



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

Dear friends,

At a recent service in which I took part, the Gospel reading of the day was Matthew 5:38-42, in which Jesus refers his hearers to the familiar saying 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'. Jesus's quotation in that Matthew passage would most immediately have brought to the minds of the first listeners the 21st Chapter of Exodus, verses 23-25: *If any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe*, a precept to be found also in Leviticus 24 and Deuteronomy 19. Modern scholarship has established that this principle – known as the *lex talionis* – dates back to the Laws of the Babylonian ruler Hammurabi around 1780 BC. Whilst to our ears it may sound harsh, in fact it represented a major moderation of the tradition by which retribution for wrongs knew no limits: if one person offended, that person's whole family might be exterminated (a practice followed in our own time, incidentally, by Saddam Hussein). By contrast, the *lex talionis* insisted on a degree of what lawyers call proportionality. Even so, it is a tough rule - in the sense that, in the words that W S Gilbert put into the mouth of the Mikado, the punishment should fit the crime. It surely still underlies the thinking behind the imposition of the death penalty for murder: for taking a life you must forfeit your own. Our Lord must have astonished his hearers by repudiating that principle. Tit-for-tat is so deeply ingrained in our psyches, from the playground onwards, that some of his listeners doubtless thought he had taken leave of his senses.

A fundamental flaw in the consequences of following the *lex talionis* is the tacit assumption that, once the eye or tooth (or hand or foot) has been taken, honour is satisfied and social balance somehow reestablished. Human history tells us otherwise. Notoriously, the *lex talionis* leads to vendettas – to repeated reciprocal acts of hatred down the generations in a futile attempt to right past wrongs, whether real or perceived. Quite apart from the objection to capital punishment that it can lead (and demonstrably has led) to the killing of innocent people wrongly convicted of crimes which they did not commit, there is the question as to what purpose may be served by punishing people, however guilty, if no serious attempt is made to rehabilitate offenders. Prisons then become schools of crime for those made to feel that they have no place in society. Our Lord's exhortation to turn the other cheek should perhaps not be read as some bizarre encouragement to tolerate wrongdoing but perhaps as a rejection of vengeance so that all might benefit. Might we see a progression from unbridled violence (before Hammurabi), via tit-for-tat (the *lex talionis*), through a refusal to avenge (turn the other cheek), to restorative justice – a move from, 'Whom are you trying to punish – and how hard?' to 'What is best for all concerned – for society as a whole, including the victims?'

For some it will seem too much of a stretch to go from 'turn the other cheek' to a fundamental reform of the justice system aimed at returning people to society as useful citizens, rather than locking them up in conditions bound to deprave them. Nonetheless, if we are to take our Lord's words seriously and not regard them as simply pious platitudes, we are bound to make the effort to build a society based on his values. I think this is called working for the coming of the Kingdom of God.

With all good wishes, Cortland.

**Service details for Sunday 21st June, the Third Sunday after Trinity
0915 Said Holy Communion in the Chapel St Peter ad Vincula
1115 Choral Matins in the Chapel of St Peter ad Vincula**

Responses: Ebdon

Psalm 86:1-10.

Te Deum: Ireland

Anthem: Greater love (Ireland)

Readings: Genesis 21:8-21 and Matthew 10:24- 39.

Hymns 346, 393, 466,

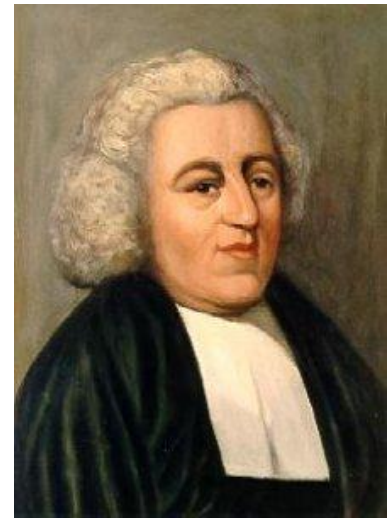
Voluntary: Fideles (Whitlock)

Collect for the Third Sunday after Trinity

O LORD, we beseech thee mercifully to hear us;
and grant that we, to whom though hast given an hearty desire to pray,
may be comforted in all dangers and adversities;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Poem of the week: Kindly Spring by John Newton

John Newton (1725-1807) is the author of a number of popular hymns, such as *Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken*, *How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds* and, perhaps the best known, *Amazing Grace*. He led a remarkable life. He went to sea at a young age and worked on slave ships in the Atlantic slave trade for several years. In 1745, he himself became a slave of Princess Peye, the wife of a white slaver and herself a woman of the Sherbro people in what is now Sierra Leone. After suffering ill-treatment at her hands, Newton was rescued and, on the voyage home, underwent a profound conversion to Christianity. Nevertheless, he returned to the slave trade and captained several slave ships. After retiring from active seafaring, he continued to invest in the slave trade. Some years after his conversion, however, Newton renounced his trade and became a prominent supporter of abolitionism. Now an evangelical, Newton was ordained as a Church of England cleric, served as parish priest at Olney, Buckinghamshire, for two decades and wrote many hymns. Newton lived to see the British Empire's abolition of the African slave trade in 1807, just months before his death.



