

Dear friends,

The big excitement this Sunday was the baptism of little Edward in St. Michael's Otterton during the service. Charlotte, his mum sings in the benefice choir (as does Louise) and they provided a huge boost to the singing and a couple of anthems. Although making a bit of a noise at the start of the service, Edward was as good as gold during the anointing with oil and the baptism itself, not making a sound. The large baptism party swamped the normal congregation of course but they were pretty well behaved as well – I still have nightmares about mass baptisms in Margate as a curate where we'd conduct 5 infant baptisms at a time in this urban priority area where we could have used crowd control.

**Back in St. Peter's** for Solo's lunch where we met Rev. Robert Charles and Josie. Robert was quite excited at the large turnout in St. Peter's that morning – joking that some sort of revival was under way. Well, it would be nice if true!

### **Sunday 2nd November – All Saints**

Archdeacon Trevor Jones will preside at both services at St. Peter's. I will preside at All Saints at 9.30am on this, their patronal festival and John Archibald will preside at St. Michael's at 11am. I will then also preside at the All-Souls service at St. Peter's at 3pm.

**Daniel 7: 1-3, 15-18.** This passage is strangely cut, leaving out all the fantastic imagery of the “ancient of day” and “one like a son of man” (Jesus' favourite way of referring to himself) in the skipped verses. With what we have left we have the message that evil, personified by the four beasts is ultimately subject to divine judgement. It will be overcome not by force but by faithfulness to goodness and truth.

**Ephesians 1: 11-23.** A piece liable to be more mesmerizing than illuminating but indicating that we must pray for wisdom, revelation and enlightenment. It ends by reminding us that we are Christ's body on earth and ends finally with a beautiful picture of Christ being all in all a truly universal beatific end for all things.

**Luke 6: 20-31.** Luke's beatitudes take place on the plain instead of on the mount as in Matthew. There are four blessings followed by four woes. This new community is to exhibit a certain heroism – offering the other cheek after being struck or giving a robber more than he was going to steal which displays a sort of other-worldly courage that goes above and beyond. Exactly the sort of example we might expect from a Saint.

### **Thought for the Day**

Well, what I predicted would happen happened much quicker than I expected. The Anglican communion is now completely officially divided. And the language used in Gafcon's (Global Anglican Future conference) communique is uncompromising. They say that the Church of England is both “spiritually and theologically bankrupt” and that the see of Canterbury is no longer the seat of authentic Anglicanism. In fact, that is the

most interesting part. They say that they have not left the Anglican communion – the church of England has left them and that they ARE the authentic Anglican communion. Gafcon has re-named itself the “Global Anglican Communion”. This is said with full knowledge that Gafcon supporting churches around the world represent 86.7% of all Anglicans in the world. Strange times indeed when the founding church of Anglicanism – the C of E – is excommunicated from the worldwide body named after us. But hey, don’t shoot the messenger, I’m just relaying the facts. Although the internet is awash with all of this, it hasn’t cut through to the main media at all which has chosen to highlight King Charles praying with the Pope for the first time in history as far as I can tell. But they weren’t meeting for religious reasons or any dialogue, they were meeting as “heads of state” and the C of E is as far away from the Catholic church as it ever has been in reality. Instead of any ecumenical coming together, the worldwide church is fracturing more and more and this seismic development within Anglicanism is just the latest split to fracture the Christian witness in the world. As a religious “professional” this has been torturing me but in the average C of E parish all operating in their own local bubbles or silos this won’t impinge very much. But long term, the fractured worldwide Christian voice has just been weakened still further.

**The Prayer for Today** is by the Spanish mystic – St. John of the cross.

**O living flame of love,**

**That wounds my soul so tenderly in its deepest centre,**

**Since by you Grace, I can endure your touch,**

**Perfect your work in me according to your will.**

Love and peace,

Martin