

[ENGLAND]

[Petitions of the city of London, to King Henry 8, to take over unused monastic hospitals and churches (1538)]

[1] **Petition of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Commonalty of the City of London to King Henry the Eighth, in the 30th year of his reign, 1538.**

**O**ur most redoughted puyffant and myghty prynce our most drad beloved and naturall Sovereign lorde

We your poore humble and most obeyent Subject the Mayre Aldermen and Comminaltye of your Citie and chamber of London dayly confyderyng and evermore and more perceyvyng by your vertuose begynnyng and charitable procedyng in all your affayres that your majestie Royall ys the elect and chosen vessell of god by whome not alonely hys true worde ys and shalbe set forthe and utteryd accordyng to the truthe and verytie of the Same but also to be the Self Same person whome god hath constytuted and ordeignyd bothe to redresse and reforme all crimes offences and enormytyes beyng repugnant to hys doctryne or to the detryment of the common welth and hurte of poore people beyng your naturall Subject and also to See and vigilantly to provyde for the reformation of the Same

Whiche your godly and gostly mynde with your charytable procedyng yn all causes Dothe not a lytell animate and encourage us your sayd orators to sue to your grace with most humble harte for two petycions very necessary as we thynke for the common welth and the proffytt and commoditye of your Cytzynes and all other repayryng to your Cytie.

**T**he fyrst ys for the ayde and comforte of the poore Sykke blynde aged and impotent persones beyng not hable to helpe them Selfff nor havyng any place certeyn wheryn they may be lodged cherysshed and refresshed tyll they be cured and holpen of theyre dysseases and Syknesse

For the helpe of the Sayd poore people we enforme your grace that there be nere and within the Cytye of London three hospytall or Spytell

commonly called Saynt Mary Spytell Saynt Bartylmewes Spytell and Saynt Thomas Spytell and one Abbey callyd the Newe Abbey at Tower Hyll fownded of good devocion by Auncyent fathers and endowed with great possessions and rent onely for the Relyeff comforte and ayde of the poore and indygent people not beyng hable to helpe them Selfff and not to the mayntenance of preestes chanons and monks carnally lyvyng as they of late have Doon nothyng regardyng the myserable people lyeng in the Streete offendyng every clene person passyng by the way with theyre fylthye and nasty Savors

Wherefore it may please your mercyfull goodnes ever enclyned to pytie and compaffyon for the Relyef of crystes very Images creatyd to hys owne Symlytude to order and establyshe by graunte or otherwyse, by your most vertuous and Sage dyfcrecion that the mayre and hys brethren of your cytye of London or Suche other as shall stande with your most gracyous favor shall and may from hencefurthe have the order rule dysposicion and governance of all the Sayd hospytalls and Abbey with the rent and revenous apperteynyng to the Same for the onely relyeff of the poore Sykke and nedy persones trustyng that your grace shall facylye perceyve that where nowe a Smalle nombre of chanons preestes and monks be founden for theyr owne Synguler proffytt lucre and commoditye onely and not for the common utyllytye of thys your Royalme a greater nombre of poore nedy Sykke and indygent persones shall be refresshed maynteyned comforted fownde heled and cured of theyre infyrmytyes frankely and frely by phisicians Surgeons & Appotycaryes whiche shall have Stypende Salary and wages onely to attende for that entent and purpose so that all impotent persones not hable to labor shall be releved by reason of the Sayd hospytalles and Abbey and all Sturdy beggers not wylyng to labor shall be punished so that with godd grace fewe or no persones shall be Seene abroad to begge or aske almesse;

for the whyche doyng your grace shall not alonely meryt more toward god and your people than any of your most noble progenitors whiche have fownded so many Abbeys but also shall have the name of the conservator protector and defender of

[1] Journal of the Common Council of the city of London, vol 14, fo 129r, 129v, 130r; London Archives COL/CC/01/01/014. Also printed in *Memoranda, References and Documents relating to The Royal Hospitals of the City of London*, London: Reprinted by Benjamin Pardon, 1863, Appendix No 1, pp 1-4. Unknown date, but probably early in the lord mayor Sir Richard Gresham's term—perhaps 1 January 1538.

the poore people *with* theyre continuall prayer for the helth welth and prosperytie of your highnes and the noble prynce your Sonne yn honor and felycytie longe to endure

Our Second petycion ys for the avoydyng of the great Infeccion and other inconvenyency that be lyke to happen to your Cytezyns and all others repayryng to your Sayd Cytye and chamber of *London* by reason of the great multytude of people Some Sykke Some hole whiche dayly reforte to the paryshe churches *withyn* your Sayd Cytye to the great noyſance of the parysheners and Inhabytant of the Same whiche Suffyce not to receyve all the people comyng to the Sayd paryshe chyrches

