

### Diary dates for December, 2014

2 <sup>nd</sup> December	10.00 CHURCH SPRING CLEAN
4 <sup>th</sup> December	10.30 Holy Communion
	11.00 Bible Study – I am the light of the world
	12.00 Bring and share lunch
20 <sup>th</sup> December	17.00 Carol Service
24 <sup>th</sup> December	17.00 Crib Service
25 <sup>th</sup> December	11.00 Christmas Day



### Prayer of the month

Almighty God,  
you have given us your only-begotten Son  
to take our nature upon him  
and as this time to be born of a pure virgin:  
grant that we, who have been born again  
and made your children by adoption and grace,  
may daily be renewed by your Holy Spirit  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord  
who is alive and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit  
one God now and for ever.



### Prayer focus

The mystery of the Incarnation



### Verse of the Month

Glory to God in the highest  
and peace to his people on earth.

*Luke 2 v14*

## St Bart's Monthly



## Christmas, 2014

### Services

**Sunday 11.00** Holy Communion (with hymns)

**Thursday 10.00** Holy Communion (said)

A warm welcome to all who worship with us.  
During the service there is a Sunday School.  
After the service coffee is served.

**Priest-in-charge: The Revd Gareth Randall**

For further information concerning baptisms,  
marriages or funerals:

 02 99 46 77 00

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Website : [www.stbarts-dinard.org.uk](http://www.stbarts-dinard.org.uk)



December, 2014

Dear Friends,

***'Spirit embodied'***

As we grow older, being at ease in our body may, with aches and pains, diminish. But one of the joys of being a child, of being young, is the delight we derive from being embodied.

A physical frame is something we share with animals but what makes us unique is our sense of self, our sense of time and place and space and a sense of the fact that we are all time-limited with a sell-by date. We are aware, awake and conscious in a body that is physical. If you like, you could say our soul is clothed in flesh.

What I personally find exciting and extraordinary about Christmas is the Christian notion that at Christmas, God took flesh, that the Word became flesh, that Jesus, the Son of God, was incarnate, enfleshed like any one of us.

What is extraordinary is that God Our Father, who is wholly different from us, in his Son, Jesus Christ, became like one of us in that he could feel first-hand what it was to be embodied and he knew both pleasure and pain and ultimately experienced dying and death.

So this Christmas, when you are enjoying (I trust) the delight of being embodied, remember that God too knew, knows, what it is to be fully human - except of course without the shortcomings of sin, of wrongdoing.

Happy Christmas !

***Father Gareth***



**Notices**

- **Advent Appeal** – Médecins Sans Frontières Ebola Appeal
- **Hedley Court** a cheque for £320 was sent as a result of the collection at our service on 9th November
- **Poppy appeal** A total of 820€ has been raised this year (550€ from St Bart's). Helen Morgan would like to thank all those who helped raise such a good sum !
- **Deadline** for submission of material for the January edition of the St Bart's Monthly is ***midday on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> December***
- **Church Finances for October**  
Income: 4,763€ Expenditure: 3,487€



**Readings in church**

***December 7<sup>th</sup>***

***2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent***

Isaiah 40 v1 - 11  
2 Peter 3 v8 - 15a

Psalm 85 v8 - end  
Mark 1 v1 - 8

***December 14<sup>th</sup>***

***3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent***

Isaiah 61 v1 - 4, 8 - end  
1 Thessalonians 5 v16 - 24

Psalm 126 v1 - 8  
John 1 v6 - 8, 19 - 28

***December 21<sup>st</sup>***

***4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent***

2 Samuel 7 v1 -11, 16  
Romans 16 v25 - end

Magnificat  
Luke 1 v26 - 38

***December 25<sup>th</sup>***

***Christmas Day***

Isaiah 52 v7 - 10  
Hebrews 1 v1 - 4

Psalm 98  
John 1 v1 - 14

***December 28<sup>th</sup>***

***Holy Innocents***

Jeremiah 31 v15 -17  
1 Corinthians 1 v26 - 29

Psalm 12  
Matthew 2 v13 - 18

## Quotations of the month

‘The other is my brother’  
*Sufi saying*

Advice on how to stay young in old age: -  
‘Learn something new. Keep your curiosity.’  
*‘You and Yours’ Radio 4*



## A Christmas greeting from Annette Delahaie

A vous tous, à chacun, à toi,  
Belle fête de Noël dans votre cœur,  
pleine de joie de tendresse, d’amour  
et de paix autour de vous à partager.  
Gardez-vous en bonne forme  
tout au long de l’année.  
Belle fête de Noël et Bonne année  
Happy Christmas and a joyful new year  
Frohe Weihnachten und ein gutes neues Jahr  
Buon Natale e felice anno nuovo



## Quick quips 3/8

These little beauties were sent to us by Bill Hughes

Husband: “Darling I think I’d like to be cremated.”  
Wife: “Ok – I’ll go and get the car.”

