

Catholic and Anglicans Together in King Henry VIII's Chapel

Catholic Vespers to be celebrated in Henry VIII's chapel for the first time in 450 years



Hampton Court Palace where Vespers will be celebrated (AP Photo/Matt Dunham)

Cardinal Nichols will celebrate Vespers in the chapel at Hampton Court Palace next month. The first Catholic vespers will be celebrated at Hampton Court Palace next month for the first time in 450 years.

On Tuesday February 9 Cardinal Vincent Nichols will celebrate Vespers in King Henry VIII's chapel. The Vespers, at Hampton Court Palace's Chapel Royal, will be celebrated in the Latin Rite and the Anglican Bishop of London will deliver a sermon.

The service will be dedicated to St John the Baptist, as the Chapel Royal was built by Cardinal Wolsey

on the site of a chapel of the Knights of St John Hospitaller, dedicated to that saint.

The music will be performed by Harry Christophers and his ensembles The Sixteen and Genesis Sixteen.

Before Vespers is celebrated, Cardinal Nichols and the Bishop of London will host a discussion on the bonds between their churches and the dialogue they have had over the centuries.

Two organisations, the Genesis Foundation and the Choral Foundation, are behind the historic ceremony.

John Studzinski, founder and chairman of the Genesis Foundation, said: “Dialogue between faiths is much needed and welcomed in these turbulent times. We need to recognise that we have more in common than not.

“I’m therefore delighted that the Genesis Foundation is enabling the Catholic and Anglican churches to engage in dialogue on this site that is so rich in history, both theological and musical. It will be an unforgettable occasion and is genuinely one for the history books.”

Michele Price of the Choral Foundation said: “The Chapel Royal at Hampton Court played centre stage to the religious changes in the 16th century. Its musicians and composers met the challenge of serving the spiritual needs of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I, by producing new and beautiful music and in so doing became the cradle of English church music.

“This historic occasion enables us to explore our rich heritage and bring together Christian traditions as we celebrate 500 years of Hampton Court Palace.”

Madeleine Teahan - Catholic Herald