



The Chapels Royal of St Peter ad Vincula and St John the Evangelist HM Tower of London

Dear friends,

Welcome back and to the first Newsletter of 2024. I sincerely hope that you all had a good Christmas and I wish you every blessing for 2024. January is often a time to take stock, to make new resolutions and to prepare for what lies ahead. Certainly, this last week for me has been full of meetings and the need to put dates into the 2024 diary. Lots of good intentions too.....

On the 12th January we remember Aelred of Hexham and Abbot of Rievaulx (1167) and on the 13th January we remember Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, (367). Aelred was an English Cistercian monk and abbot, famous for his writings, and a traveller who wrote several books addressed to King Henry II, advising him on how to be a good King. (It was Henry II who fell out with Thomas à Becket.) Rievaulx Abbey in North Yorkshire, built in 1132, was one of the great abbeys in England until it was seized in 1538 under Henry VIII. Hilary of Poitiers (310 -367) was a Doctor of the Church and a great writer and mediator between the emerging church and the state. Married with a family, he was elected Bishop of Poitiers for his wisdom and sound leadership.

The church calendar is full of people like these, who are part of our 2000-year-old Christian history. I sometimes wonder which new people will be included in the church calendar in years to come.



Aelred of Hexham and Abbot of Rievaulx.



Rievaulx Abbey in North Yorkshire.



Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers.

Notices:

1. Can I remind all regular (and irregular) members of the congregation to get a **Chapel Pass**. All we need is a passport photo with your name clearly written on the back, and Debbie will then make up a pass. This will help you get entry into the Tower and will make life easier for the Tower staff.
2. **Confirmation.** If anyone is interested in being confirmed, then please get in touch by Wednesday 31st January. The Bishop of London will be with us on Maundy Thursday (28th March) and there will be a confirmation service at 6.15pm.

3. **Spare Winter Coats:** I am hoping to collect 20 coats or jackets for a city-wide initiative to help keep those in need warm during this winter period. Coats and jackets can be any size (including children's); the charity simply requests that the coats should be clean and in good condition. If you think you can help, then please get in touch with me first by email (Roger.Hall@hrp.org.uk) before bringing in a coat.

With my best wishes, thoughts and prayers for you all. Roger.

Poem of the Week

This beautiful poem by William Blake, and a favourite of mine, is a good reflection for the beginning of the year. The Divine Image is a poem from Songs of Innocence which was first published in 1789, followed by Songs of Experience in 1794. It portrays an ideal world, presenting four traditional Christian virtues (Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love) which exist in the human heart, connecting them with God. William Blake was a poet, painter, printmaker and writer of prophetic works who was largely unrecognised during his lifetime but is considered today to be amongst our greatest poets, perhaps best known for his poem Jerusalem, now famously sung as a hymn. Many considered him mad but he always believed he was touched by the hand of God. I often hope that the Christian virtues Blake describes are at the heart of my life.

The Divine Image

To Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
All pray in their distress;
And to these virtues of delight
Return their thankfulness.

For Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
Is God, our father dear,
And Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
Is Man, his child and care.

For Mercy has a human heart,
Pity a human face,
And Love, the human form divine,
And Peace, the human dress.

Then every man, of every clime,
That prays in his distress,
Prays to the human form divine,
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.

And all must love the human form,
In heathen, Turk, or Jew;
Where Mercy, Love, and Pity dwell
There God is dwelling too.

William Blake 1757 - 1827

**Sunday Service Details
14th January 2024**

The Second Sunday after Epiphany
0915 Holy Communion, St Peter ad Vincula
1100 Choral Matins, St Peter ad Vincula

Psalm 139: 1-5 and 12-18.

Readings

1 Samuel 3: 1-10
John 1: 43 – end

Collect for the Second Sunday after Epiphany

Almighty and everlasting God, who dost
govern all things in heaven and earth;
Mercifully hear the supplications of thy people,
and grant us thy peace all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Jigsaw

The White Tower lit up for the Tower Illumination Coronation Light Show in November 2023.
<https://www.jigsawplanet.com/?rc=play&pid=0524fbo32ae>



Early Spring snowdrops in St James Park



Prayers

Please continue to remember those on our sick list, some of whom are very ill, amongst whom we name:

Norma, Ann, Mark, Dan, Ian, Patti, Florence, Jeff and Kofi.

Please continue to pray for Ukraine, Israel and Palestine:

God of peace and justice, we pray for the people of Ukraine, Israel and Palestine today.

We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.

We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow, that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.

We pray for those with power over war or peace,
for wisdom, discernment, and compassion to guide their decisions.

Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at risk and in fear,
that you would hold and protect them.

We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of peace. Amen

With best wishes to all, Roger.



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