted to hear what the priest might say about the Gospel, from the bread of heaven discourse in St John. I wanted to hear it because a month in Chile had given me a new sense of what Jesus was doing in the Eucharist. In Chile, as in Jesus' Palestine, bread is not an optional item. It is the opposite of what it has become for many of us. Not long before this journey on a visit home to Sydney I had come upon something I thought truly preposterous, a 'bread boutique'. In the centre of the shop was an artistic display of different breads, an acme of a window-dresser's art, subtly backlit, without the slightest connection to food. If you had shown Jesus a 'bread boutique' I should think he would have laughed, or possibly wept. We know there are homeless people and hungry people near at hand here in London as in Sydney. Nonetheless they will be able to find some bread and other food as well. But in Chile (as in Jesus' Palestine) there are many people for whom the 'daily bread' for which we glibly pray is not guaranteed. For them bread is not a decorative item or a camp joke.

You get a further sense of the fundamental importance of bread in Chilean society as you watch priests at the altar. As you probably know, the Spanish word for bread is *pan*. It is a strong monosyllable, and I

noticed that the words ‘took bread’ (*tomo pan*) in the Eucharistic Prayer were almost always enunciated with great force and followed by a marked pause, as if to say here is what we eat every day and Jesus used *this*. Which is why I wanted to hear what the Jesuit priest at the church next to Father Hurtado’s tomb — now a national place of pilgrimage — would have to say about bread.

The church was packed for the fourth Mass of the morning. The sermon began with a call to identify our home cities, so I played the game; when, following a catalogue of mostly Chilean cities, I shouted, ‘Londres’, a loud gasp filled the church, followed by applause. Santiago and Chile are provincial places and the shrine, located in an older down-at-heel residential area left behind by Pinochet’s new bourgeoisie, is not easy to find in a city where maps are rare and inaccurate and few visitors venture beyond the deceptively shiny city centre or the plastic new suburbs in the foothills of the Andes.

The sermon began. The priest moved quickly to the Gospel and his proclamation did not disappoint. Jesus, he said, simply and repeatedly, is as necessary to us as *bread*. Bread in this context was *not* something to be stared at in a boutique but made at home or bought for less than a penny in a little shop or street-stall nearby. Jesus is the food that makes the difference between life and death.

For Saint Alberto Hurtado, and for the preacher, that truth led unavoidably to two conclusions.

First, that we all *need* Jesus: he isn’t a whimsey or an option (like so much in our society, exhausted by choice). Second, that in our Christian daily bread, the Eucharist,

Jesus is present to us to help us recollect (‘do *this* in *remembrance*...’) who we are, that we Christians are *alive*, that we do not merely exist: the Eucharist is not a religious snack which we choose; the church is not a boutique. It is vital, literally ‘the staff of life’, because it reminds us (‘do *this* in *remembrance*’) not only that God loves us and is with us, but that he loves and wants to welcome home *those who are not here*, those who have not the bread of life. He asks us what *we* will do about that.

It was said of Hurtado that ‘He was incapable of seeing pain without wanting to remedy it’, an epitaph of which any Christian might be proud. Pain comes in many forms, to rich and poor alike. In the end Hurtado simply did something about the pain he met. He saw, suddenly, in a particular poor man, that unless we share our bread (both material and spiritual), the Eucharist, and our faith, is just a boutique.

God intends it to be a feast of life to which all are invited; we, who are fed, are called to share it. When, after we are told to ‘Go in the peace of Christ’, we answer ‘Thanks be to God’, we are committing ourselves to doing that.

In 1952, Hurtado was stricken with intense pain and rushed to the hospital. He was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Day after day the media kept the country informed of Hurtado’s state of health. Before his death he had become a national hero. After a brief battle with the illness, he died in Santiago, aged only 51. In his last illness, he still had the strength to repeat the motto he had always encouraged others to adopt: *Contento, Señor, Contento*: (which means ‘contented, Lord’: happy in your will for me), expressing the joy with which he always lived.

May S Alberto pray for Chile and for us:

I hold that every poor man, every vagrant, every beggar is Christ carrying his cross. And as Christ, we must love and help him. We must treat him as a brother, a human being like ourselves. If we were to start a campaign of love for the poor and homeless, we would, in a short time, do away with depressing scenes of begging, children

sleeping in doorways and women with babies in their arms fainting in our streets.

