

My name is Thomas. I'm the Archbishop of Canterbury.



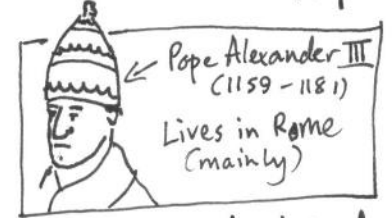
Thomas Becket:

- born about 1120
- Chancellor, 1155
- Archbishop, 1161
- Killed, 1170

That means that I'm the top bishop in England and Wales, although the Archbishop of York likes to think he's my equal. Huh! All bishops answer to me. I'm head of the church.



But I have 3 masters. God is the most important. His representative on earth is the Pope.



The Pope is head of the Universal (Catholic) church. He is top churchman. So he's my boss.

But the King is also a representative of God on earth and he is ruler of England and Wales. He is also my boss.

It's complicated.

Very complicated.



King Henry II (1133, King 1154-89)



First, a bit about me. My mum and dad were London merchants. I went to school at Merton Priory, and then in London and Paris. I was very clever, but not very rich, and I had to find work as a secretary.



Luckily, I became secretary to Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury. He made me Archdeacon (quite important) and introduced me to my best friend... King Henry II.



Henry and I were really close. We worked together and hunted together. He put me in charge of his son Henry. And he made me chancellor - head of his government. I got all his taxes in and he was quite pleased. I even led an army for him!



My dear Thomas - thanks for the taxes. You even got money out of the Church. Wow!

You see, Thomas, the Church is getting a bit too big for its boots. I know you're a cleric, but anyway. I don't like the Churchmen evading taxes. They're landowners too - they should pay.



I agree!

And as for clerics who commit crimes - the crimes are no different from those that other people commit. They should all be tried in my courts.

1162 Henry made me Archbishop of Canterbury, after the death of Theobald in 1161.



The Bishop of Winchester consecrating me as Archbishop.

I soon realised the error of my ways. I had lived too richly and done many things I ought not to have done. I tried to become a good priest and church leader.

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I started to realise that Henry was wrong - the Church should not be controlled by the King because we are all servants of the heavenly King (God) and we should obey canon (church) law first. That means that we need enough money for the Church and that clergymen should be tried in church courts.



WHAT???

As you can imagine, Henry was not pleased.

I ran away to France for a year, after I refused to sign his Constitutions of Clarendon. Thereafter, we did not get on. I spent more time in France, because I couldn't trust Henry. And then.....

1170 Son, your mother and I think you should be crowned as my heir. Since the Archbishop is STILL in France, the Archbishop of York will have to do it.



Eleanor of Aquitaine

Henry, the Young King



WHAT???

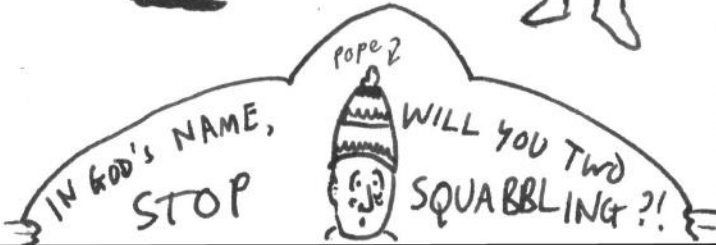
I was not pleased.



We made up in 1170, in the summer. But things still were not easy.



(Well, Robert, it's good to be back, but those wretched bishops who connived with the king to crown his son.... I'll punish them. I also need to see the Young King to give him a proper crowning)



I'm Robert of Merton Priory. I'm butting in because Thomas didn't know this bit of the story. Henry, in Normandy, was cross that Thomas was still being angry and had suspended his bishops. He cried out:



Four knights heard this and thought they would please the King by arresting Thomas.





It was horrible.



Thomas wouldn't come with us to safety, and when the soldiers stormed in, he just stood there.

They tried to take him, but he told them to go away. So they took out their swords...

Thomas' brains were splattered all over the altar. There was blood everywhere.



monk who tried to help

me, hiding behind the altar

Edward Grim who tried to stop Fitzurse and nearly lost his arm

Blessed Mary, I commend you my spirit

Ooops