

[GOVERNMENT OF ENGLAND, 1666] [1]

**[Proclamation ordering a general fast and a charitable
collection for sufferers of the great fire of London]**

[1]

By the King.

A PROCLAMATION

**For a General Fast through *England* and
Wales, and the Town of *Barwick* upon
Tweed, on Wednesday the Tenth
of *October* next.**

CHARLES R.

Whereas it hath pleased Almighty God by a most lamentable and devouring Fire (which broke out upon Sunday the Second of *September*, about two of the Clock in the morning near *Thames-Street*, and continued raging till Thursday night, or Friday following) to lay waste the greatest part of the City of *London* within the Walls, and some part of the Suburbs, whereof more then Fourscore Parishes, and all the Houses, Churches, Chappels, Hospitals, and other the great and Magnificent Buildings of pious or publique use which were within that Circuit, are now brought into Ashes, and become one ruinous heap:

A Visitation so dreadful, that scarce any Age or Nation hath ever seen or felt the like; wherein although the afflicting hand of God fell more immediately upon the Inhabitants of this City, and the parts Adjacent, yet all men ought to look upon it as a Judgment upon the whole Nation, and to humble themselves accordingly.

His Majesty therefore out of a deep and pious sence of what himself and all his People now suffer, and with a Religious care to prevent what may yet be feared, unless it shall please Almighty God to turn away his Anger from Us, doth hereby publish and Declare his Royal Will and Pleasure, That Wednesday, being the Tenth of *October* next ensuing, shall be set apart and kept and observed by all his Majesties Subjects of *England* and *Wales*, and the Town of *Barwick* upon *Tweed*, as a Day of Solemn Fasting and Humiliation, to implore the mercies of God, That it would please

him to pardon the crying sins of this Nation, those especially which have drawn down this last and heavy Judgment upon Us, and to remove from Us all other His Judgments which Our sins have deserved, and which We now either feel or fear:

And to the end that His Majesties Subjects may be assisted in the performance of the duties of that Day, and that all His good People may be united in such common Devotions and Supplications as may be fit and proper for the occasion, His Majesty will take care, by and with the Notice of His Reverend Bishops, That a Form of Prayer fit for that purpose shall be timely and seasonably published;

And His Majesty doth strictly charge and command all His Subjects of what Estate or Degree soever, That they duely observe this Day of Fasting and Humiliation in such decent and devout manner as becomes so sad and solemn an Occasion, as they will answer the neglect thereof unto Almighty God, and upon pain of incurring the utmost severities which can be inflicted upon the wilful breakers and contemners of this His Majesties Royal Command:

And because many Persons and Families, who were formerly able to give great relief to others, are now become great objects of Charity themselves, having not only lost all they had by Fire, but being destitute of all Habitation; His Majesty doth therefore require and command all Ministers, Parsons, Vicars, or Curates who shall Preach on that Day,

That they earnestly recommend the distressed estate and condition of those who have been undone by this Fire, unto the charity of all good and well disposed Christians.

And that they cause Collections for this purpose to be made in all Churches and Chappels whatsoever, and the Monies so collected to be faithfully and entirely returned up to *London*, and there paid in to the Lord Mayor of the City of *London*, or such as he shall appoint, to the end the same may be duly and orderly distributed by the ad-

[1] National Archives UK, SP46/131/fo56-001, -002. Cited in Steele no. 3474.

vice and directions of the Lord Mayor, and Lord Bishop of *London*, unto and amongst such poor Sufferers by this Fire, as shall be found to have most need thereof;

And that all good people may be the better prepared for their Devotions, and provided for their charitable benevolence that Day, It is His Majesties further Pleasure, that this His Royal Proclamation be read in all Churches and Chapels on some Lords Day precedent to the said Day of Fasting and Humiliation.

Given at Our Court at *Whitehall* the Thirteenth day of *September* in the Eighteenth year of Our Reign.

God save the King.

LONDON, Printed by *John Bill* and *Christopher Barker*, Printers to the Kings most Excellent Majesty, 1666.