St Alberto Hurtado, SJ

If you would like to know more or donate to *Hogar de Cristo*, you can find out more at the English-language version of the charity's website:

www.hogardecristousa.org/site/

Fr Michael

MURDER — AND SONGS, AND LAUGHTER — IN THE CATHEDRAL

Following the All Saints trip to the Thomas Becket exhibition at the British Museum, James Sherwood tells the story of the comedy musical he co-wrote about Becket, and his hopes for its return post-pandemic.

You will remember the outpouring of Thomas Becket-themed euphoria that washed over the nation in 2020, as the 850th anniversary of his murder approached. Becket-mania, the tabloids predictably dubbed it. That summer's Glastonbury was re-named 'The Constitutions of Clarendon'. The French tourist board advertised holidays to Burgundy with the slogan 'Get exiled to Pontigny'. And the queues to get into Canterbury Cathedral were absolute murder.

At least, that is what the renowned comedy writer James Cary (*Miranda*, *Milton Jones* — those are his credits, not his nicknames)



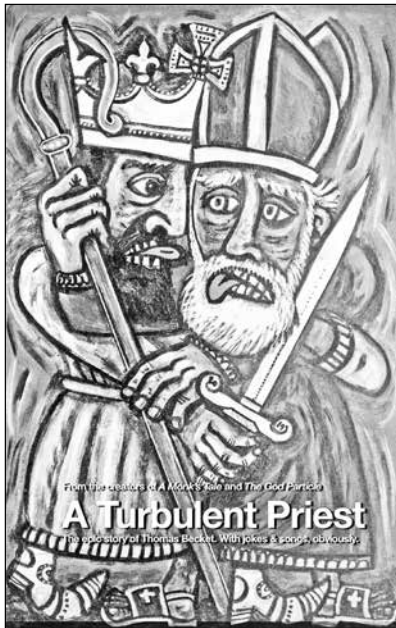
imagined when he dreamt up the idea of a comedy musical about Thomas Becket. He approached me to write the music, some lyrics, and have a hand in the script. We had previously collaborated on 'A Monk's Tale' — a show of songs (mostly by me) and sketches (entirely by him) about Martin Luther, which had toured around a remarkably large number of churches and church halls in 2017 to mark the 500th anniversary of that German priest making a great big nail-hole in a perfectly nice church

door in Wittenberg. From that action flowed the most significant range of religious reforms in history, most importantly the installation of noticeboards at the back of churches.

So Cary and Sherwood certainly know a bankable religious anniversary when they see one, and we fixed our attentions on December 2020 which, after consulting our calculators, we were almost certain comes

850 years after Thomas Becket popped into his cathedral for evensong, and never popped back. We envisaged a national tour, just like the Luther one, culminating in a huge concert performance in Canterbury Cathedral just after Christmas, probably. Rave reviews, west end run, film adaptation, international acclaim — all the usual.

It started well. The show, called unsurprisingly *'A Turbulent Priest'*, toured around a good number of churches and church halls in late 2019, around the time some people in Wuhan started losing their sense of smell. As we were planning our



assault on the national ramp up to 29th December, everything stopped. Yes, even comedy musicals about 12th century political/religious figures were no match for SARS-CoV-2.

* * * * *

The action opens with Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, outlining the major problem facing the nation — The Anarchy. The

Anarchy was a kind of prequel to the Civil War. It ran from 1135 to 1153, and was mostly a spat between Stephen and Matilda about who should succeed Henry I. It wasn't 18 years of all-out war, but it wasn't much fun, and by the time Thomas Becket was interviewing for a job in the Archbishop of Canterbury's private office, the greatest national priority was to bring it to an end. Theobald's opening song explains some of the objection to Matilda — although a daughter of Henry I, she had married into the Holy Roman Empire, and was seen by some as beholden to foreign interests — and also cocks a snook at any suggestion that there is no rhyme for 'Anarchy':

*The Empress's home
Is near Cologne.
She's too (some moan)...
Germanick-y.*

This is the fourth of six rhymes for 'Anarchy' in the song, and arguably not even the most tortuous. Though it does sum up an important historical truth. The song's other truths included: the country was feeling panicky; and the atmosphere was quite manicky. Assertions that no respectable historian would oppose.

This is a musical with a certain interest in what respectable historians might think. It was our job, we felt, to absorb informed historical opinions about this period, and the details of the Becket story, and only then start making it funny, and tuneful, and (just about) rhyme. Then hopefully it's clear to the audience that the show's *messing about* exists to give them a fun evening, not to obscure the historical facts, as currently believed by the smartest historians on that beat.

