

From The Vicar . . .

Dear Family of God at St. Thomas,

"God, why did my loved one die of cancer, from a road accident, violence or from some other life event, when he or she was so good, so young, or so full of life?" It is very natural in times of grief, sorrow or in the midst of other life (and death) traumas to pose this "Why?" question of God. God's compassion and love are always extended to us at these difficult times, but God also understands and answers this cry of our hearts, even though the answer may not be the one we expect.

Recently, my nephew, Daniel, the only son of my older sister, Julie, and my brother-in-law, Geoff, died in England of a coronary thrombosis at the tender age of 31 years. Julie, Geoff, my niece Louise (Daniel's only sister), Daniel's partner, Lauren, and the rest of our family are naturally devastated at the sudden loss of my nephew who seemed to be in perfect health. There were no warning signs, Daniel just died. Of course, my family's heartfelt cry has been the cry of every human being faced with such a loss, "God, why?" In the midst of all of us doing what needs to be done at such a time of loss, my spirit, too, was crying out to God, "Why did Daniel die?" But, instead of telling me why Daniel died, God's answer was to tell me why Daniel lived! Below, I share the answer God gave me with you in the hope that it might help you in a similar time of grief and loss:

*Daniel, child of God, child of the earth.
God gave you to be a shining light, a star in this world,
That others might know and see, through your joy and appreciation of life,
A glimpse of eternity.
The angels sang the day you were born and the Son (Jesus), Himself,
Ordained and kissed your future curls,
While the angels smiled in delight.
Your time on earth was brief, because you were given*

To fill an empty space in this world.

A space that needed your fun loving spirit, your joy, laughter and kindness.

You left your imprint on this world and in the hearts of those that love you,

Where you still live on.

Daniel, we thank God that you were given to us for a season,

And, mission accomplished, have now returned to God

To be a shining star in the heavens,

Only, now, for eternity.

We thank you, Daniel, that the world is a brighter place because you were here.

We thank you that in your passing, you have showed us how to live

Until we are reunited with you;

Until we, too, embrace eternity.

(Daniel, beloved nephew, Rest in Peace!)

In the Savior's love,

(Rev) Shirley +