

MAGDALENE COLLEGE

CAMBRIDGE

29 APRIL, 2007

Even the beauty of life on the Cam in Spring offers only a small degree of consolation for my not being able to celebrate with you Dad's marriage to Lin in Sydney today. It is some further consolation, however, to think that only a few weeks ago I was in Beijing where I had the opportunity not only to see the final stages of their new home, but more importantly, how happy, in love, and committed to each other, both Dad and Lin so clearly are. That memory is as beautiful as the still waters and green pastures that I live amongst in Cambridge. The memory is also a particular pleasure for me, because, I cannot forget that in very recent memory, Dad was walking through what the Psalmist calls the "valley of the shadow of death". And so it gladdens me to imagine him now that he has found these green pastures by the banks of the Yangzi. I am delighted to join with you all in celebrating this wonderful new chapter in Dad's life. As Ecclesiastes says, "Enjoy happiness with a woman you love all the fleeting days of life that have been granted to you under the sun – all your fleeting days. For that alone is what you can get out of life and out of the means you acquire under the sun." Keep me in your thoughts today, not least as I return to my books and work on my thesis, and despair to think that Ecclesiastes holds out no such hope for me when he writes: "Be admonished of this my son, of making many books there is no end and much study is a weariness of the body"! I stand admonished, and trust that you will all join with me in celebrating together a new era in which we can rest assured that the bride and groom will have much happiness in their shared future – a future in which we might all, hopefully, share –

Damien