***It’s more than Peter O’toole and Richard Burton***

So often when people look at historical events they do so through the lens of a movie. Again, so often, when we have seen several movies about the same subject, we can see how interpretation can even alter the facts. So here it is:

* Thomas a Becket is a Saint
* He was an Archbishop of Canterbury
* He had to choose between loyalty to his friend, King Henry II and loyalty to his Savior Jesus Christ
* He was martyred at Vespers (Evensong) in 1170 and was named a saint in just a matter of a few years – 1173

During the time of another King Henry the popularity of the shrine erected to honor St. Thomas Becket continued to be significant and it was desecrated and destroyed in 1538.

History is filled with conflict between loyalty to State or Church. Is it possible that our love for the State can grow to such an extent that we believe that the State speaks for the Church? Is the Church simply an organization (an “it”) or is “She” the Body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, Mother Church? Is it possible that Robert Bellah has given us an opportunity to reconsider how Civil Religion can replace the Religion of Christ, leaving us with a generic “religion” that attempts to please the State but does not please God? And in the end, would this render all religions being the same as long as they are polite? Would the conclusion be that there are, therefore, in civil religion may ways to - whatever happens after we die? And if we did not want to be with Jesus in this world, why would we want to spend eternity with him?

Maybe today is a good day to reread all that we can about St. Thomas a Becket. At what point do Christians today, even in a free society, need to speak more boldly of their Faith in the only One who has come into the world who could save our sins and open the Kingdom of Heaven.

**It’s more than Peter O’TOOLE and Richard Burton**