

Lee Abbey News

Next steps for Simon & Anne



Dear Friends

Go East!

We have and do cherish your prayers and so wanted to let you know of plans that have emerged since writing in Rapport. *'Those who wait on the Lord ...'* On a sunny but windy day I found myself on a beach outside Barnstaple with God. As I prepared to leave I came across a sign post in the beach that appeared to be pointing nowhere! However, on reaching the sign you become aware of a path opening up through the dunes. As I stood there I felt God say, *'There's one more adventure ahead Simon'*. A few weeks later I was asked to consider the post of Deputy Director of the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem. So, after a three-month sabbatical, in mid-October Anne and I journey to a new country to begin a new adventure.

Over 400,000 people visit the Garden each year and hear the Gospel proclaimed. Anne will have a specific ministry of prayer and listening. Each morning begins with worship outside the empty tomb with the community God gathers to share the news, 'He is not here He is risen!' I find the ironic grace of God to call us to a place celebrating resurrection and life hugely humbling. We will have two regular days off and a generous holiday allowance that will, we believe, bring a different pace to our lives. We are daunted yet excited at this new beginning for us.

We cannot thank you enough for your prayers and love shown in so many ways over our long association with Lee Abbey. James Denniston who many of you will know sent me this quote from Henri Nouwen, after I led prayers on the feast of the Annunciation (March 25th) the day of my resignation, it is entitled '**Waiting open-endedly**': *"I have found it very important in my own life to let go of my wishes and start hoping. It was only when I was willing to let go of my wishes that something new, something beyond my expectation could happen to me. Just imagine what Mary was actually saying, 'Let what you have said be done to me'. She was saying, 'I don't know what all this means, but I trust good things will happen'. She trusted so deeply that her waiting was open to all possibilities. And she did not want to control them. She believed that if she listened carefully, she could trust what was going to happen.*

Waiting 'open-endedly' is an enormously radical attitude towards life. It is trusting that something will happen to us that is far beyond our imaginings. It is giving up control over our future and letting God define our life. It is living with the conviction that God moulds us according to his love and not according to our fear.

The spiritual life is a life in which we wait, actively present to the moment, expecting that new things will happen to us, new things that are far beyond our own imaginations or prediction. That indeed is a very radical stance in a world preoccupied with control."

So, the God of transformation, who many of you have encountered at Lee Abbey, has once again encountered us in the waiting and transformed our lives to see that He truly does make all things new! May each of us find our lives shaped not by our fears (I have known

many during our time here) but by the love of God who is risen and calls us to life, life in all its fulness.

With our love, see you in Jerusalem!

Simon & Anne