## Notes from the Council 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2014

This morning, on Radio 4, I heard that we in the UK are the likely to be more obese than any one else in Europe but here, today at St Bart’s, the members of our Council were distinctly ‘thin on the ground’ !

The most exciting item discussed and approved was outlined by our Honorary Secretary, Dr David Norris, ‘Jam and Jazz’ at Les Essarts, the family home of Chris Curtis in St Briac: the chance to dance, to sip tea and cocktails, buy preserves and tickets for an up-market raffle, with the price of admission reflecting the occasion, the venue and the purpose of the day - to raise money for our Organ Appeal. At 20€ a ticket, limited to around 120 guests, with the chance to reserve a table for 6 or 8 folk, the function will be held in the summer before the start of the season itself.

The organ restoration was discussed – the question of VAT and the accommodation of the artisans among other things.

The Library, Church Fabric, Church Flat, Church Garden all figured among our deliberations. The addition of some extra shelves in the Elizabeth Hannay Room to accommodate a most generous gift of books was considered and approved. Dates for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity were confirmed with the Revd Dr John Marvell preaching at the service here on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2015 and the day previous in St Servan at the Temple Protestant.

The meeting ended as ever as it began – in prayer.

*Father Gareth*



### The St Bartholomew's Organ Appeal

Here, at St Bartholomew's, we are very fortunate to have an interesting and beautiful instrument, the work of an English organ builder, Alfred Oldknow of London then Jersey, who also constructed the organ at the Church of St Malo in Dinan.

Built and installed in 1894 at the cost of around 10,000 Francs, this thirteen stop two manual and pedal instrument was, according to 'Anglicans in Brittany' by the Revd Dr Alan Charters, originally powered by 'a boy to blow the bellows . . . at a salary of 25 Francs per quarter.'

Money necessarily figures in the successful running of any institution, churches included. Our church has been maintained by the money bequeathed to us in the past, by present giving and by what we earn through for example the Garden Party, lunches, concerts, the sale of marmalade etc.

I make no apologies in appealing once more to your generosity by asking you to support our appeal to undertake a major renovation of the organ. This work needs to be undertaken once a century and so by now, 110 years on, is well overdue. Andrew Cooper and Co of the Isle of Wight will undertake the restoration and we need around £70,000 of which we have already raised around £25,000.

Please support us as generously as you feel able so that we, her present stewards, may pass on the organ which we have inherited to those who will come after us.

Thank you.

*Professor Janet Darbyshire CBE  
Chairman of the Friends*

**Christmas Greetings** to all our Readers from  
Pam and Chris Rowlands celebrating Christmas back in the UK



### Questions 5/8

*This mini-series was forwarded to me by Ian Phillips*

If it's true that we are here to help others,  
then what exactly are the others here for ?



### Whose fault?

*The following was sent to me Jon Banyard*

Standing outside the inn, an exhausted Joseph and a heavily pregnant Mary were having no success finding accommodation from a clearly tired and over-worked Innkeeper.

Trying to excuse himself of his duty of care for a woman about to go into labour by stating what to him was an obvious fact, the innkeeper excused himself by saying, "It's not my fault."

Poor Joseph simply smiled and replied, "And it's not my fault either."



### Billboard 1/8

From a church notice-board sent to us by Bill Hughes  
Aspire to inspire before you expire

**Carol Service 2013**

The church was packed,  
standing room only,  
and for an hour or so,  
the story of Christmas  
retold in word and song.  
There was a sense  
among those present  
that we were one  
with the One  
who'd come  
to make us one,  
one with another.

**Christmas crackers**

*This little gem was found in Brian Hewitt's cracker last Christmas:*

Name Santa's prickly-green, American motorbike of choice that he uses when not going on sleigh-rides ?

A Holly Davidson

*A cartoon forwarded to me by Valerie Trevino depicted:*

a New York departmental store lift going up to the toy department in which a small man is squashed between half-a-dozen, obese Santa Clauses – and the caption underneath . . . ?

