



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

Dear friends,

Lent has now begun and perhaps already someone has asked you what you are giving up. Rather as pancakes on Shrove Tuesday have become detached, in the secular imagination, from their original connection with eating up rich foods before the start of the penitential season of Lent, so the idea of 'giving up something for Lent' seems to linger on in the collective imagination but only as a shadow of its former religious self. It seems to be associated with a vague idea that giving something up is good for you (which may be true) but I suspect that it will soon be eclipsed in popular culture by 'dry January' (giving up alcohol after the presumed excesses of December) and Veganuary (giving up rich food and especially meat products as a way of cleansing the system). What both these modern versions of abstinence lack is any sense that they are preparations for something else. Giving up alcohol or going vegan for a month become ends in themselves, entirely directed at our own health and wellbeing. Lent, on the other hand, is essentially a time of preparation for the events of Holy Week, culminating in the joyful celebration of Easter. The idea of giving something up for Lent is a small way of encouraging us into a spiritual discipline and, at the same time, making Easter treats all the sweeter.

We sometimes use the verb 'to sacrifice' as if it were synonymous with 'to give up'. I have heard it used like this at budget meetings: '*We have to make 10% savings; what are we going to sacrifice?*' This is an interesting example of how words change their meanings. The Latin verb '*sacrificare*' simply means 'to make sacred'. Thus, an animal slaughtered for God (or for the gods) is thereby made sacred. To offer something that really matters to you – and remember how valuable bulls were in the ancient world – was to make sacred something that you genuinely prized. To do so, you had to give up something in order to make the sacrifice. You see how, in time, the idea of giving something up came almost to redefine the verb 'to sacrifice' and the noun 'a sacrifice'. Knowing that this is where the word comes from may enable us to look at giving something up for Lent in a new light. Rather than necessarily abstaining from something – especially if that 'giving up' doesn't really make much difference to us – we might think in terms of making something sacred. That could be to take something on, such as visiting a difficult relative or friend or helping someone in need - and making that action an offering to God, that is, making it sacred.

That said, there remains value in even small acts of abstinence during Lent. Each time we do not drink that cup of coffee or glass of whisky (or whatever our chosen abstinence may be) we may consider not so much the trivial act in itself but rather the purpose which lies behind it: namely, preparation for Holy Week and Easter. To remember that we are doing it for that purpose makes it sacred. In other words, it becomes a true sacrifice.

With all good wishes, Cortland.

**Sunday Service Details for 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2026**  
**The First Sunday in Lent**  
**0930 Said Holy Communion in the Chapel of St John the Evangelist**  
**in the White Tower**

Readings: 2 Corinthians 6:1-10 and Matthew 4:1-11

O LORD, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights;  
Give us grace to use such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the Spirit,  
we may ever obey thy godly motions in righteousness, and true holiness, to thy honour and glory,  
who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost,  
one God, world without end. Amen.

**Poem of the week: Disclosure by Ann Lewin**

Ann Lewin is a contemporary British poet who is also much in demand as a retreat leader. Now retired, she was a secondary school teacher (RE and English) for 27 years, and later Welfare Adviser for International Students at the University of Southampton. She has also worked tutoring ordinands at Sarum College. This piece, *Watching for the Kingfisher*, is from her book of the same name. Like many of her poems, it is quite short; some are even shorter. The language here is simple and even colloquial. There is no rhyme scheme. You could argue that it only qualifies as a poem because it is set out like one on the page, whereas it could be read as prose. There is something in that, but the way in which it is formatted does reinforce the meaning of the words. For example, the word 'Wait' is given its own line, followed by white space, suggesting silence and, indeed, waiting. The same is true of the word 'Expectancy', where the white space suggests a pause and, again, silence – even suspense. The poem is, of course, about prayer. Substitute 'God' for the Kingfisher and see what that does to the sense. Being still, being quiet, being patient, being open to God – as suggested subtly in this poem – may be helpful ideas for this Lent.

**Disclosure**

Prayer is like watching for the  
Kingfisher. All you can do is  
Be where he is likely to appear, and  
Wait.

Often, nothing much happens;  
There is space, silence and  
Expectancy.

No visible sign, only the  
Knowledge that he's been there  
And may come again.

Seeing or not seeing cease to matter,  
You have been prepared.

But when you've almost  
Stopped expecting it,  
A flash of brightness  
Gives encouragement.

**Ann Lewin (contemporary)**

## Music: Kyrie from Missa Brevissima in Tempore COVID by Colm Carey

I wrote this Mass during the Covid lockdown. It was envisaged to be performed by just 4 singers, as we were singing services in a socially distanced way, and was deliberately short so as to minimise the time we were in contact with each other.

It's interesting for me to listen to this music a few years later. At an emotional level it conveys what I (with, indeed, many others) was experiencing during lockdown - a sense of isolation, bewilderment, disconnection, dis-ease, fear for the future, and a feeling of being in suspended animation. It is in a dark key; it's very stark and angular; it repetitively uses the interval of a semitone, a musical device often employed to depict pain; it is intense and frustrated. A lone voice ends the movement, eschewing any sense of finality, leaving the listener hanging. When was this all going to end?

Kyrie eleison.  
Christe eleison.  
Kyrie eleison.

