

## Stewardship Sunday 2/4 – Theme: Service

### Address by Richard McCauley

My name is Richard McCauley and along with Susy Rodriguez and Gordon Furry I am one of the staff who Father Peter refers to as *the Welcome Ministry* because it is our responsibility to look after the people who visit St Bartholomew the Great.

I have been asked to speak about Service and the idea of *Looking after People* is central to this and to what I see as a '*Mission*', but this is not just a one way street.

It is very true that *we need the people* who visit us. The cost of keeping St Bartholomew the Great going is astronomical and we need visitor income to help with this.

Just look at how difficult is to change a lightbulb, (*as I take my light pen and point to the spotlights at the top of the Late Twelfth Century Crossing!*) .....To change the lights here you need a contract with Spiderman!

But, seriously, when see how much pleasure, this Church gives to the people who come here, it is very clear that *People need this Church as much as we need them* and I see this every day I work here.

So I would like to suggest that we have a mission and a challenge to help find more people and to introduce them to this wonderful church and its amazing story.

I want to talk to you about three people who have visited the Church over the last couple of years because they each tell us something about our mission.

Firstly, I will tell you about a Teacher, called Michael Stuchbery who visited the church in 2015 and was just aghast at the beauty of this Church and the wealth of historical image and artefact.

Michael told me that it would be far easier for him to teach children about history by bringing them to a place like St Bartholomew the Great, than by asking them open their textbooks at page 104.

I will show you what I think he means.

Just compare the Tomb of Rahere, which dates back to 1405 to the tomb of Walter Mildmay, Chancellor of the Exchequer, to Queen Elizabeth 1<sup>st</sup> and of course a Tudor. Mildmay was entombed in 1589.

Rahere's Tomb, suggests so much *reverence* (we see the Canons praying to Rahere) but Mildmay's tomb, gives you a sense of the brashness of the Tudors because it is, highly decorated and more like a throne.

Just by comparing the tombs you can see the dramatic effects of the Reformation and how Mans relationship to the Church and to God changed dramatically within a period of less than 200 years.

Michael told me that if we were able to raise our profile with Schools, we would get a lot of interest and could charge for Educational Visits, but our challenge is that *at the moment we don't have the resources to raise our profile....*

So this is the sort of thing, which if you are interested, we need some help with.

Let me tell you about another visitor who came to the church couple of years ago.

This was a lady from the University of the Third Age. Some of you may have heard of the U3A but for those of you who haven't, The U3A is a nationwide network of open universities for retired people.

There are many people who see retirement as a wonderful opportunity to pursue an interest like architecture, poetry, or history and the lady from the University of the Third Age told me that the U3A have newsletters which are shared across the network, but *“we don't ever hear anything about St Bartholomew the Great!”*

So once again if we raise our profile we will find people like the University of the Third Age who will want to come and see us.

Finally, let me tell you about an American lady who came to the church only two weeks ago. This lady had been to the church many times and was clearly overjoyed to be back.

Our American visitor said “Walking in here is like stepping back into the 12th century” and she had brought with her a friend who was of course, amazed.

The lady's friend also told me that she would be going on Twitter to advertise us.

The third story is satisfying because you can see the effect this place has on people and you also see that people will help us to spread the word...if we help them in the first place.

So I have given you some idea of what I see as our mission: ‘Church Needs People, who Need Church’. If you can help us in our efforts to introduce the church to more people then you yourselves will have performed a truly wonderful service.

***Richard McCauley***