**Colossians 1:15-28; Luke 10: 38-end**

Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, ‘Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.’ But the Lord answered her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.’

**May I speak in the name of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

I begin with a bit of an aside this morning. Buzz Aldrin, 50 years ago, took with him into space (with special permission obviously) bread and wine with which to celebrate the Eucharist. That is how important it was to him. I think that is worth thinking about as we celebrate that same ritual this morning. No matter how far we travel or where we go, God is there with us and it is for us to give Him the glory due to Him. That was Buzz Aldrin’s perspective.

Now. Today’s gospel is also about perspective. What is the right perspective. I am always, with this story, reminded of the immortal words of the great Francis Albert Sinatra singing Strangers in the Night (and probably many other things as well). Dooby dooby doo. There is Martha, doing all the doing. And there is Mary doing all the being. And where are we – and where should we be?

And now I fear I may have given you – those of you who know Frank and the song – an earworm. An earworm is when you can’t get a bit of music out of your head. Sometimes they last mere hours and sometimes they can last weeks. Maybe on and off, but weeks nonetheless. Sometimes they are obvious: anyone who has seen Les Mis has probably had snatches of those tunes spinning round – partly, ear worms are signs of good and memorable music. And when you’ve just seen a show, you know **why** you’ve got the earworm.

But sometimes earworms are annoying bits of advertising doggerel. Or television theme tunes. And they can be completely unbidden: obscure phrases once heard and seemingly forgotten. They can be the most frustrating ones – when you hear a little fragment that you may or may not know the words to, and you can’t remember what came before it or what comes after it.

I developed an earworm slightly of this nature while I was in France the last couple of weeks. And it took me several days to remember its precise context. When it’s the first verse of a hymn it tends to be easier to remember. But when it’s one of the other ones, partway through a line, it’s trickier. And that was what I got. And not even priests in charge take hymn books on holiday just in case they get an earworm.

So it took me a while to cotton on. But when I did, it made perfect sense as something that God might be nudging me to remember as I took a break from parish ministry. For those of you who are still with me, it’s hymn number 358, the third verse, and the phrase that kept repeating was ‘in faith receive from Him’.

And as we drove down through France, and into the Tarn valley, I realised that, really, that is all we ever have to do. Receive from God. What we get, we don’t earn. We can’t. We are simply recipients of grace. We don’t get extra heavenly Brownie points for the good works we perform. We can’t buy or work our way into heaven. We receive. In faith. From God. Receive by faith all His immense bounty; His gifts to us.

So I could look around and give thanks for the warmth of the sun – 35 degrees a couple of times, but generally 31 or 32, which was perfect.

And for the imposingness of the landscape, with its deep deep gorges and rocky outcrops and scary hairpin bends.

And for the plucky little villages and their inhabitants, clinging to those steep hills and valleys.

And for the sound of the rushing water where we parked up on the riverbank.

And for the rich gold of the wheat harvest and the vast vast machines trundling back and forth all day every day cutting and gathering and threshing and baling and whatever else they do.

And for the man-made beauty of ancient towers and castles and churches, and the sheer elegance of the Millau viaduct, currently the tallest bridge in the world, with an overall structural height of more than 336 metres. That’s over 1100 feet in old money.

And for the sunflowers and poppies and vines. For gin and tonic and bread and cheese – because that’s all we really need on holiday. And rubbish books to read. And time to walk and cycle and sleep.

In faith, receive from Him.

And then, bit by bit, I remembered the rest of that verse: Be still; for the power of the Lord is moving in this place. He comes to cleanse and heal, to minister His grace. No work too hard for Him. In faith receive from Him. Be still.

Remember that, whether you are going away on holiday or staying put.

And then, weirdly – although I ought never be caught out thinking God’s timing is weird, because I experience it time and time again – I checked the readings for today on my phone – because even when a priest in charge is on holiday, they have to plan for when they come back…..

And I found Mary and Martha. And Martha is cross that Mary isn’t helping her rush round and serve the visitors. Because what is Mary doing? In faith, she is receiving. She is listening, quite literally, to God. And while we all have to do the busy stuff, we all also have to do the not busy stuff. Be still - and receive from Him who is Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

Dooby dooby doo.

**Amen**