Claustrophobia

**Giving to the Organ Appeal**

If you are a tax payer in either France or the United Kingdom you can make more of any donation towards the restoration of the organ as follows-

***Sterling Donation***

Ask Father Gareth or the Treasurer, David Morgan, for a gift Aid Form. Complete it and send it with your donation to the Diocese in Europe (14 Tufton Street, LONDON SW1P 3QZ UK) who can reclaim the tax paid. This will increase the value of your donation by 24p for every pound you give.

**Euro Donation**

The treasurer, David Morgan, will issue a tax receipt for every donation which can be used to reduce your tax liability for the current tax year.

***David Morgan***

***Honorary Treasurer***

**Accommodation needed**

In January, when the organ is taken down then later in the year when it is returned and restored at a date still to be fixed, then the craftsmen will need accommodating - a week in Jan; up to three at Easter.

If you were able to offer one of two men a place to stay, a packed lunch and an evening meal, it would help to reduce the cost of the work and be a kind gesture of Christian hospitality

If you can help us then please contact me on :

02 96 86 08 16 or [johannesdavey@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:johannesdavey@tiscali.co.uk)

***John Davey***

## Visitors to the Holy Land (4) Bethlehem

Manger Square with the Church of the Nativity dominates the centre of Bethlehem. The Church is one of the oldest and most well known in the Holy Land that is still in use. Each Christmas it appears on our television screens as the focal point of the celebrations of the birth of Christ. Built in the seventh century over the top of the cave that tradition said was the place where the Virgin Mary gave birth to Jesus, it is currently being renovated. Over the centuries, being in the Arab quarter, constantly surrounded by troubles and poverty, it has been kept open by constantly patching it up. Finally it is getting a major overhaul and this has already revealed elaborate mosaics on a floor some two feet below the one in use as well as many statues, chalices and other items that have been used in worship previously.

The birth cave is in the crypt down steep steps and not easily accessible for the large number of visitors wishing to go in and out by the same way. This detracts from the emotional experience but nevertheless as we were allowed to kneel for just a moment and touch the entrance to the hollow and look inside, the hair on the back of our necks seemed to stand up as we were filled with a feeling that this is a very special place. The tranquillity that had eluded us in that place was compensated for thanks to a little research and we were able to find nearby a modern English church without the trappings and the crowds of people of the Orthodox one. This gave us a well earned rest for some quiet contemplation, a brief prayer and time to realise that Jesus was born very near there more than 2000 years ago.

As we turned our backs on Manger Square, the feeling of a small Arab village deserts us. Sadly, within two hundred metres of the Church of the Nativity, urban commercial development has been allowed without any attempt to plan it. Houses, shacks and shops plus a Kentucky Fried Chicken Restaurant all built on top of each other beside narrow

## Church Publicity

Would you be interested in taking on the responsibility for advertising what goes on in church to the wider community? In the recent past, Helen Cocaign has served as our Publicity Officer but due to changes in circumstances has offered her resignation to the Council.

Helen would we able to give you details of what is involved and would help you get acclimatised. If you feel you would like to take on this invaluable role in making St Bart's and what we do better known by the wider public, then please contact Helen on 02 99 73 96 03 or [helen.cocaign@gmail.com](mailto:helen.cocaign@gmail.com) Working knowledge of French is desirable.



### Unscramble these Christmas carols/songs

*The number in brackets is the number of words in the answer.*

1	A WINEY ANAGRAM	(4)
2	COMMITTEE HUNG TIRED CHAPLAIN	(6)
3	FILLS WORN TEETH	(3)
4	I AM THE CLUE FOOL A FLY	(5)
5	HOT JOWLED TORY	(4)
6	IN BED AT WHITE KREMLIN	(4)
7	SWEET GHERKIN	(3)
8	THE TINY HILL SONG THING	(4)
9	I'M THE FELLOW ON THE BOTTLE	(5)
10	WAS IT A NICE SHARK	(2)
11	WICKEDNESS LONG AGO	(3)
12	WITHDREW CASH HELD SHEEP	(3)
13	RUINOUS NOSY ABBOT	(6)
14	IS BARTHOLOMEW THE THIEF?	(6)
15	CHARM THIRTY NINE BLIND HOGS	(5)

*John Marshall*

**Prayer**

*The following, a prayer by Fr Ray O'Shea, was given to me by Olive Browne:*

In ev'ry need, let me come to thee  
with humble trust saying : Jesus help me.

In all my doubts perplexities and temptations :  
Jesus help me !