Kindly Spring is one of his many hymns, usually sung to the simple German tune *Da Christus geboren war*. Like other hymns, with their regular metres and rhyme schemes, it can be read as a poem. Newton had undergone great suffering during his life, including being lashed to a grating and flogged for insubordination after being pressed into the Royal Navy, not to mention his experiences as a slave himself. Although his hymns were written in the relative peace and comfort of Olney, it seems reasonable to assume that he remained profoundly marked by the physical and mental sufferings which he had undergone, as well as by profound spiritual remorse for his previous life as a slaver. It does not seem fanciful to imagine that he may have had moments of deep despair in which, to take words from the poem, his soul drooped and he seemed dead. Whilst the first two verses paint a picture of springtime beauty, the second half of this poem is a cry *de profundis* – from the depths – to his ever-merciful and healing God.

Kindly Spring

Kindly spring again is here,
Trees and fields in bloom appear;
Hark! the birds with artless lays
Warble their creator's praise.

Where in winter all was snow,
Now the flowers in clusters grow;
And the corn, in green array,
Promises a harvest-day.

Lord, afford a spring to me,
Let me feel like what I see;
Speak, and by Thy gracious voice,
Make my drooping soul rejoice.

On Thy garden deign to smile,
Raise the plants, enrich the soil;
Soon Thy presence will restore
Life to what seemed dead before.

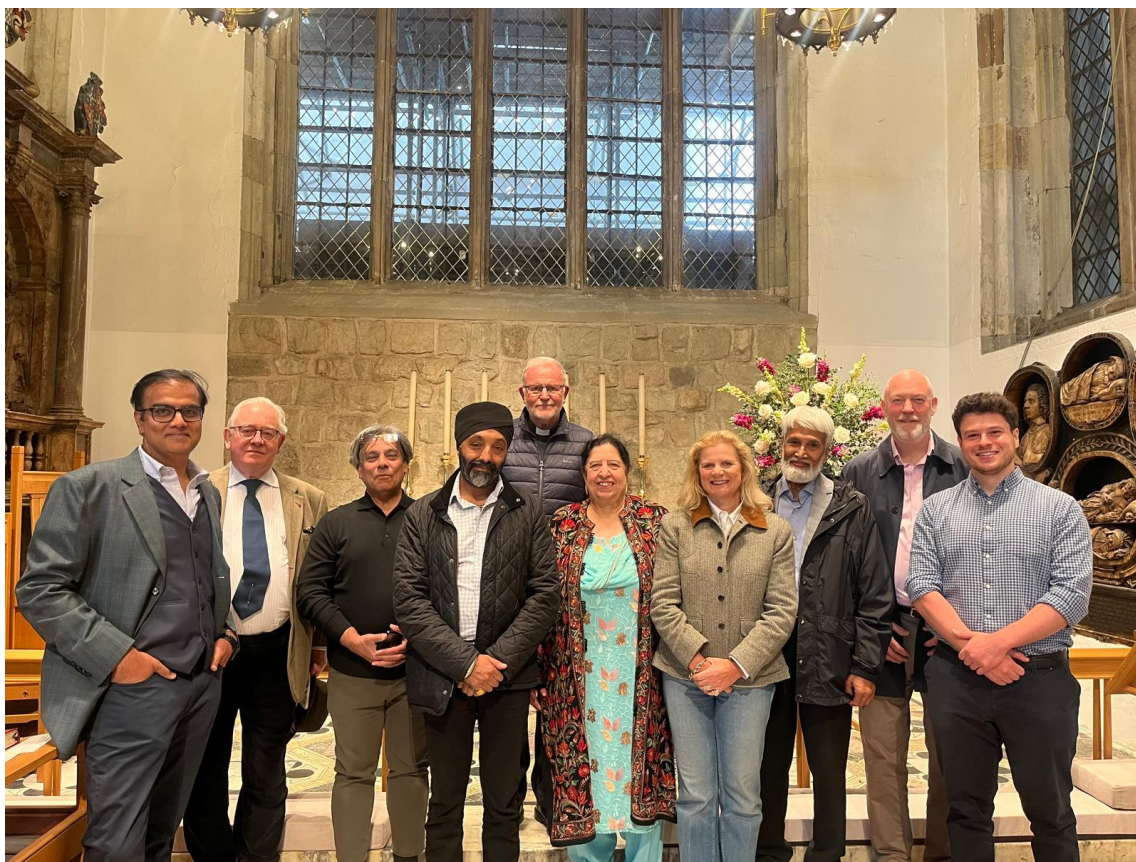
John Newton (1725-1807)

Our congregation.

On Sunday 14th June Roger baptised his granddaughter Imogen in the Chapel of St Peter ad Vincula. From left to right below are YW Nev Dednum, Imogen, parents Richard and Erykah, Freddie, Georgia and Roger.



On 9th June Canon Roger Hall and Geraldine (whom you may recognise from our congregation, fourth from right) hosted a visit from the Greater London Lieutenancy's Faith & Belief Forum.



Jigsaw This week's picture is of the Church of St Peter and St Paul, Olney, Buckinghamshire, where John Newton is buried. 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: Louise, Rob, Kofi, Nick, John, Chris and Howard.

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

Our Safeguarding Officer

Anna Kimber, Deputy Governor and Head of Operations, HM Tower of London: 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.

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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.

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

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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

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To: The Manager, _____ [*Name of your bank*] [*Address*
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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	40-52-40
	Account number	00027597
	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.*

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