



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

Dear friends,

This coming Sunday, the chapel choir will be performing **John Stainer's *Crucifixion*** in place of Choral Matins. This is an appropriate piece for Passion Sunday during this Lenten season, that is, closer to The Cross and Easter. *The Crucifixion* is a meditation on the Sacred Passion of the Holy Redeemer and is an oratorio composed by John Stainer (1840–1901) in 1887. It is scored in 20 movements for choir and organ, and features solos for bass and tenor. Stainer intended the piece to be within the scope of most parish church choirs and includes five hymns for congregational participation. Its structure is clearly modelled on the scheme of the choruses, chorales, recitatives and arias of Bach's St Matthew Passion, which in 1873 Stainer had introduced into the music for Holy Week at St Paul's Cathedral.



Sir John Stainer



St Marylebone Parish Church

Written for St Marylebone Parish Church where Stainer's former pupil William Hodge was organist, *The Crucifixion* was first performed there on 24 February 1887, the day after Ash Wednesday, where a choir of boys and men was directed by Stainer himself, with the organ accompaniment provided by Hodge. There have been performances in St Marylebone Parish Church every year since then; Stainer's *Crucifixion* continues to be performed by choirs today, as part of the repertoire of choral music for Passiontide and Easter. I hope that as many of you as possible will be able to come and join us on Sunday for this performance.

Thank you for the generous donations that have already been made towards this year's Easter flowers. There is still time to make a contribution, which can be in memory of a loved one.

With best wishes, thoughts and prayers, Roger.

Sunday Service Details for 17th March 2024
The Fifth Sunday in Lent or Passion Sunday

0915 Holy Communion, St Peter ad Vincula
1100 Stainer's *Crucifixion*, St Peter ad Vincula

Please note: On Palm Sunday, 24th March, we will meet outside the RRF HQ at **1045** for our procession of witness.

Musical Chairs

A Note 🎵 from the Maser of Music.

Hello everyone!



It is with great sadness that I pass on the news that Christian Wilson will be leaving us on Easter Day.

Christian has been playing the organ for us for well over a decade and has made an enormous contribution to the musical life of the Chapels. We have been extremely fortunate to have such a fabulous organist, imbued with deep musical understanding and sensitivity, as part of the team at the Tower for so long. We will miss him greatly.

I am delighted Christian has been appointed Director of Music at Keble College, Oxford - a post he took up in September 2023 - with the opportunity to develop the music of such an esteemed institution. He is also getting married to Mary in September, so it is an exciting year for him both professionally and personally.

I do hope you will be able to attend our celebration of Easter on March 31 and bid a hearty farewell to Christian at the same time.

Poem of the Week

I make no apology for again choosing Dietrich Bonhoeffer's poem *Who am I?* since its words are very appropriate as we move towards Passion Sunday. Jesus, facing his eventual death on the cross in Jerusalem reminds us now of so many other people facing their own crosses: the people of Ukraine, the Gaza strip, Sudan and other war-torn places in the world. Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-45) grew up in a highly-educated family at the heart of Berlin's cultural elite. Ordained a Lutheran pastor, he quickly made a name for himself as a promising theologian, and his books and writings are now considered modern classics.

Bonhoeffer was a founding member of The Confessing Church, a movement within German Protestantism after the Nazis came to power, opposing government attempts to unify all Protestant churches into a single pro-Nazi German Evangelical Church. When the Nazis passed laws forbidding people of Jewish ancestry from holding office in the church, Bonhoeffer wrote that this was completely incompatible with the Christian faith. He staunchly resisted the Nazi dictatorship, including vocally opposing Hitler's genocidal persecution of the Jews and programme of euthanasia. Because of this, he came into further conflict with the authorities. He was imprisoned in 1943 for eighteen months, and then transferred to Flossenburg concentration camp, where he

was hanged on April 9th, 1945 on suspicion of his involvement in the plot to assassinate Hitler on July 20th, 1944.

Bonhoeffer wrote a great deal whilst in prison, and his book *Letters and Papers from Prison*, a collection of theological writings, correspondence and poems, is still read and referred to today. His poem *Who am I?* which is best experienced by being read aloud, expresses his anguished thoughts and beliefs during that time. Although outwardly he appeared calm and brave, inwardly he was fearful and constantly anxious. This poem explores and reflects those feelings in detail, ending with two wonderful lines:

*'Who am I? They mock me, these lonely questions of mine.
Whoever I am, thou knowest, O God, I am thine.'*

Who am I?

Who am I? They often tell me
I would step from my cell's confinement
calmly, cheerfully, firmly,
like a squire from his country house.

Who am I? They often tell me
I would talk to my warders
freely and friendly and clearly,
as though it were mine to command.

Who am I? They also tell me
I bore the days of misfortune
equably, smilingly, proudly,
like one accustomed to win.

Am I then really all that which other men tell of?
Or am I only what I know of myself,
restless and longing and sick, like a bird in a cage,
struggling for breath, as though hands were compressing my throat,
yearning for colours, for flowers, for the voices of birds,
thirsting for words of kindness, for neighbourliness,
trembling with anger at despotism and petty humiliation,
tossing in expectation of great events,
powerlessly trembling for friends at an infinite distance,
weary and empty at praying, at thinking, at making,
faint, and ready to say farewell to it all?

Who am I? This or the other?
Am I one person today, and tomorrow another?
Am I both at once? A hypocrite before others,
and before myself a contemptibly woebegone weakling?
Or is something within me still like a beaten army,
fleeing in disorder from a victory already achieved?

Who am I? They mock me, these lonely questions of mine.
Whoever I am, thou knowest, O God, I am thine.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer 1906-45



Easter Flowers

As in previous years, we are collecting money for Easter Flowers.

If you would like to donate towards the flowers, please bring either cash or a cheque with you on Sunday, or you can send a cheque to me at the address at the end of the newsletter.

Flowers are often given in memory of people who have died, and these names will be remembered at Easter.

Thank you.

‘Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross’ performed by the London Haydn Quartet

Tuesday 26th March 2024, 7pm

One of the world’s leading period instrument string quartets, The London Haydn Quartet was born out of a passion for Haydn. They have received invitations to many of the world's most important concert series and venues, including the Wigmore Hall, Carnegie Hall and Sydney Opera House. Their complete series of recordings of Haydn’s quartets on the Hyperion label have met with international critical acclaim.

Haydn's ‘Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross’ is one of his most enduring works. Originally an orchestral work commissioned for Good Friday, this popular transcription for string quartet was made by Haydn himself. Following the recent release of the London Haydn Quartet's recording of the work, the Tower of London presents them live in concert at the Chapel Royal of St. Peter ad Vincula.

Tickets available at – https://tickets.hrp.org.uk/hrp_b2c/palace.html?eventcode=TLCHAP



Our Congregation

On Sunday we had our final Lent Lunch. Thank you to everyone who was able to attend, and to all of those that volunteered to help each week. Donations received £385 which will go towards the Whitechapel Mission, the Bishop of London's Lent Charity. Thankyou.



Jigsaw

The White Tower in the golden sunshine.

<https://www.jigsawplanet.com/?rc=play&pid=3e958b6a285d>



Tracy's Garden – Daffodils



Prayers

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

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

RIP

Malcolm Weisman

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.



1 Tower Green
HM Tower of London
EC3N 4AB
07908 413045
Roger.Hall@hrp.org.uk
Twitter @RogerHall53