For the redreſſe of the Same pleaſyth yt your highnes to call to your princely remembrance that where certayn relygyous perſones late callyd Freers fownded by the byſſhop of *Rome* hys uſurped Authoritye and not of goddes worde under color of Symplicitie and wylfull povertie have proccured them Selffes houſes churches and other places *withyn* thys your Sayd Cytye by reason of whoſe ample and large chyrches there was no provyſyon made yn the poore and ſmalle paryſhe churches for Severing of Sykke and infected perſones from the hole and Sondry people conſydering that in the chyrches of the Said Freers were maſſes erely and at all howres and the Sayd chyrches large and brode At whiche tyme the Sayd perſones infectyd dyd commonly thether reforte *without* daunger of other

Nowe Syth yt hath pleaſed god to revelle to your Maieſtye the truthe of hys bleſſyd worde and to perceyve and knowe theyr Symulate Sanctytie and covered flatteryng and accordyng to theyre demerytes lyke a moſt godly catholyke and vertuous prynce have extirped and extinct the Sayd orders of Freers to the great exaltacion of cryſtes doctryne and the abolucion of Antecriſte theyr fyrſt founder and begynner to your high lawde prayſe and commendacion ſo that nowe all the Sayd howſes and chyrches of Freers remain vacant and voy

Wherefore may yt pleaſe your grace of your moſt virtuous inclynacion whiche never Seaſyth to here the humble peticions of your Subject of to conſyder that the fowre churches of late belongyng to the Grey Blak White and Auguſtine Freers be the moſt ample churches *withyn* your Sayd Cytye (*powles* onely except) and moſte propice and mete for goddes worde to be preched in & holy

ſcripture to be redde in and alſo for all ſtrangers reſorting to your Sayd Cytye and to here maſſe yn *without* dyſturbyng of the paryſheners of the Small paryſhes

For the whiche conſyderacion and other conſyderacions partycularly Folowyng may yt pleaſe your highneſſe to gyve to the Sayd Mayre and Comynalte the churches and Scituacions and all the landes and tenement of *withyn* the precinct of the Sayd howſes lately called the Grey Blak Whyte and Auguſtine Freers And they *with* your moſt gracyous aſſent ſhall devyſe Suche an order that god ſhalbe devoutly Served *withyn* the Sayd howſes and hys holly worde truely and Sincerely preched *withyn* the Sayd churches to hys high glory and your great honor forever

The inconveniences that happen by reason there ys no ſerveyce nor maſſes ſayde *withyn* the ſayd foure churches lately belongyng to the ſayd iiij orders of freers

Fyrſt every paryſhe churche ys edyfied alonly for the paryſhe and hath aſ many of the parochianers aſ yt can convenyently conteyne

~ Alſo in the parylament or terme tyme reſorteth ſuche nombre to thys Cytye that yf every perſon reſortyng to thys Cytye ſhulde comme to the paryſhe churches the parochianers ſhulde be put owte of theyre pewes and the churche peſtered *with* people

~ Alſo wekely carryers fyſhers and otherz uſyng unfavery facions reſortyng to the Cytye dayly do peſter the churches whiche were wonte to reſorte to the places aforeſayd

~ Alſo merchants eſtrangers commyng owte of all realmes reſortyng to paryſhe churches be ſo loked and gaſed upon that neyther they nor the parochianers can ſerve god quyetly

~ Alſo yn the tyme of peſtylence for ſuche as walke and be recovered there ys no remedy but to goo to the paryſhe churches whiche were wonte to goo to the freers where ys large Rowme

~ Alſo every vittayller and purveyor can not tarry the paryſhe maſſe on the holy day becauſe yt begynnyth but at vj or vij of the klok whiche were wonte to have maſſe at v and iiij of the klok in the ſayd freers

~ Alſo noble men and gentylmen reſortyng to the Cytye can here no maſſe but yn paryſhe churches and that at howres appoynted ſo

that yo<sup>ur</sup> grace fomtyes fhall lak Attend-  
ance

~ Also bakers bruers carriours and all p<sup>er</sup>sones  
that fhulde labor yerely and fuche as come  
to the Cytie knowe where to have maffe and  
to gyve thankes to god and nowe all gentyl-  
men m<sup>er</sup>chants fstrangers and all others repay-  
ryng to the Cytie be uncer<sup>te</sup>yng where to  
reforte to here maffe for *polles* ys so peftured  
*with* people nowe yn the wynter that yt ys  
doughtfull what wyll folowe thereof yn the  
fommer

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