In hours of loneliness, weariness and trials :  
Jesus help me !

In the failure of my plans and hopes :  
Jesus help me !

When others fail me and Thy Grace alone  
can assist me : Jesus help me !

When I throw myself on Thy tender love  
as Father and Saviour : Jesus help me !

When my heart is cast down by failure at seeing  
no good come from my efforts : Jesus help me !

When I feel impatient and my Cross irritates:  
Jesus help me !

When I am ill and my head and hands cannot work  
and I am lonely : Jesus help me !

Always, in spite of weakness, falls and shortcomings  
of ev'ry kind: Jesus help me and never forsake me.

roads add to the chaotic traffic conditions and the throngs of eager tourists.

After a meal in a local restaurant complete with traditional Arab entertainment, we were ready to escape to somewhere cooler and quieter. We were taken about two miles outside Bethlehem to a site known as the Shepherd's Fields. This, according to legend, was the place where the Angel of the Lord visited the shepherds, telling them of the birth of Jesus and where they should go to worship Him. Set on a grassy hillside overlooking the birth place, this area seemed to fit the Biblical story very well. There are large caves with smoke blackened ceilings and it could be imagined that fires were used to keep the shepherds and animals warm and safe during the cold nights. There is a clear spring of water (now converted into an ornamental fountain with carved angels, sheep and shepherds) for drinking and steep slopes suitable for grazing sheep or goats.

We pictured the scene on a clear dark night as the sky was suddenly transformed into a blaze of light by the Glory of God with angel choirs singing. We could feel the fear and panic of those humble men in this area which even though not too far from the town would have been very dark and quite remote. This brought credibility to the whole area as the place of the start of Christianity and restored to us the belief that this was where Jesus was born. It blocked out the sad way that the churches were just cashing in on their positions to exploit the gift of God of his only Son to the world.

We returned to our hotel having experienced scepticism and sadness and got past that to know joy at the birth of Christ in this place.

*Geoff Carter*

## Tragedy, 1914-18

If I may be permitted to add my two centimes' worth to Gareth's excellent review of 'Oh What A Lovely War', it goes this way: Yes, I, too, saw the film (when it first came out) and a thoroughly grotesque picture it painted. Yet I find it significant that its debut was a period when historical thinking was dominated by what one might term the 'A.J.P. Taylor School of Historians', summed up in the epigram describing the soldiers, vs the generals, as 'lions led by donkeys'.

Robin Neillands doesn't see it that way. Neillands, who died in 2006, served in 45 Commando Royal Marines and was a prolific author who brought a soldier's eye to historical writing. He views contemporary events through the lens of what the actual combatants actually had to fight with and what they actually knew, when they knew.

His book 'The Great War Generals on the Western Front 1914-1918' (ppbk, Robinson, London) goes some way towards exonerating many leaders who by the 1960s were being trendily execrated. He points blame where he sees it due. He faults the generals, collectively, for being so slow to recognise that what they'd got themselves into was siege warfare. He is not shy of criticising, in particular, the French General Nivelle as a total charlatan.

But his forte lies in myth-busting. To anyone seriously interested in what went on during those years not far from where we all live, his book is a must-read.

*David Boggis*

## Questions Assumption ?

It's the Feast of the Assumption – Friday 15<sup>th</sup> August – and I'm sitting in Notre Dame church for the service immediately preceding the ceremony at the war memorial outside to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Dinard.

Père Peter Bernard is taking the service and rightly, in a mass in honour of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, alludes to the Catholic understanding of the Immaculate Conception, that is to say of Mary, she herself being conceived without sin.

One of the readings is from Revelation 12 v1 – 6, a passage that may symbolically refer to Mary. Verse 2 catches my attention: 'elle criait, torturée par les douleurs de l'enfantement' which our pew Bibles translate as 'crying out in birth-pangs, in the agony of giving birth.'

Now one of the consequences of the Fall is the pain of child-birth: In Genesis 3 v16, we read of God saying to Eve:

'I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing;  
in pain, you shall bring forth children.'

If Mary is the second Eve but herself without sin, then would Mary's delivery of Jesus involve this degree of promised pain ?

So what do you think ?

*Father Gareth*

*On the 8<sup>th</sup> December the Anglican Communion celebrates the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary whereas on that day our brothers and sisters in Christ in the Roman Catholic Church will celebrate her Immaculate Conception.*

**Odd Words**  
**Questionable inflection**

*Not so much an odd word, more an odd way of saying things.*

*Not so much an odd word, more an odd way of saying things ?*

How did you say those two sentences ?

