



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

Dear friends,

Some of you may already be familiar with the work of Evelyn Underhill, one of the foremost Anglican writers on spirituality in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In her final year (1941) she wrote *The Fruits of the Spirit*, which contains some ideas for 'LENTEN TRAINING [sic] FOR CHURCH MEMBERS.' It is very much of its time (and some of the content is more than a little surprising to us nowadays) but it contains some interesting pointers to personal conduct during Lent.

*The object of our rule of prayer is to love, worship and glorify God and if we want to do this well, we must train ourselves for His service, get ourselves in hand. Now Lent is a time specially set apart for doing this, not merely from the point of view of keeping spiritually fit but as an act of love to God. A good Lent means deliberately accepting some of the hardness and obligation, of being a Christian, going into training, giving up some of the things we find pleasant and doing other things which are an effort, giving more time and attention to essential things, trimming off superfluous things. There are three sorts of discipline which we should all try to practise in some way during Lent:*

**1. Abstinence.** *This means giving up, or reducing, our use of some superfluous things; not necessarily food, but comforts and self-indulgences, and generally bracing up and making our lives more simple and plain, and therefore more useful to God, Many of us do not realize what a hold our comforts have on us till we try to give them up. Lent abstinence means trying to give some of them up as an act of love to God.*

**2. Almsgiving.** *This means being more generous in spending money, time and trouble on other peoples' needs; and consequently, spending less on ourselves.*

**3. Prayer.** *This means more time and attention given to our communion with God, and a real effort to learn more about Him and so improve the quality of our prayer.*

*I think every member of the Prayer Group should try in this coming Lent to do something about each of these forms of self-discipline; remembering that whatever we choose to do should be (a) inconspicuous, (b) not inconvenient or irritating to other people, (c) really costing us something. We should be careful only to undertake things which we know that we can carry out. The following suggestions are merely meant to help each to make a Lenten Rule for themselves. One, or at most two from each class should, be chosen.*

### **Abstinence.**

*(1) Bodily Comforts.*

*Reduce, or stop entirely your use during Lent of one or more of the following:*

*Cigarettes. Chocolates and sweets. After-dinner coffee, Cocktails. Sherry. Hot-water bottles. Bath salts. Bath powder.*

*Reduce expenditure on cosmetics and give the money saved to charity,*

*A time-limit of five minutes on hot baths.*

*Avoid lounging, and sometimes deliberately choose an uncomfortable chair.*

*Do not linger in bed, but get up at once when called.*

*No new clothes till Easter.*

*(2) Mental Comforts.*

*Give up or reduce: Novel-reading, films, plays. Reading in bed.*

*Those who cannot relinquish any of these things for the whole of Lent might at least do so on Wednesdays and Fridays and in Holy Week.*

**Almsgiving**

*This includes, besides giving money, giving yourself, your time, and trouble i.e. in visits or letters to lonely and unattractive people, volunteering for tiresome or uninteresting jobs, in listening patiently to other people's worries, etc. All actions which help others at a real cost to ourselves are alms; and alms are gifts offered to God through His other children.*

**Prayer**

*Try, by rising earlier, to give a rather longer time to prayer. Make a point of praying for half an hour in church once a week if possible. Try to form a habit of remembering God and turning to Him during the day; especially praying for peace at noon. The Bishop of Derby has asked all church people to pray, for the maintenance in this country of a Christian spirit towards our enemies; and for the making of a just and Christian peace. The Prayer Group might make this a subject of special intercession during Lent and also say daily the Quinquagesima Collect\*.*

*Please remember that, whichever of these suggestions you choose to adopt, nothing should be done which involves fuss or strain or interferes with your ordinary duties or with health.*

*From: The Fruits of the Spirit, pages 48-50 [published in 1942, the year after her death]*

*\* O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth; Send thy Holy Ghost and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee. Grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.*

As a complete contrast, this month Bishop Sarah gave a long interview about her career to the King's Fund, which you can listen to [here](#). It is a very frank account of her journey from nursing to the episcopate and I commend it to you.

With all good wishes,

Cortland.

**Sunday Service 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2025  
The Third Sunday of Lent**

**0930** Said Holy Communion in The Chapel of St John the Evangelist in the White Tower

**Readings** Ephesians 5:1-14 and Luke 11:14-28

**Collect for the Third Sunday in Lent**

We beseech thee, Almighty God,  
look upon the hearty desires of thy humble servants,  
and stretch forth the right hand of thy Majesty,  
to be our defence against all our enemies;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## The Valasse Cross



You may like to read the following note by [Dr Charles Farris](#), Public Historian, Curatorial, Palaces & Collections Directorate, Historic Royal Palaces.

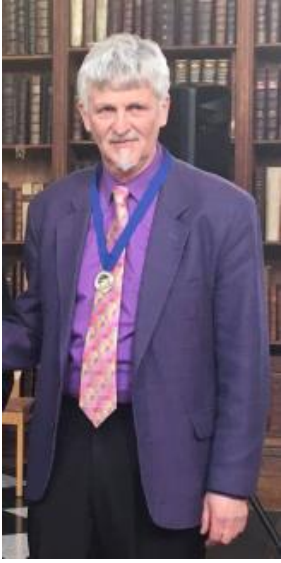
From March 2025 to January 2026, the magnificent Valasse Cross will be on display at the Tower of London. This beautiful cross is a rare example of medieval royal goldsmiths' work. The larger outer cross was probably made in Normandy in the 1180s, around the same time as the Coronation Spoon in the Crown Jewels. The smaller, older cross at the centre is associated with Empress Matilda, granddaughter of William the Conqueror. It was likely made in the 1000s.

