



First, thank you for having me and for your kind welcome – Martin tells of what a good time he is having here - so it really is an honour for me to be asked to preach on this special day of Martin’s first presiding over Holy Communion ...and we pray for him don’t we ...but prayers are offered for all of you too: And as we consider our readings for today, we maybe can see why we would pray.

So, this section of Paul’s letter to the Corinthians: we get a sense that overall Paul’s message is about doing things out of love rather than duty – he writes about excelling in faith, speech, knowledge and eagerness and doing what is right – but what makes a gift especially generous, is when it is given out of love – and that love is the energy behind its success. And also there is a real feeling of thankfulness and joy about it. Giving out of love is a wonderful joyful thing. While Paul is writing about a financial gift to help a poorer church, and rejoicing over their love, the intention and the message is the same about all gifts and offerings:

That when out of love one offers all one can for the life and health of others - rather than any duty or knowledge or faith – this makes the offering truly generous, the gift, real, and the thankfulness and joy, deep. And I would suggest for the receiver as well as the giver. They bless each other.

Today, that joy and thankfulness and sense of blessing may be in Martin, who offers his life and ministry.....and that joy and

Come to God’s table  
Sermon by Reverend Julianne Watson 30.6.24  
For Reverend Martin Allen’s first celebration of the Eucharist

thankfulness may be in you too, as out of love you receive him and his ministry.

Pause...

Soon though as the saying goes, the rubber hits the road, and after being strengthened and renewed in this Holy Communion service....through the presiding and freshly anointed hands of Martin's very first ...Monday morning is....Monday morning.. and as you all begin to live out this new gift, I suggest that this week's Gospel reading can offer some encouragement.

For Jesus is up, out and on the move on the *other* side of the lake – lots of people keen to hear what he has to say, and keen to see what he will do.

But Suddenly the atmosphere changes and from excitement and enthusiasm comes a desperate plea from a leader of the synagogue – he is known and named and maybe within a group of leaders of the synagogue who have been watching Jesus....Jairus, maybe once cynical , is now desperate, needing to take a step of faith, because his daughter is at the point of death. Our hearts go out to the man – as does Jesus's heart, no matter what any leader of the synagogue might have said against him - a father and his daughter are in need, so Jesus goes.

But then en route to this vital mission, Jesus is interrupted with another plea – a woman in desperation over her own health reaches out to touch Jesus clothes – and Jesus aware of this, stops, turns round and gives her his full attention – she has time

to tell him her whole story and he listens and blesses her with peace and wholeness.

Now....although being told that time has run out for Jairus and his daughter, Jesus nevertheless presses on and even after being laughed at, that he is wasting his time,...he is still able to say to the girl – “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”. And, wonderfully she does.

Where then is the encouragement for us – and where is the encouragement for Martin?

Well, naturally, we are all very excited and keen to know and see Martin – yes, he's been around awhile now...but from our point of view we might wonder what will he be doing now? What will he be saying now?

And wondering from his point of view, how many times will he feel interrupted by pressing and worthy causes? The pressing in of our concerns, thoughts, hopes and how timely will he be in addressing any of them?

In answer to all these ...wonderings ...

What we can learn here is that a sense of urgency is good and right and needs response, but equally good and right is the time for full attention, and listening to any concern - no matter the person who expresses it, and even if it feels like turning aside from the urgent matter at hand.

But there is more...there is always more...and it *is* about blessing.

Saying 'go in peace, be healed' and the voice of healing – 'I say to you, get up' - are *blessings* and although not using these exact words today perhaps, blessing will be given by Martin in God's name – and responded to by your 'Amen'! You have another priest in your midst who can bless you as you bring your selves in trust to God.

Pause...

Then, as when Jesus's day of energy, pleas, and the giving of blessings ends, with what feels like a quiet calm, food, and a sense that all has gone well; so Martin, in your next days, may you know that all is well in your ministry and as one who will bless others.

So at the beginning of this new era, may your joy and thankfulness in each other be full –  
God bless you all  
and thank you for listening to me.