Did you say them in exactly the same way or did you make a distinction between the two and if you did, what was it ? A native English-speaker of my generation would have automatically made a distinction without a pause for thought, indicating the difference between a statement and a question by a falling tone at the end of the sentence for a statement and a rising tone for a question - in musical terms, the difference between a perfect and imperfect cadence ?

So it's irritating on Radio 4 to hear someone being interviewed who uses the rising tone even when she is making a statement – irritating and possibly confusing !

So why is this so ? Greg Brown, a teaching colleague of mine at Owen's, was studying for an MA in linguistics at the University of Hertfordshire in the 1980s told me that it was due to the influence of Australian soaps which was changing the way people in general and youngsters in particular spoke.

Odd or simply annoying ?

*Gareth Randall*

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**ANAK**  
**un pont pour les enfants**

*The following article appeared in the April journal of a French charity working in the Philippines with disadvantaged children in Manila.*

Each child rescued by ANAK has a different story; their traumas, personal to them, are often difficult to cure. There are some wounds which are not easy to address. "So what's happened to your hands ?" asked a worker from ANAK on one of their nightly forays who discovered Jake curled up on cardboard. With his hands seriously burned, the child was in no little pain. But Jake hid his suffering under a cloud of shame: "It's my fault." For having stolen a few pesos from the family purse, his hands had been plunged into scalding hot water by his mum !

After several months with the charity, Jake proved to be a mature, gentle, kindly lad who asked if he might see his mum again so that they might be reconciled. Miraculously they were. Through mutual love and forgiveness, a mum who'd physically abused her son and a son who stolen from his own family were reunited.

Though Jake still boarded with the foundation, he was now attending a local high school where he was top of his class. Last December on Christmas Eve, when he had another operation on his hands, it was his mum who was at his bedside to care for him. The scars on his hands will always be there but the love between mother and son has healed the wrong-doing which separated them. In a way, these scars are stigmata – signs of both suffering and the power of love to heal.

❄ ❄ ❄

## The Bartholomew Gospel

### 19 On the cross

*'They crucified him there.' Luke 23 v33*

They stripped him. They nailed him to the cross. They left him there to die. And die he does, before the end of the same day.

Tradition puts the seven last words of Jesus, cumulatively found in the four gospels, together to form one act of devotion – 'The Seven Last Words'. My account of the crucifixion follows this pattern.

And yes, I was there. Not close, like John, Mary his mother, and some of the women, close enough for Jesus to speak to them. But I was there with Philip. Word had come where and what was happening to Jesus so we hurried there and stood some way off. And what we saw was not nice.



'Father, forgive them! They don't know what they're doing!'  
Luke 23 v34

When they come to Calvary, Simon of Cyrene puts the cross down. The soldiers take Jesus' clothes from him and make him lie down, arms apart, feet together. Promptly, efficiently, they nail him to the cross, then hoist him up into the air and plant the cross firmly, securely into its socket in the ground.

And Jesus prays for them, prays that they might be forgiven for what they are doing to him. They do not know what they are doing. Not true in one sense, since these men are professionals; they know exactly what they are about and that they are about to execute someone. But true in another sense since, they have no idea who it is that they are in

## Film Review of the month

### *Kaddisch für einen Freund' - Leo Kashin 2012*

What do you think makes for a good film? Does it have to make you cry? Should the ending combine joy and sadness? Does it have to take a realistic view of life, treat a difficult contemporary issue with sensitivity but still remain optimistic? At the end, are you left wanting to see it again, of even going to the trouble of buying the DVD?

Well 'Kaddisch für einen Freund' ('Kaddish pour un ami' as it was billed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> 'Week of German Cinema' here in Dinard in May) ticked all those boxes for me. It focuses on a Lebanese refugee family in Berlin. They have temporary asylum and, by chance, find themselves living in an apartment underneath an ageing Jew, Alexander, (Ryszard Ronczewski) a widower without children, his son having been killed while serving in the Israeli army.

In the face of anti-Semitism and teenage hooliganism, an unlikely friendship develops between Ali, (Neil Belakhdar) a fourteen-year-old in trouble with the law, and his Jewish neighbour. The tensions are sometimes painful, sometimes funny – there's a hint of a love interest.