According to tradition the cross was owned by Valasse Abbey, which Empress Matilda (1102–67), founded in Normandy. Matilda was almost the first ruling Queen of England after her father named her heir. Matilda's cousin Stephen seized the throne, beginning a civil war known as the Anarchy. Matilda was never crowned but secured the throne for her son, the future Henry II. Henry likely gifted the cross to Valasse Abbey.

The cross may have been carried in religious processions or used as an altar cross. The cross contains a relic of the 'True Cross', set at the front in wax. Relics were an important part of medieval religion. Medieval English kings and queens had large collections of relics which were used in ceremonies in chapels like St John's.

The 'Valasse Cross' is a special loan from the Musée des Antiquités (Rouen Métropole Normandie) in France. The loan has been made possible thanks to the generous support of The Syder Foundation.

## Lent Book



As Roger has mentioned here before, he recommends as a Lent book this year *Living with the Psalms* by John Bell. Bell is a writer, broadcaster and musician, as well as a prolific hymn-writer, with a passion for social justice and inclusion. He was part of the Iona Community for over 40 years and regularly speaks on Radio 4's Thought for the Day, as well as continuing to write for the Iona Community offshoot Wild Goose Publications. In 2018 he received a Lambeth Award – the Thomas Cranmer Award for Worship - and the citation noted that, “John Bell has made an outstanding contribution in terms of Christian worship, witness and social action.” His book on the Psalms is described thus: ‘John explores the Psalms as they relate to daily life, drawing on stories and personal testimonies to help us to rejoice, grieve or draw encouragement from this most extraordinary and fascinating collection of sacred poems and songs’. It is accessible, enjoyable and a very suitable book for Lenten reading.

## Prayer of the week: A Prayer of St John of the Cross

St. John of the Cross (San Juan de la Cruz) (1542 – 91) was a Spanish Roman Catholic priest, mystic, and Carmelite friar of *Converso* ancestry [that is, descended from converts from Judaism]. He was mentored by, and corresponded with, the older Carmelite nun Saint Teresa of Ávila. Both his poetry and his studies on the development of the soul, particularly his *Noche Oscura* [*Dark Night of the Soul*], are considered the summit of mystical Christian literature and among the greatest works of all Spanish literature. In his writings, he stressed stillness and contemplation in prayer, as a means of being open to God's word. In *Sayings of Light and Love*, he wrote, “*The Father spoke a Word; that Word was his Son; and this word speaks always in eternal silence; and in silence it must be heard by the soul.*” This translation of one of his prayers brings out the importance of contemplative silence for St John of the Cross.

O Blessed Jesus, grant me stillness of soul in Thee.

Let Thy mighty calmness reign in me. Rule me, O thou King of gentleness, King of peace.

Give me control, control over my words, thoughts and actions.

From all irritability, want of meekness, want of gentleness, O dear Lord, deliver me.

By thine own deep patience give me patience, stillness of soul in Thee.

Make me in this, and in all, more and more like Thee. Amen.



## **Music: God so loved the world by Bob Chilcott (born 1955)**

Bob Chilcott is among the most important composers of choral music in Britain today. Having been a Choral Scholar at King's College, Cambridge, he joined the King's Singers, one of the leading vocal ensembles in the world. Since leaving the King's Singers, he has devoted himself to directing and composing.

*God so loved the world* was commissioned for the wonderfully named *Lovers Lane United Methodist Sanctuary Choir* in Dallas, Texas. A worthy alternative to the well-known version by John Stainer, the simplicity of writing eschews sentimentality but is nevertheless very emotive. Presented as a simple prayer, the piece begins with a mantra-like rhythm. The introduction of a soprano soloist for the second iteration of the text serves to heighten the musical expressivity, ultimately bringing this little gem to a close in the major key, full of hope and optimism.

The text is:

*God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoso believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* (John 3, v.16)

## **Jigsaw**

This week's picture is of the Valasse Cross described above. You can find the jigsaw [here](#).



## **Prayers**

Please continue to remember those on our sick list, some of whom are very ill, amongst whom we name: Stanley, John, Mark, Rob, Kofi, David, Val and His Holiness Pope Francis.

## **RIP**

Ron Owen (Priest), Michael Crosby and Arnold Scott.

## **Please continue to pray for Ukraine and the countries of the Middle East:**

God of peace and justice, we pray for the people of Ukraine and the Middle East 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.

This we pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of peace. Amen.

With best wishes to all, Cortland.



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## **Our Safeguarding Officer**

Dan Hawkins, Tower of London Operations Manager [Dan.Hawkins@hrp.org.uk](mailto:Dan.Hawkins@hrp.org.uk)

## **Donations to the Chapel**

We are always grateful for financial contributions to help us in our work. If you would like to support the Chapels Royal, HM Tower of London by setting up a Standing Order, making a one-off donation to Chapel Funds or setting up a Direct Debit, this is how to do it.

### **Thank you in advance for your generosity.**

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**Thank you again for your generosity.**

# The HM Tower of London Chapels Royal Foundation



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Use the information below to set up online, or return the completed form to your bank.

Please remit to: CAF Bank plc	Sort code	<b>40-52-40</b>
	Account number	<b>00027597</b>
	Account name	The HM Tower of London Chapels Royal Foundation
	Reference	[ <i>your initials and surname</i> ]



## The HM Tower of London Chapels Royal Foundation



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