John Guy's book *Thomas Becket* was my main source. (My writing partner read *more* than one book on the subject — which is showing off, if you ask me.) It's very readable

and accessible, though I think it counts as a work of ‘history’ rather than ‘popular history’. I am not a great devourer of books in either of those categories, but it struck me as being particularly rigorous in its treatment of reliable sources, and insightful in its grasp of what to believe. It doesn’t bog the reader down in its account of how we know what we know. But when he constructs some of his more contentious theories, he shows the reader a little of the rigour that he has clearly applied. His approach to his sources is painstaking and sceptical, so his conclusions, when he reaches them, feel hard-won and convincing.

So I am now, in ‘Becket Studies’ terms, a firm Guy-ist, to coin a much-needed term. It’s remarkable how even a small amount of knowledge, such as I have in this area, can engender passionate opinions. I recall listening to an episode of Melvyn Bragg’s Radio 4 academic-fest *In Our Time* about Becket and being pretty livid at the position adopted by all of the assembled dons. These boffins seemed to think that it was the business of kings to be absolutely ghastly, and it was the business of non-kings to let them. I disagreed — as would Becket.

The Guy book — and the small shelf-full of supporting literature in my co-writer’s study — felt like a very solid basis to start remoulding the story for our comic and musical purposes. It became clear that there were a few strong themes that could provide the skeleton for the show. Becket’s character was clearly one. Here was a man who was not born into high rank, and had not particularly excelled in his academic life. Yet he had some kind of quality that made him an extraordinarily effective operator. He was someone who got promoted, over and over again.

In our show, Thomas has a song “I’m average” in which he bemoans his academic

mediocrity:

*I’m average, I’m average,
I’ve got no special knacks.
I’m no expert on algebra
Or Greek or income tax.*

But during the instrumental breaks of the song, when any self-respecting musical theatre character should be dancing, Thomas spends the time solving an argument between two of his co-workers in Archbishop Theobald’s office. The co-workers had previously been sworn enemies, so when Theobald overhears Thomas’s remarkable diplomatic achievement, he reacts with astonishment:

*When I’ve tried placating them
There’s been something to wreck it.
But what’s so different this time?
Good God, that new chap, Becket!
The way they smiled!
They’re reconciled!
It makes me wax quite lyrical.
To get those two
To bill and coo
Is nothing short of a miracle.*

By the end of the song, Theobald has promoted Thomas to Archdeacon of Canterbury. Such telescoping of biographical details is inevitable when compressing a lifetime’s work into less than two hours of stage show. But Becket’s career progression was so vertiginous, it’s often not too much of a stretch. Thomas accepts the job, asking to be broken in gently: Theobald, ignoring the request, asks him to bring the civil war to an end. Stephen is still fighting one side, though the other side is now promoting Matilda’s son Henry as their candidate for the throne. Such is Becket’s brilliance in negotiation, persuasion, and other political manoeuvrings, Henry II is being installed almost before Theobald has shuffled off stage.

It’s hard to keep Becket’s intellectual

shortcomings in mind as he makes such extraordinary progress through his career. The only on-going sign is his poor Latin, which is mocked later on by his friend and colleague, John of Salisbury, while they discuss his possible accession to an even higher position:

You need the Latin.

Yes, just the Latin.

*As archbishop they provide you with
a handy box*

To put your hat in

While dressed in satin.

*But you'll fail if you've not mastered all
your hic haec hocs.*

King Henry II is the other major character in our story. He is a bully and a tyrant with a plentiful supply of character flaws. Another major theme that John Guy's book draws out is Henry's preoccupation with 'the customs'. This was essentially a power grab. His understanding was that when his grandfather, Henry I, was king, people did what they were told and knew their place (and why not, chorused Lord Bragg's Radio 4 academics). Henry II looked on the reign of Henry I much as *Telegraph* readers look on the 1950s. Henry II made it sound like he was protecting tradition, but his primary objective was greater power.

