

Relics of St Thomas Becket discovered in Italy



The town of Mottola in Italy has re-discovered relics of its patron saint, Thomas Becket.

The martyrdom of St Thomas Becket in his cathedral at Canterbury shocked the Christian world in the Middle Ages. Immediately after his death, miracles began occurring at his tomb, and the English Archbishop soon became one of the most popular saints in the Church.

Saint Thomas became the patron saint of numerous cities and institutions, including the small Italian town Mottola in the province of Taranto. In recent years, the town has been trying to find relics of their patron. [Gifts from God in His Providence - Reflections on the new Instruction on Relics](#)

“Together with the Bishop of Castellaneta, Claudio Maniago, we have searched the sanctuaries that could contain the relics of Saint Thomas,” explained Father Sario Chiarelli, the rector of the Cathedral. “The last contact was with a church of Verona that bears his name, but nothing came of it. Then, the surprise: two relics were here in Mottola, hidden in as many holy stones [altar stones]. In short, we had been searching for what we already had.”

News of the discovery came just days ahead of the Saint’s feast, on 29 December. The two relics were discovered during restoration work in the Mottola’s Cathedral, known as the “Mother Church of Holy Mary of the Assumption.”

One of the relics, in a theca closed with a lead seal, was known to exist, but its location had been lost to memory. The second, a fragment of bone, was previously unknown. It was found in a parchment dated 1884 and placed in the altar stone by the Bishop of Mottola at the time, Gaetano Bacile.

Following the discovery of the relics, both were placed in a new altar during the re-consecration of the chapel.

