

FOUR SYMBOLIC GIFTS

7 November, 2105

During the Sunday morning, 1 November, All Saints' Day celebration at All Saints' Marseille, four symbolic gifts were presented to Fr David as he was "Instituted" into the ministry as our new priest-in-charge.

The rubrics, the fine print and directions of our Diocese's Institution worship service identify that after the congregation makes vows of accepting the new Rector and their willingness to support him/her and their family and to continue in an active personal and congregational Christian life, and after the new priest has made vows – certain declarations of assent and oaths of canonical obedience – then the archdeacon installs the rector to the presider's chair and the new rector leads the congregation in prayer. After all this, then the rubrics say, *"It may be appropriate at this point for members of the chaplaincy or congregation to present signs or tokens of the priestly ministry to the new priest-in-charge."* These signs or token often take the form of the wardens giving the keys to the church, the treasurer giving the minutes of the last Annual General Meeting, or one of the altar servers giving a chalice.

On this Sunday, Fr David was presented with four significant tokens as gifts and significant words were said – "Share, Lead, Gather, Listen, Search, Dialogue, and Represent." These words of commissioning were spoken as each of the four symbolic gifts were presented.

SHARE

The first presentation was made by Mr Gaston Roumieu. Gaston is one of the volunteers of the AMAM or Association marseillaise d'accueil des marins. He is also a very active congregation member of the All Saints church. All Saints is sponsored by the Church of England's Missions to Seafarers a financial ministry which enables maritime ministry to flourish around the world. To us at All Saints' Marseille, the church volunteer ministry towards seafarers is a primary ministry and our main charitable effort beyond the walls of our church. That is why Fr David asked that Gaston's be the first symbolic gift. Gaston presented Fr David with a dockyard access pass and invited him to share with us in our special ministry of pastoral care to seafarers. Fr David was invited to SHARE in this ministry since it is a ministry open to all of the church members and undertaken by 20 of us! So the first commission was to SHARE.



Mr Gaston Roumieu presents a dockyard access pass and invited Fr David to share in our missions to seafarers.

LEAD

The second gift was a bottle of blessed oil for anointing. One of the primary roles, exclusive to priests and bishops, is to be a leader of the sacraments. Clergy are many things, prophet, counsellor, administrator, worship leader, but the primary distinctive ministry is one called to LEAD in the sacraments. In the Anglican Communion only priests and bishops can lead in the service of Holy Communion/Eucharist, only priests and bishops hear confession and grant absolution, only priests and bishops bless and perform the nuptial blessings and only priests and bishops anoint with holy oil at the times of baptism, healing, and last rites.



Anna and Julia Hilton present a bottle of blessed oil for sacramental anointing.

Miss Julia and Miss Anne Hilton, of the congregation, presented Fr David with a vial of blessed oil for use as a LEADER of this sacred sacramental ministry.

GATHER, LISTEN, SEARCH, AND DIALOGUE

Our new priest is also an academic. Fr David has a Master in Divinity as well as a Masters of Art in Theology in Ecumenism (the study of different Christian denominations seeking respect, cooperation and unity) and a Licentiate in Theology in Inter-Religious Dialogue (the study of different faiths seeking respect, cooperation and hospitality).

Sr. Monique Delubac of the Communauté du Chemin neuf, on behalf of the Ecumenical Committee of Marseille, presented Fr David with a hand calligraphied document - a special prayer used by her community to pray for Christians of all churches and

ecclesiastical communities - to signify the mutual support and interconnectedness of all followers of Christ. And she invited Fr David to “rejoindre avec toutes les églises de Marseille en écoutant et parlant dans un esprit de Dialogue pour chercher l'unité” – to GATHER with the other churches in Marseille and to LISTEN and SEARCH in a spirit of DIALOGUE in the quest for unity.



Sr. Monique Delubac of the Communauté du Chemin neuf greets Fr David on behalf of her community and the Ecumenical Committee of Marseille

REPRESENT

Fr David, as a priest of the Church of England and as a member of clergy within our Diocese in Europe, also has responsibilities within the church outside of our congregation. He is a Canon, a trusted counsellor of his bishop and a member of the college of clergy. To recognize his wider calling with his brother and sister priests, Dr Amanda Haste and Mrs Helen Brooking, our wardens, the corporate administrative leaders of our congregation came to Fr David and presented him with the All Saints’ Marseille rector’s ring and asked him to receive it as an outward and visible sign of the ministry we – priest and congregation – share and to wear it to REPRESENT All Saints and Aix-en-Provence in the courts and synods of our church.



Wardens Helen Brooking and Amanda Haste present the All Saints’ Marseille Rector’s Ring.

So each of these four gifts were symbolic and the words used to present them were symbolic. Each represented a different focus of ministry. Together they commissioned that Fr David share with us in ministry; lead us in the sacraments; gather, listen, search and dialogue with the representative of other Christian congregations to seek unity; and represent us in the wider synods of our church. Our symbolic gifts were simple, the words of presentation were short; but they carried within them much depth of meaning.