

Thoughts on the Daily Word

12th Week of Year. Monday 22nd June. Sts. John Fisher & Thomas More.

Readings: 2 Maccabees 6:18,21,24-31; Psalm 30; Matthew 24:4-13.

John and Thomas were victims of a cruel tyrant. It was just the beginning of religious warfare that would continue for centuries. However, while we respect the courage and the many gifts of these two men, we must remember that they also were men of their time. Had they been servants of a Catholic king then undoubtedly, they would have used similar tactics against the heretics. Admire, as we must, the faith of so many martyrs, we have to recognise that while they were victims of conscience, very few would have understood our understanding of what that means. Hilary Mantel in her book on these Tudor times has at least given us a picture of a different world. Our challenge is to take seriously exactly what freedom of religion and freedom of conscience means in our own time. Cancel culture and people being silenced over opinions on race, gender and politics can have the same challenge. We can still be so sure of our own rightness and sense of victimhood that others must be silenced, for good if necessary. As Catholic Christians we have to learn from even the failures of our saints.