Lord have mercy.  
Christ have mercy.  
Lord have mercy.

**Music bonus track** Charlie Baigent, a bass in our choir, has kindly made a short video to give an insight into what our choir members do when they are not at the Tower: [A Day in Lyon](#) .

## Beano - Mischief at the Tower of London

This February half term, Beano's travelling through time!

When Dennis, Minnie, Harsha, Rubi and Gnasher are late for a school trip to the Tower, they turn their go-kart into a time machine. It doesn't quite go to plan, and the pals find themselves flying through time and crash landing at the Tower - warping time and space in the process.



**Jigsaw** This week's picture is of a kingfisher, picking up the image in the Ann Lewin poem 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: Ciara, Louise, Stanley, John, Rob, Kofi, Nick, John, Donald, Christopher and Brian.

**22 February 2026 marks the fourth anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.**

**Please continue to pray for peace in 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.



The Reverend Cortland Fransella  
Assistant priest, Chapels Royal, HM Tower of London  
Deputy Priest in Ordinary to HM the King  
[Cortland.Fransella@hrp.org.uk](mailto:Cortland.Fransella@hrp.org.uk)

### **Our Safeguarding Officer**

Anna Kimber, Deputy Governor and Head of Operations, HM Tower of London: [Anna.Kimber@hrp.org.uk](mailto:Anna.Kimber@hrp.org.uk) Telephone: 07785 954549.

## **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.**

**STANDING ORDER.** This is our preferred method because it ensures that we get maximum benefit from your contributions in the timeliest manner. If you would like to set up a Standing Order, you should be able to do this online with your bank, using the following details:

Bank name: **CAF Bank plc**

Sort code: **40-52-40**

Account number: **00027597**

Account name: **The HM Tower of London Chapels Royal Foundation**

Reference: *[your initials and surname]*.

If you prefer to set up the Standing Order by hard copy, please complete the Standing Order form below and send it to your bank.

In either case, please be sure to complete the Gift Aid Form below if you are an eligible UK taxpayer, as this increases the amount of your donation by 25% at no additional cost to you. Please send the completed Gift Aid Form to the address on the form: *The Chapel Administrator, 1 Tower Green, Tower of London, London, EC3N 4AB* or scan it and send it as an e-mail attachment to: [TowerofLondonChapelAdministrator@hrp.org.uk](mailto:TowerofLondonChapelAdministrator@hrp.org.uk).

**ONE-OFF DONATION.** You can make a one-off donation online by clicking on [this link](#) or pointing the camera of your phone or tablet at this QR Code



and following the link which then pops up. If you are eligible for Gift Aid, please tick the relevant box and provide the required details on the CAF Bank online form. These two links are also available on our website [here](#).

**DIRECT DEBIT.** It is also possible to use the links above to set up a Direct Debit if that is what you prefer.

If you are an eligible UK taxpayer using the CAF Bank website via the links above to make either a one-off donation or to set up a Direct Debit, please remember to tick the Gift Aid box on the CAF site form. This method of Gift Aid payment does entail some delay in our receiving the benefit – hence our preference for Standing Orders. Gift Aid is available only to eligible UK taxpayers.

If you would also like to give to the Music Fund known as the Chapel Music Friends, please click [here](#).

Please note that Standing Orders and Direct Debits can be set up only from accounts with banks in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man. One-off payments may be made from anywhere in the world, using the card or PayPal options on the CAF Bank website from the links above.

Please see below for the Standing Order and Gift Aid forms.

**Thank you again for your generosity.**

# The HM Tower of London Chapels Royal Foundation



## Standing Order

### Standing Order

If you have an online banking facility, you should be able to use that to set up a Standing Order with the information in the box below. If not, please complete the form and send it to your bank.

To: The Manager, \_\_\_\_\_ [*Name of your bank*] [*Address*  
of \_\_\_\_\_ [*Address* \_\_\_\_\_ of  
bank] [*Sort code*] \_\_\_\_\_ [*Account No.*] \_\_\_\_\_

Please remit £ \_\_\_\_\_ to the account detailed below commencing on

\_\_\_\_\_ [*date*] and monthly / annually [*delete one*] until further notice.

[*Signature*] \_\_\_\_\_ [*Date of signing*] \_\_\_\_\_

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



### Gift Aid

#### Charity Gift Aid Declaration – Multiple donations

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is required to identify you as a current UK taxpayer. In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box below.

I want to Gift Aid my donation of £ \_\_\_\_\_ and any donation I make in the future or have made in the last four years to The HM Tower of London Chapels Royal Foundation.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in the tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. *If this does not apply, please strike through and continue with the rest of this form.*

My details: Title\_\_\_ First name or initials \_\_\_\_\_

Surname\_\_\_ Home Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Post Code \_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No \_\_\_\_\_ Signature\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please notify the charity if you:

- want to cancel this declaration
- change your name or home address
- no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment Tax Return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Please post, or return to:

*The Chapel Administrator, 1 Tower Green, Tower of London, London, EC3N 4AB.*

or send as an e-mail attachment to:

[TowerofLondonChapelAdministrator@hrp.org.uk](mailto:TowerofLondonChapelAdministrator@hrp.org.uk)

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