

CLERGY LETTER

Dear Friends

Some of you may already know that I recently did something very special – and very rare. I married my son! (and it was all legal and above board). I have to say that given the fact that I definitely needed the tissues at my daughter Beth's wedding last year when I was simply "mother of the Bride", I was more than a little concerned about whether I would manage to keep my emotions under control this time, especially as it's not unusual for me to get a lump in my throat at other marriages that I conduct. However, in the event I needn't have worried – the sheer happiness of the occasion and the broad smiles on both Edward & Danielle's faces from the moments they arrived at the church meant that the only emotion that I had was sheer happiness – their joy at getting married was truly infectious, and other guests have said they felt it too.

Having said that, there was a moment where I could have had a wobble. As they stood in front of me to make their vows I allowed myself to wonder where that little boy of many years ago had gone – but as soon as I thought it I realised that he was still there – yes he had grown (a lot), yes he had sprouted facial hair (like father like son) and yes, he had even got the odd bit of grey (he also takes after his mother). But beneath it all I could see the same nervous excitement that he always



showed when he was about to do something special, I could see the same smile, hear the same laugh and appreciate the great love and care that he always freely gave and was now directed towards Dani. And I could see her accepting his love and returning it with her own.

Well, all this got me thinking – in fact two things occurred to me. Edward & Dani's joy that day was infectious – it was meant to be. I wonder, how many other occasions are there when we find that our moods are affected by those of other people and how often are theirs affected by us? Indeed, are we more likely to bring a smile to their faces or a tear to their eye? Although it's not always easy, and I am the first to say that we have to be honest with ourselves and those around us, I hope that we can all be more likely to bring joy into the lives of those around us rather than despair. Of course, we can only really do this if we are feeling genuinely joyful ourselves.

So how can we be joyful? Well look around you. Your home, your family and friends, the peace and beauty of the countryside, look in your fridge or larder and give thanks for the fact that you have plenty of food to eat and fresh water readily on tap. Think of the things you enjoy doing – walking the dog, sitting in the garden, simply watching your favourite programme on the TV – the list

goes on. Concentrate on the positive things in your life and learn to appreciate and enjoy them all.

I would also love it if you could think about who is ultimately responsible for giving us all these things and so much more as well. God - and this is where my second point comes in – think about the fact that he is changeless and dependable. Think about his generosity, his care, his love, his dependability and his willingness to be there all day every day for us, no

matter what is going on in our lives and how we feel about him. And acknowledge the fact that he wants to be as much a part of your lives as Edward and Dani wanted to be of each others.

Please do feel free to call me at any time if you would like to talk about any of this or are having problems feeling joyful in your lives at the moment.

