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## Focus on Religious Freedom

### Religious Freedom Week 2022 : Theme - Life and Dignity

Again this year the U.S. Bishops have declared June 22 - 29, 2022, Religious Freedom Week. We are all called to defend the God-given right to religious liberty which continues to face grave threats in the U.S. and the world. Religious freedom allows the Church and all religious communities, to live out their faith in public and to serve the good of all.

The USCCB chose June 22, the feast day of SS. Thomas More (1478-1535) and John Fisher (1469-1535), the patron saints of Religious Freedom, to begin this important week when Catholics and all Americans are urged to pray, reflect and act to promote religious freedom.

SS. Thomas More and John Fisher were talented and brilliant Renaissance men who contributed to the humanist scholarship of early modern England. Thomas More wrote theological and philosophical treatises during his career as a lawyer and government official. Bishop John Fisher was notable as an administrator and for his dedication to preaching. Above all their accomplishments, these men bore witness to a deep faith in Christ and his Church.

Both men were opposed to King Henry VIII's divorce from his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, when he petitioned the pope for an annulment in order to marry Anne Boleyn. Henry then claimed to be the supreme head of the Church in England, asserting sovereign power over English Christians and demanding they sign an oath of supremacy agreeing that King Henry was supreme head of the Church. More and Fisher refused to sign the oath because this law of the king came into conflict with the law of Christ. Ultimately, they were executed since they followed their consciences and submitted to Christ. Thus, SS. Thomas More and Bishop John Fisher gave their lives for the freedom of religion and for freedom of conscience.

(usccb.org; catholicnewsworld.com; catholiccourier.com, 6/24/21)

*"I die the King's good servant, but God's first." - St. Thomas More, 1535*

### **Catholics For Freedom of Religion Celebrates Their Tenth Anniversary!**

Please join Catholics For Freedom of Religion parish volunteers on June 26, 2022, at St. Agnes Cathedral, Rockville Centre, NY, at 11am Mass, as we pray for religious freedom for all and celebrate ten years of ministry to educate and advocate for First Amendment Freedom of Religion for all.



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SS Thomas More and John Fisher were talented and brilliant Renaissance men who bore witness to a deep faith in Christ and his Church. They were executed for following their consciences and refusing to sign an oath claiming the king was head of the Church.

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