In the show, Henry has a recurring refrain of "Is that too much to ask?" as he piles on his demands for greater obedience from all:

*I want everything to be just like the old
days,*

*Those 'subjects always do as they are
told' days,*

*Those 'always give the king half of your
gold' days.*

But, as his preoccupation with the customs comes with an unhealthy dose of nostalgia, we also give him a weird obsession with his grandfather, Henry I. Henry I steps out of

Henry II's imagination and onto the stage a few times, to give us a clear view of the voice in his head which causes him to behave so monstrously. This is not a historical Henry I in any way, but the version that haunted Henry II's psyche — a family memory of a hero to whom Henry II feels a constantly unworthy successor. Our Henry II has granddaddy issues. Henry I at one point interrupts his grandson's song to swagger around the stage singing his own taunting song, to a jaunty Calypso tune:

Here's the secret, here's the thing:

Some people just make a brilliant king.

Some are tyrants and others are weak

*But some have a magic that makes them
unique.*

Guess I was lucky:

All the people just loved me.

So jolly regal:

Being this superb should be illegal.

Since I was anointed

No one was remotely disappointed.

I've not no equal —

*The original's always better than the
sequel.*

Possibly the over-riding theme in the story is the "church vs state" struggle. As Henry II reclaims the powers that he thinks 'the customs' entitle him to, the principal loser of powers is the Church. Thomas sits right in the middle of this on-going struggle. When Thomas is promoted — again — to Lord Chancellor, leaving Theobald's employ and entering the King's, his job is to take the state's side. But he feels great personal loyalty to the Church — which we mostly portray in the show as a personal loyalty to Theobald — and we see Thomas struggling with these two sides. He promises to Theobald, when he leaves his job with the archbishop, that he will always put the Church first. But the reality, once he arrives in the King's court, is very different.

Henry II is a tyrant who will allow no disagreement — but all presented with a mask of bonhomie. We all know the type. The boss who proclaims his door is ‘always open’, but will smilingly dismiss and belittle you if you offer him an opinion contrary to his own. King Henry thinks he’s a great guy — relaxed, informal:

*If you want you can look me in the eye,
Face the other way as I ride by.
Beat me at cards, I’ll say ‘well played’.
I’m an ordinary guy who just wants to be
obeyed...*

*Some monarchs choose
For their retainers
A dusty grey-haired crowd.
I like a courtier
Who’s rather naughtier:
Who says that’s not allowed?*

While the king’s refusal to listen to anyone else rankles at first, Thomas soon gets tempted by the comfort and luxury of life in the king’s court.

*This liberty, this excess...
Is pleasant, I must confess.
Oftentimes we
Just drink until three
Then someone else clears the mess.
Round here the servant mob
Means I can just sit and slob.
If we want drinks, they bring them.
We’re running a kingdom
And that is a thirsty job.*

And Henry makes it clear that he is happy to share his life as regal party animal with Thomas:

*I feel the monarch’s function
Is to party without compunction.
You’ll never be bored
With this feudal Lord.
Now drink up, it’s time for luncheon.*

Their friendship develops. They both think the friendship is real, but Thomas

should know better. Henry is not capable of real friendship, as his description of their friendship reveals:

*We are the best of friends
We can argue about odds and ends
But it doesn’t take long
Til you say you’re wrong
And then you can make amends.*

Thomas’s greatest betrayal of the Church coincides with news of Theobald’s death. Thomas is wracked with guilt at failing to stand up for the Church. The vacancy at Canterbury sets the stage for Thomas’s final and most famous promotion, to Archbishop of Canterbury. There were literally hundreds of more qualified candidates — he wasn’t even a priest when he got the job (he was a deacon) and was only ordained priest the day before his consecration as archbishop — more of that real-life telescoping. If this over-promotion can largely be explained by the King’s championing of his Lord Chancellor, then Thomas’ ability to swing from convenient placeman to thorn in the royal side shows another fascinating aspect to his character — someone capable of great loyalty, but great personal stubbornness as well.

The writers of this show have had some (still unresolved) discussions about whether to change the title from ‘*A Turbulent Priest*’ to ‘*The King’s Bishop*’. The former has the advantage of being the most recognisable phrase from the story. Though, predictably, it’s a misquote (thank you, John Guy, and your inconveniently rigorous research) so perhaps that gives an impression of a show that has done less homework than we have. The advantage of the latter is that it summarises the central tension of Becket’s life. If you can imagine a newspaper editorial criticising his appointment to Canterbury, decrying the imposition of Henry’s closest

ally into that supposedly independent rôle, I think *'The King's Bishop'* — possibly with the addition of a question mark, if the subeditor was feeling particularly weaselly — would succinctly express the problem in that moment. He was appointed to Canterbury because everyone, and most importantly Henry, believed he would act as the king's bishop. It would be the equivalent of having a government apologist running the BBC (if you can imagine such an establishment stitch-up in these enlightened times). For some reason — historians, playwrights, and musical theatre-makers disagree on exactly why — he failed to fulfil everyone's expectation, and the king's clear hope. His refusal to be the king's bishop is what created the great crisis of the last period of his life, including his exile, his murder — and ultimately his sainthood and his legend.

