

The Chantry Chapel of S. Leonard

[The Blessed Sacrament Chapel]

THIS CHAPEL IS SET APART FOR PRIVATE PRAYER

Here we have the only intact survivor of several Chantry Chapels which once adorned the Church; it is dedicated to St. Leonard, the patron saint of prisoners and pregnant women.

The chapel was built in the 15th Century at the orders of Sir John Elmes (d.1460) of nearby Bolney Court, who was a very successful merchant in the town. He had the chapel built as a chantry, in which masses were to be said daily by a priest for the souls of himself and his family, who now lie buried beneath the floor.

The three canopied niches once held the statues of St Leonard, St John the Baptist, and St Mary; the icons which now adorn the niches were painted by local artist Clive Hemsley, and depict St Leonard (in the single niche), St Catherine (to the left of the altar) and St John the Baptist (to the right of the altar).

The fine windows are by the Edwardian artist J. C. Bewsey – note the smiling face of King Balthazar, and the bells on the angels' toes in the small trefoil windows above!

To the right of the altar, the Blessed Sacrament – the consecrated Bread and Wine of the Eucharist which Christians hold to be the spiritual Body and Blood of Christ – is reserved.

In the Eucharist, Jesus fulfils his promise to be 'with us always, even to the end of time', and he nourishes us in Holy Communion with that Body and Blood he gave for us on the Cross on the first Good Friday. We believe that 'on the third day he rose again from the dead', and so he lives on, through Communion, not only with God the Father in heaven, but in us, reminding us of the glory he will share with us all.

O God, who in a wonderful Sacrament has left to us a memorial of your Son's Cross and Passion; grant that we may so venerate the sacred mysteries of his Body and Blood, that we may ever see within ourselves the fruits of his Redemption. Amen.