

Anglican dean bans Blake's 'Jerusalem'

by UPI

LONDON -- The dean of Southwark Cathedral, one of the major Anglican churches in London, has banned a popular hymn that he says is too nationalistic. The hymn is "Jerusalem," a poem by William Blake that asks if Jesus Christ was in ancient times seen on "England's pleasant pastures." The last verse goes: "I shall not sleep from mental fight, nor shall my sword rest in my hand, until we have built Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land." The Very Rev. Colin Slee, the cathedral dean, banned the hymn from a private memorial service last week, The Daily Telegraph reported. "The hymn 'Jerusalem' is often used on national occasions, although rarely in Southwark, even on such occasions," a spokesman said. "The Dean of Southwark does not believe that it is to the glory of God and it is not therefore used in private memorial services." The hymn has been banned on a number of occasions as un-Christian, nationalistic and -- in one case -- anti-urban, because it describes "dark satanic mills." Blake rejected conventional religion and sympathized with revolutionaries in France and the United States. British Prime Minister Gordon Brown has described the hymn as a favorite of his.

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