The clash between church and state intensifies through a series of showdowns between King and Archbishop, which we present in the show as if they featured Muhammad Ali and were promoted by Don King. But instead of Kinshasa and Manila, our venues are Woodstock, Westminster Abbey, Clarendon Palace, and (most glamorously of all) Northampton. The song that carries us through these encounters is performed in the vocal style close to the heart of so many readers of this publication: rap. It's not a style of performance that brings out the King's accommodating side:

*Now I'm a decent king, I'm a reasonable
man,
I've got a nice idea, I've got a simple
plan:
You agree to everything that's on my list
Then we all just happily can co-exist.*

The argument become predictably petty, and in the end Thomas loses because he did not keep a good enough paper trail of his

work as Lord Chancellor — he didn't keep his receipts. Henry taunts Thomas in his victory:

*It's an ironic twist, it's a clerical quirk:
A clerk defeated by paperwork.*

But Henry is too busy performing laps of honour to notice that Thomas has slipped away.

Thomas hides in a monastery at Pontigny. He is abandoned by his friend John of Salisbury, who finds the Cistercian menus too Spartan for his taste, and a terrible waste of being in France. John re-routes his personal pilgrimage via locations better able to provide the sustenance he requires: Paris, 'the library at Brie', and 'the monastery at Chablis'.

The under-nourishment has a different effect on Thomas: he hallucinates a vision of the apostle, Thomas, after whom he was named. "Wow, 'Doubting Thomas'", Becket says. His hallucination corrects him:

*I prefer 'St Thomas the Apostle'. It
puts more of the emphasis on my entire
lifetime's ministry in the Gospel, rather
than a single comment I made once, when
I'd had very little sleep.*

St Thomas sings Becket an inspiring song, which gives the archbishop the strength for his next meeting with King Henry — their famous final meeting at Traitor's Meadow. Their conversation rekindles some of the warmth of their previous friendship, but Thomas is his own man now, and Henry cannot maintain a friendship of equals. Thomas returns to Canterbury, but after a contentious excommunication or two, Henry loses his temper with Thomas, and is overheard by four off-stage knights who take the King's eponymous outburst as an execution warrant.

Thomas's final moments in the cathedral

are not particularly rich in comic potential. In the show, Thomas is visited not by four heavily armed and rather drunk knights, but by Death himself. Leaning heavily on the contemporary accounts of the conversation between Thomas and the knights, Thomas and Death argue, and the argument ends in Death raising his sword, and a blackout.

Of course, becoming Archbishop of Canterbury wasn't Thomas's final promotion, nor even his most record-breakingly speedy. Thomas Becket became a saint scarcely two years after his death. In the show he is welcomed into the communion of saints by his namesake apostle. The cast come together for a final curtain call rendition of Thomas and Henry's old anthem 'We are the best of friends', each character re-living their relationship with Thomas, and perhaps settling a score or two. As Theobald sings to Thomas:

*We were the best of priests
We kept all the major feasts.
But you'd have lasted longer
When the King chose to wrong ya
If you'd have just learnt to keep receipts.*

I very much hope the show gets another life. I'll let you know in the pages of this

publication if it does. If your interest in the show is at all piqued by reading a few of the lyrics — even if only to wonder how any self-respecting actor could possibly perform such rhymes with a straight face — then do get in touch. Drop me a line — james@sherwoodjam.com — and I'll put you on the show's mailing list.

I'm sure more than one of the tunes came into my head while sitting in the choir stalls, pretending to be in a religious reverie. If so, it wouldn't be All Saints' only contribution to musical theatre — Andrew Lloyd Webber was born while his father was the organist at All Saints. Whatever your opinion of Andrew Lloyd Webber — and I imagine there are some strong opinions amongst this readership — he knew how to make a hit from unlikely source material. A 12th century archbishop of Canterbury strikes me as every bit as unpromising as an Argentinian first lady, some dreadful poems about cats, or some of the odder bits of the last dozen chapters of Genesis. So maybe it's time for Margaret Street to act as a musical theatre talisman once again.

