

It's forty years since the battle for the Falklands took place and, whatever one's views of the rights and wrongs of it, the men – and it was mostly men – who took part in it, willingly or not, deserve to be remembered as do St John Fisher and Thomas More, today. They too took part in a conflict not of their own making and could, as the rest of Thomas More's family and most of the bishops of the time did, have conformed to Henry VIII's desire to be both head of the Church of England and have his marriage to Ann Boleyn recognised as valid. But they resisted, for they felt, and indeed knew, that what was being asked of them was not of God but rather the power-play of a king for his own ends only. It was not, in short, simply a matter of king versus a particular institution, but of the king's will versus that of God. And the two men paid the price for standing against Henry's false claim to absolute power. Now what has that got to do with the Falklands War?

There's a poignant scene in the two men's last days when Thomas More watches from his cell in the Tower, the first of the English martyrs being led to their deaths and comments to his daughter, Meg

Lo doest thou not see, Meg, that these blessed fathers (the three Carthusian Priors) be now as cheerfully going to their deaths as bridegrooms to the marriage?

And later he learns of the death of his good friend and advisor, John Fisher, and one becomes aware of the solidarity that the martyrs have, not simply for some abstract distant concept of God but for one another. And there's an equally poignant scene in a recent documentary on the Falklands War in which veterans of the conflict reveal their loyalty to one another, and one might say their 'love', both then and now, to the point where, surviving without their lost ones, for some, is too much. And I wonder whether this bonding hasn't got something still to teach us about the nature of martyrdom: at least that it's not as abstract as we might think. We live and we die, not only for God, but for one another.

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