

Becket anniversaries to prompt pilgrimages

WORSHIPPERS from our diocese will mark two anniversaries relating to Thomas a Becket during 2020 with a series of pilgrimages and special services.

Thomas Becket, also known as St Thomas of Canterbury, was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1162 until his death in 1170 – famously being murdered by followers of King Henry II within his own cathedral. Our cathedral is dedicated to him.

Becket 2020 is the name given to a programme of events around the UK to mark 850 years since Becket's martyrdom and 800 years since his body was moved from the crypt to a new shrine within the chancel of the cathedral. We'll use Becket 2020 to focus on our spiritual journey as God's people and our call as God's pilgrim church.

Among the events planned is a **Portsmouth Cathedral** pilgrimage to Canterbury on July 7 – the exact anniversary of the translation of Becket's body. One of our cathedral choirs will sing Evensong jointly with the choirs of Canterbury Cathedral.

The Friends of Portsmouth Cathedral hope to organise a coach for pilgrims to travel to Canterbury on that date, and others from across the diocese are welcome to join them.

A more general diocesan pilgrimage is planned on October 3, which is a Saturday. Bishop Christopher and a group of pilgrims will visit Canterbury Cathedral, when its choirs and one of our cathedral



Canterbury Cathedral (c) Mattana via Creative Commons

choirs will again sing Evensong jointly.

Some worshippers may choose to walk from Portsmouth to Canterbury in the week starting on September 28, joining the ancient pilgrimage route from Winchester to Canterbury, which crosses our diocese from Wickham to Havant. Others may choose to walk from Southwick Priory to our cathedral, re-tracing the steps of the monks who originally founded Portsmouth Cathedral.

Parishes and deaneries interested in either pilgrimage are urged to indicate their interest via info@portsmouthcathedral.org.uk, to give an idea of the numbers involved.

Other significant occasions during the year will include the annual presentation of St Thomas Awards by the bishop on March 22. And on June 20, Canterbury

Cathedral Choir will sing Evensong at Portsmouth Cathedral at 5pm, cementing the links between the two cathedrals. For details, see www.becket2020.com.

Worshippers at **St Thomas a Becket Church, Warblington**, are also planning events to mark the anniversary of the martyrdom of the saint their church is dedicated to.

The programme includes a family-friendly pilgrimage on May 10; a patronal festival Eucharist on June 28; an exhibition about Thomas a Becket in Emsworth Museum in September; and an illustrated history of the church and the man, with sound, light and music, from September 9-11. They'll also make a pilgrimage to Canterbury Cathedral on October 27.

For details see www.warblingtonwithemsworth.org or www.portsmouth.anglican.org/becket