

UK vicar invokes God's blessing on BlackBerrys

January 11 2010, By RAPHAEL G. SATTER , Associated Press Writer



The Rev. Canon David Parrott blesses computers and mobile phones on the altar of the 17th-century St Lawrence Jewry Church, in the City of London, Monday, Jan. 11, 2010, in an effort, he said, to remind the capital's busy office workers that God's grace can reach them in many ways. The short blessing capped services at the Christopher Wren-designed building - the official church of the Corporation of the City of London, which runs the capital's bustling financial district. Parishioners took out cell phones as Parrott recited a blessing over them and their electronic devices.(AP Photo/Sang Tan)

(AP) -- God bless this BlackBerry. A venerable British church has done what e-mail addicts and workaholics have been doing for years - invoking the Almighty's blessing on their high-tech gadgets.

The Rev. Canon David Parrott blessed a symbolic heap of laptops and [smart phones](#) on the altar of London's 17th-century St. Lawrence Jewry church Monday. An effort, he said, to remind the capital's busy office workers that God's grace can reach them in many ways.

"It's the technology that is our daily working tool, and it's a technology we should bless," Parrott said.

The short blessing capped Monday's services at the Christopher Wren-designed building - the official church of the Corporation of the City of London, which runs the capital's bustling financial district.

Parishioners took out cell phones as Parrott recited a blessing over them and their [electronic devices](#). A few held their phones up in the air as he ran through the prayer.

Parrott said the blessing ceremony was an update of a traditional back-to-work ceremony called "Plow Monday," in which villagers gathered to bless a symbolic farming implement dragged to the church's door. Parrott said that ceremony didn't have much relevance for his church, which was "nowhere near a field in the middle of London."

Parrott took up his post at St. Lawrence Jewry (so-called because it stands in what was once the capital's Jewish neighborhood) about seven months ago and said the updated ceremony was "a fresh idea for a fresh post."

He said he hoped the ceremony had made worship "lively and relevant to the people who work nearby, in the financial district."

Parrot said parishioners were welcome to leave their phones on during the service - so long as they kept them on silent.

More information: St. Lawrence Jewry: <http://www.slj.btik.com/>

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