I loved the scene in court where, faced with the judge's implacable insistence on right justice regardless of consequence, Alexander's impassioned defence of Ali is the antithesis of Shylock's worldview in the 'The Merchant of Venice' and instead opens the door on what it might mean 'to love one's neighbour as oneself' (Leviticus 19 v18). And, of course, I loved the scene where the boy recites Kaddish at the graveside which did, understandably, reduce me to tears. The film is about death and new life: both characters grow up; both characters die; one goes on to the life to come; one has life as an adult to come.

*Gareth Randall*

Jesus is the Light of the World. ‘The darkness did not overcome it.’



Are words sufficient to reflect such things, in such circumstances?

Let the Roman centurion in charge of the soldiers have the last word here: ‘This fellow really was God’s son.’



*Something I saw on the Plage de L’Ecluse, Dinard  
back in November 2013*

Fading the light  
not yet night  
towards evening  
the gloss gone  
from the day  
sand sea sky  
matt  
an impression  
of a picture  
with one boy  
kite flying  
pulled  
on a board  
by the wind



the process of killing. If they had, then they ought to have been seriously worried.

But even here, in pain, Jesus demonstrates his compassion and concern are for all.



‘I’m telling you the truth, you’ll be with me in paradise, this very day.’  
Luke23 v43

Jesus is being mocked from all sides. Easy abuse from those who dislike him, who get pleasure mocking him when he’s defenceless, vulnerable. And one of the two criminals, being crucified alongside him, joins in their mockery. I guess he may get some relief from gloating, knowing there’s someone worse off even than him. But the other criminal tells him he’s out of order because though they may deserve their punishment, Jesus doesn’t – he’s an innocent man.

And this man’s reward – Jesus promises him a place in paradise. Jesus recognises this man’s compassion, that even at the last, a criminal can have a change of heart; that no one is beyond redemption; anyone, anywhere, at any time, can in theory be saved. In practice, this man is.



‘Mother. Look! There’s your son.’ ‘Look! There’s your mother.’  
John 19 v26 & 27

John and Mary are at the foot of the cross. Even here Jesus is mindful of their welfare. Speaking first to his mother, Jesus points her to the disciple he especially loved, committing her to John’s love and care. And Jesus says the same to John, committing him to his mother’s care

and love. Mary, the mother of God's Son, will now be John's adopted mother and John her adopted son. John is now in fact one of Jesus' brothers - the one into whose care he gives their mother.

From now on, each is there for the other and it is no coincidence that John's gospel is the most spiritually reflective of the four.



'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani? My God my God why did you abandon me?' Mark 15 v34

His cry, when it comes, is heart-rending. Now Jesus is truly alone, really on his own among those who surround him. As a scapegoat, Jesus is naked, nailed to his cross, hanging up in the air in a type of no man's land, in the sight of those he loves but removed from the touch of those who love him. For the first and only time, the perfect communion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit breaks under the weight of the burden of sin-bearing. Perfect at-one-ment is broken by the cost of atonement. Here and now, for us to be at one with God, God is not at one with and in himself. To break the power of our wrongdoing, Jesus bears the weight of our sin. Here and now, an overpowering spiritual darkness cuts Jesus off from the very light he embodies.



'I'm thirsty.'  
John 19 v38

Hardly surprising given how Jesus has been abused since his arrest. Probably no one thought to give him anything to eat or drink while he's been in their custody and in the heat and exhaustion, his mouth must be dry, parched like the desert itself.

How ironic that Jesus, the source of living water, is dehydrated. How ironic, given his promise that we should never thirst again if we drink from him, that he should now be thirsty on our account.



'It's all done'  
John 19 v30

His cry tells us that the end is at hand. Jesus is done for and his work is done, complete, perfectly finished. He knows that he is dying, close to death. He knows that he has fulfilled God's will for him, perfectly enacted God's plan for Man. He knows that his mission is drawing to its painful conclusion. Exhausted, at the end of what he can do, he knows that in dying, in losing, that he has ultimately won.

The pain and agony of death are also the pangs of new birth.



"Here's my spirit, father! You can take care of it now!"  
Luke 23 v46

Jesus' last words echo the evening prayer a good Jew would say before going to sleep for the night. He may sleep secure and confident in the knowledge that God stands guard over him and will keep him safe through the hours of darkness and will be there for him when he wakes with the dawning of a new day.

Jesus has done what he has set out to do – to fulfil God's will - and now, letting go of life, he hands himself over to God's keeping. The night that faces Jesus is the darkness of death. The light of dawn will be the sunrise of the resurrection.