

Dear friends,

Louise left for Toronto in Canada on Friday via Dublin for a conference. She's only gone for a week but two disasters have already happened. First, she arrived in Toronto, and her case didn't. Thankfully she was reunited with her bag quickly, the next day. Now she has had her passport stolen and an envelope holding her Canadian currency – thankfully not her purse and phone – thank goodness. I can't imagine the trauma that must be causing – because that was one of our biggest fears when we travelled to Asia earlier in the year. But Louise is resourceful, and things are in hand, the British consulate has issued an emergency travel document, now safely locked away and she is safe, thanks be to God!

**Annual Vicarage Party.** The annual bring-and-share party to foster social interaction between the three churches is on **Saturday 9th August from 3pm – 5pm**. It will take place in the house, only spilling out into the inner garden if the weather is fine. Bring a bottle of your favourite tippie. You'll only need something to sit on if we spill out into the garden. We look forward to seeing you!

**Sunday** was a great morning in both villages and Mike Scrivener played the organ at both churches. I ran him home and returned to Otterton for the Baptism of Freddie Dutton in St. Michael's. It was a lovely informal occasion with about 50 family and friends present. I'd baptised his brother Archie a few years ago though unsurprisingly he didn't remember me!

### **Sunday 3rd August – Trinity 7 – Proper 13**

I will be presiding at both services at St. Peter's. Archdeacon Trevor Jones will preside at All Saints at 9.30am and John Archibald will preside at St. Michael's at 11am.

**Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14, 2: 18-23.** The word translated as Vanity in the NRSV Bible we use is most often translated as Meaningless in most others. The Hebrew word "Hevel" that it translates is actually more akin to something ephemeral like smoke. When you try and grab hold of it and pin it down it is gone. All of life is like this, fleeting and inconsequential. Even hedonism is like this. Nothing can be controlled or guaranteed and strangely, accepting this is the key to peace of mind and contentment resting in God.

**Colossians 3: 1-11.** With the inconsequential reality of life laid bare in Ecclesiastes. Paul says that we should set our minds not on earthly things but on Christ alone. Whatever life is and however we experience it, Christ is the real substance of it and Christ is all in all.

**Luke 12: 13-21.** The theme of the day being futility, Christ underlines this point that the possessions we gather around us, cannot and will not help us at the dying of the light. Only God can redeem and save us and provide that safe harbour for our souls.

## **Thought for the Day**

Continuing the theme that “All is meaningless” and dwelling on that could send you into a spiral of despair. From an atheistic point of view that is where we are at. But from a Christian point of view we know that the world and everything in it has been sanctified by God becoming human and sharing our lives. There is something innately connected to the divine about existence so our souls are restless until they find their rest in God – the only reality that is truly apart and transcends our short, inconsequential lives.

God, the “I am” revealed in Exodus 3:14 as pure being that transcends all life was incarnated in Jesus of Nazareth, to show us that life has a meaning and purpose but that meaning and purpose can only be found in God. This is because there is no “thing” else. So far, so Buddhist or Hindu, but from there we have a different view of the very end of all things

Jesus was a person, an individual human being, just like every one of us, and we believe He is the model for all human life and experience, the optimal way to live and act and speak. And Jesus was resurrected as an individual before ascending to heaven, so we believe in the resurrection of a individual soul rather than us just dissolving into one great soul or being reincarnated.

At the end of the day we need to acknowledge how much of what we believe is just mysterious and beyond our knowledge but belief is inextricably bound up with hope and trust. As we examine and contemplate our lives and know we will face the final curtain, do we place our hope and trust in Jesus?

**The Prayer for Today** is by Desiderius Erasmus.

**Lord Jesus Christ**

**You are the way the truth and the life.**

**Never let us stray from you, who are the way,**

**nor to distrust you, who are the truth**

**nor to rest in anything other than you, who are the Life.**

**Teach us, by your Holy Spirit, what to believe,**

**What to do,**

**And how to take our rest.**

**Amen**

Love and peace,

Martin