James Sherwood is the Parish Office Administrator, and sings bass in the All Saints choir.

MUSIC LIST AUGUST 2021

✠ SUNDAY 1 AUGUST — 9th AFTER TRINITY

SUNG MASS at 11am

<i>Setting:</i>	Cantus Missæ in E-flat — Rheinberger
<i>Preacher:</i>	Fr Julian Browning
<i>Offertory Motet:</i>	Ach, arme Welt — Brahms
<i>Communion Hymn:</i>	276 Bread of heaven, on thee we feed
<i>Final Hymn:</i>	480 In Christ there is no east or west
<i>Voluntary:</i>	O Gott, du frommer Gott — Brahms

EVENSONG & BENEDICTION at 6pm

<i>Office Hymn:</i>	150 O blest Creator of the light
<i>Canticles:</i>	Sixth Service — Weelkes
<i>Anthem:</i>	Sicut cervus — Palestrina
<i>O Salutaris:</i>	Tallis
<i>Tantum ergo:</i>	Byrd
<i>Voluntary:</i>	Fantasia in C minor BWV 562 — Bach

✠ SUNDAY 8 AUGUST — 10th AFTER TRINITY

SUNG MASS at 11am

<i>Setting:</i>	Spatzenmesse K220 — Mozart
<i>Preacher:</i>	Fr Michael Bowie
<i>Offertory Motet:</i>	Jubilate Deo — Gabrieli
<i>Communion Hymn:</i>	292 Jesu, thou joy of loving hearts
<i>Final Hymn:</i>	443 Rejoice, the Lord is King
<i>Voluntary:</i>	Fuga in B minor BWV 579 — Bach

EVENSONG & BENEDICTION at 6pm

<i>Office Hymn:</i>	150 O blest Creator of the light
<i>Canticles:</i>	Jesus Service — Mathias
<i>Anthem:</i>	Thou wilt keep him — Wesley
<i>O Salutaris:</i>	Nicholson
<i>Tantum ergo:</i>	Nicholson
<i>Voluntary:</i>	Chorale from Toccata, Chorale and Fugue — Francis Jackson

✠ SUNDAY 15 AUGUST

ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

HIGH MASS at 11am

<i>Setting:</i>	Jugendmesse — Haydn
<i>Preacher:</i>	The Vicar, Fr Peter Anthony
<i>Offertory Motet:</i>	Assumpta est Maria — Palestrina
<i>Communion Hymn:</i>	187 Virgin born, we bow before thee
<i>Final Hymn:</i>	185 Sing we of the blessed Mother
<i>Voluntary:</i>	Paraphrase Carillon from L'Orgue Mystique Suite no 35 — Tournemire

EVENSONG & BENEDICTION at 6pm

<i>Office Hymn:</i>	183 O glorious maid, exalted far
<i>Canticles:</i>	Dyson in F
<i>Hymn:</i>	Salve Regina
<i>O Salutaris:</i>	French chant

Tantum ergo: Henschel
Voluntary Plein Jeu and Fugue from Ave Maris Stella — Grigny

✠ **SUNDAY 22 AUGUST — 12th After Trinity**

HIGH MASS at 11am

Setting: Missa Ave Regina — Victoria
Preacher: The Vicar, Fr Peter Anthony
Offertory Motet: Our Father — Sheppard
Communion Hymn: 295 Let all mortal flesh keep silence
Final Hymn: 359 Fight the good fight
Voluntary: Toccata in D, BuxWV 139 — Buxtehude

EVENSONG & BENEDICTION at 6pm

Office Hymn: 150 O blest Creator of the light
Canticles: Fauxbourdons — Byrd
Anthem: Christe, qui lux es et dies — Byrd
O Salutaris: Handl
Tantum ergo: Victoria
Voluntary: Vater unser im Himmelreich BuxWV 219 — Buxtehude

✠ **SUNDAY 29 AUGUST — 13th After Trinity**

HIGH MASS at 11am

Setting: German Mass — Mendelssohn
Preacher: Fr Michael Bowie
Offertory Motet: Os justi — Bruckner
Communion Hymn: 307 Sweet Sacrament divine
Final Hymn: 413 Now thank we all our God
Voluntary: Un poco allegro (Trio sonata no 4 BWV 528) — Bach

