

***Becket or the Honor of God***

*By Jean Anouilh*

Opens March 4, 2005

**ST. MARK'S PLAYERS**

St. Mark's Church  
3rd and A Streets, SE  
Washington, DC 20003

*Becket* is a powerful drama about the tangled relationships between Thomas Becket and King Henry II in 12<sup>th</sup> Century England. It is also about Thomas' quest to find that to which he will give his personal honor. The French playwright Jean Anouilh's script is beautifully crafted to catch the many nuances between the conquered but brilliant and educated Saxon Thomas and the much younger and less sophisticated Norman King Henry II.

Performances from March 4 through March 19<sup>th</sup> are at historic St. Mark's Church located just 3 blocks east from the U.S. Capitol Building (See last paragraph for details).

The St. Mark's Players production of *Becket* opens this Friday, March 4<sup>th</sup>. *Becket*, which won a Tony award when it ran on Broadway in 1960, is directed by Will Monahan a widely known area director and actor. Liz Williams directs fight choreography. Stage Management is by Margaret McGhee. Costume Mistress is Jo Rake, who researched and, with the help of several others, created and built—just for this production-- almost all the historically accurate costumes. The Props Team, who have brought together historically authentic props just for this show, are Susan Sedgewick, Ceci Albert and Margaret Mook, all very talented Capital Hill residents.

*Becket* is an educational show to which to bring children of 9 and older. With the recent resurgence of interest among children about the period of the Middle Ages, attending this production will give them a first hand look into the ways in which both the conquered Saxons and the ruling Normans lived. It will also illuminate a time in history when the power and wealth of the Catholic Church in England rivaled that of the kings. It was this very fact that led King Henry II to command his trusted and loyal Chancellor, Thomas Becket, to become the Archbishop of Canterbury, the head of the Church of England, in order, the King thought, to bring the Church under his command.

Chris Tully plays Thomas Becket while Michael Blackburn plays King Henry II. These two talented and experienced actors bring these two historic figures to life with great zeal. Kate Blackburn, who in fact is the mother of the King in life as well as onstage, plays the King's mother. Christine Peters, who is new to Washington, but an experienced actress, plays the Young Queen.

Following the 3:00 PM Sunday matinees on March 6 and 13 there will be a 30 minute discussion with members of the cast still in costume, including 9 year old Maddie Hartke-Weber and 10 year old Emma Herman both of whom are Capitol Hill residents. Both Emma and Maddie play multiple characters with spoken lines.

Before attending a performance with their children, we strongly recommend that parents talk with their children about the harshness of life in the 12<sup>th</sup> century including the

**brutality to the lower classes and especially women regardless of whether they were royalty or conquered people.**

**This production is the second show in the 23<sup>rd</sup> season of shows presented by the St. Mark's Players in the Nave of National Historic Landmark St. Mark's Church. The Co-Producers of this show are Ellen and Larry Cardwell. They were also the Co-Producers of last May's *1776* another of the highly successful productions for which the St. Mark's Players are well known. Ellen founded the Players and Larry served in leadership capacities for the company in the past. Each of them has produced shows that have won recognition in the annual, prestigious Ruby Griffith Competitions among many of the region's strongest community theater companies.**

**Performances of Becket are on Friday and Saturday nights, March 4, 5, 11, 12, 18, 19 at 8:00pm plus March 6 and 13 at 3:00pm. Seating commences 30 minutes before show time. Reserve your tickets now at 202-546-9670 or by going online at [www.stmarksplayers.org](http://www.stmarksplayers.org). The web-site also provides a map of the St. Mark's neighborhood and directions for getting there. Parking is on-street.**

**Group rates are available for groups of ten (10) or more people buying tickets as a block.**