

St Thomas Becket 29/12/25

In on an obituary yesterday of the primatologist Jane Goodall, it was her discovery of tool making by chimps in the wild that first gained her widespread scientific recognition - for in that one observation she overturned the concept of humankind as separate from the animal kingdom, we are toolmakers too but not the only ones. The naturalist Richard Mabey touched on this in a more despairing way when he reflects in the 'The Accidental Garden' that our desire today to be reconnected with nature is redundant because we are already part of nature and part of the problem - whatever we touch we corrupt because of our natural desire and ability to control. Now this may seem a long way from a celebration of Thomas Becket as a saint and martyr but reading the history of the time and his own part in it one can't but be struck by the issues of control and power-play which dominate. It's a very violent period and all the baser instincts of humankind are on display - just like today. Grace has a lot of work to do when it builds on nature. Yet we do celebrate Thomas Becket as a saint because God has worked a wonder through him, he gives his life willingly 'in the name of Jesus and in defence of his Church'. This gives us hope that one day our own desire to control and dominate one another, and the world in general, may give way to a greater power and willingly so. The rest of creation is waiting.

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