EVENSONG & BENEDICTION at 6pm

Office Hymn: 150 O blest Creator of the light
Canticles: Ireland in F
Anthem: Set me as a Seal — Walton
O Salutaris: Elgar
Tantum ergo: Brahms
Voluntary: Largo (Trio Sonata no 2 BWV 526) — Bach

*For a full MusicList, including readings and psalms, go to asms.uk/music.
All Masses are live streamed on asms.uk/youtube.*

– **ALL SAINTS MARGARET STREET** –

(Registered Charity Number: 1132895)

Parish Legacy Policy

At All Saints Church, we welcome all gifts in Wills, however large or small, and we promise to use your gift to make a difference in our parish.
Our PCC legacy policy is to encourage people to leave bequests specifically to one of our two related charities:

All Saints Choir & Music Trust (Charity Number: 802994)

which supports the choral tradition at All Saints. The capital of the Choir & Music Trust cannot be spent, only the income.

or

All Saints Foundation (Charity Number: 273390)

which assists the PCC in the care of our Grade 1 listed heritage buildings.
The capital of the All Saints Foundation can be spent.

Non Designated Bequests

When bequests which have not been designated for any specific purpose are received, the PCC's policy is to direct these to one or other of the two All Saints Trusts, or to some specific piece of restoration work or capital expenditure.

You can be confident that your gift will have a long—lasting effect rather than being used to pay day—to—day expenses.

Remembering Donors

The names of donors will be entered in our Chantry Book and they will be remembered in prayer each year on the anniversary of their death.

Contacting Us about Bequests

If you would like to discuss making a bequest to All Saints, please contact:
The Vicar/Honorary Treasurer/The All Saints Choir and Music Trust Administrator/
The All Saints Foundation Administrator

c/o The Vicarage, 7 Margaret Street, London W1W 8JG.

The Parish Office can put you in touch with these individuals by email.

Please email in confidence: office@asms.uk

or telephone 020 7636 1788.

Mission Projects

All Saints year—round fundraising efforts support:

The Church Army hostels and programmes empowering homeless women into independent living in Marylebone (**The Marylebone Project**)

The USPG—led UMOJA, HIV Project in Zimbabwe,

enabling people living with HIV and Aids to live positive lives, and

The Soup Kitchen (American International Church, Tottenham Court Road) feeding up to 80 vulnerable people daily

KEEPING IN TOUCH

As well as the monthly **Parish Paper**, you can keep in touch with life at All Saints through:

The All Saints Website asms.uk

The Weekly Email

This gives weekly news of events, people to pray for, and a short letter from the Assistant Priest. You can subscribe for free at asms.uk/email — all subscription enquiries to the office: **office@asms.uk**

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Assistant Director of Music:

Jeremiah Stephenson c/o 020 7636 1788

Electoral Roll Officer:

Catherine Burling c/o 020 7636 1788

CALENDAR and INTENTIONS for AUGUST 2021

1 ✘ TRINITY 9	Parish and People
2 S Peter Julian Eymard	Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament
3 S Germanus of Auxerre	Christian Unity in the UK
4 S John Mary Vianney	Parish priests
5 <i>Feria</i>	Pope Francis
6 TRANSFIGURATION OLJC	Discerning faith
7 <i>of BVM</i>	Society of Mary
8 ✘ TRINITY 10	Parish and People
9 S Teresa Benedicta of the Cross	The Churches of Europe
10 S Laurence	Christ Church S Laurence, Sydney
11 S Clare	Poor Clares
12 S Jane Frances de Chantal	Widows and widowers
13 Ss Pontian and Hippolytus	Unity
14 S Maximilian Kolbe	Christians in Poland
<i>(Walsingham Devotion)</i>	
15 ✘ ASSUMPTION BVM	Parish and People
16 S Stephen of Hungary	Christians in Hungary
17 <i>Feria</i>	Christian charities and our giving
18 S Alberto Hurtado	Christians in Chile
19 S John Eudes	Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus
20 S Bernard	Cistercians
21 <i>Feria (Monthly Requiem)</i>	The Faithful Departed
22 ✘ TRINITY 12	Parish and People
23 S Rose of Lima	Christians in Peru
24 S Bartholomew	The sick and all NHS staff
25 S Louis	Christians in France
26 S Ninian	Christians in Scotland
27 S Monica	Directors of Vocations and Ordinands
28 S Augustine of Hippo	Theologians
29 ✘ TRINITY 13	Parish and People
30 <i>Feria</i>	The bereaved
31 S Aiden	Mission in England

