

Heaven has been enriched by a new voice, and earth is the poorer for having lost one.

Today we say farewell to Alison. Finn Harald's life companion, a sister, a friend, a role-model in faith and deed.

My thinking may be somewhat naive, but if the meaning of life is made tangible in a person, many of its attributes could be found in Alison. She wore the mantle of humility in her encounter with others. The girdle of enthusiasm held others above water. She embraced leadership. Maybe in the kitchen of the conference centre in Caux, where those who met her said: "Now I understand what you are really doing here". Maybe in a quiet conversation about the path ahead with some of you here. For she was wise.

She had the gift of being loving, cheerful and talented, yet not for her own sake, but for others. Whatever you want others to do for you, you shall do for others, those were Jesus' words and Alison's deed.

A conversation in Hong Kong, South Africa, the USA or in the Scottish countryside. Or a water-colour painting group here in Nybro church. A song on a stage in London or in Torsång church-choir. The place was of no importance, since the value was in the encounter with her fellow human being. Friendship transcended place. This honest striving was natural in her life. The friendship we are witnessing here today, when the world is gathered to say its farewell.

Life and body were not always in agreement, but Alison was not afraid. When one illness came after the other, she said, I may be unlucky, but I have my faith.

In our grief and loss, we must remember the heavenly sound. Now in Spring, we hear the bumble-bee coming to life. You know, Alison wrote a book about a bumble-bee discovering the world.

In our grief we can feel the hope of Spring when we see flowers conquering the hard soil. Outside her window, there are bulbs striving towards the light.

Somewhere in one of the many countries she visited, there is a family who found new life through meeting Alison.

If on earth she made music that spoke to the heart, think of what heavenly music is being made now. For, if she served through her gift here on earth, in my naive picture of heaven, she continues to serve there. Thus earth and heaven are united, and we with her, so far and yet so close. She had the wide perspective. Let that lead even us.

Now Heaven has been enriched by a new voice, and earth is the poorer for having lost one.

Expecting resurrection and eternal life, we now leave *Alison* in God's merciful hands.