Session Two:

Keynote: Chaplaincy - Radical compassion



RADICAL
COMPASSION

Territorial Chaplaincy
Conference 2026



Jesus Christ is the living expression of radical compassion that carries with it the potential for complete, incalculable, undeniable and ineffable transformation.

radical

/ˈradɪkl/

The word **radical** comes from the Latin word *radix*, meaning "root", and refers to things that are fundamental, extreme, or derived from a base.

General/Adjective: Something thoroughgoing, fundamental, or going straight to the core/origin of a matter (e.g., a "radical difference" or "radical change").

Proverbs 24:21-22

My son, watch your step before the Lord and the king, and don’t associate with **radical**s. For you will go down with them to sudden disaster, and who knows where it all will end?

Compassion:
a deep awareness of another person's distress paired with a genuine desire and drive to relieve it.

The word comes from Latin roots meaning *"to suffer together"* (*compati* or *com- pati*). **Active Response:** Unlike passive sadness or pity, true compassion moves a person to take meaningful action or offer tangible help.

Compassion vs. Empathy:

Empathy means feeling or sharing someone else's emotional state, whereas compassion adds an active, caring motivation to help improve it!

Matthew 20:34

Jesus had **compassion** on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him

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Colossians 3:12

Therefore, as [Chaplains] God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with **compassion**, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

"Chaplaincy is one of the clearest real-world expressions of radical compassion. Radical compassion goes beyond ordinary kindness. It's a deliberate, courageous commitment to see the humanity in others even when they are suffering, angry, marginalized, or difficult to understand. In doing so they bear witness to Jesus, who himself demonstrates radical compassion and in whom fullness of life is available to all."

Luke 8: 40 -50

The misunderstood relationship with the Church (sending Body) Experienced by Jesus, Martin of Tours and, at times, ourselves as chaplains.



Radical Compassion

Leading the Martin Way…. Who is Martin?



Leading the Martin Way…. Who is Martin?

Underneath the deliberately unkept hair, the pallid features, and the rough surge slave robe in which he was dressed, lay a personality that at one time recalls the Mahatma Ghandi, at another William Booth, at another the visionary William Blake, and yet another, Lord Montgomery of Alamain



Leading the Martin Way....

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Anyone who has cause to study the 4th century [church] will be immediately struck by the unique sense of rapport that exists between that century and ours…. on the one hand they were conscious of being rooted in a centuries old Greco Roman culture and tradition, yet they were becoming more and more aware that their feet were on the threshold of a new age in which nearly every familiar landmark, physical moral, and spiritual was about to be swept away.

Donaldson C

‘Do not seek to follow in the footsteps of the men of old, seek what they sought’

Matsuo Bashō. (Japanese poet)



Introduction

St. Martin of Tours:

- key figure in early Christianity.
- Known for humility, charity, and miracles.
- Sulpicius Severus: Roman aristocrat turned writer; authored Vita Sancti Martini.
- Life of being taken where he didn't want to go

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Early Life and Conversion

- Early Life- Born in 316 AD in Sabaria (modern Hungary).
- Raised in Pavia, Italy; son of a Roman military officer.
- Felt drawn to Christianity from a young age. (catechumen aged 10)
- Enlisted in the Roman army at age 15.

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The Cloak Incident

- Encountered a freezing beggar while stationed in Gaul.- Cut his military cloak in half to share with the man.
- Christ appeared in a dream wearing the half-cloak.
- Became a symbol of Christian Charity an Holy Relic
- Birth of Chaplaincy

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Baptism and Departure from the Army

- Baptized around age 18.
- Refused to fight: “I am a soldier of Christ.”
- Imprisoned briefly, then released.
- Became a disciple of Bishop Hilary of Poitiers.

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Monastic Life

- Founded Ligugé Monastery near Poitiers.
- Lived in prayer, poverty, and service.
- Attracted many disciples; laid foundations for Western monasticism.

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Bishop of Tours

- Chosen as bishop in 371 AD, despite reluctance.
- Continued monastic life at Marmoutier Abbey.
- Advocated for the poor, opposed heresy, and evangelized rural Gaul.

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Leading the Martin Way….

Miracles and Ministry

- Raising the Dead: Revived a catechumen and a young man through prayer.
- Nature Miracles: Calmed storms, stopped fires
- Discernment: Identified false visions and spiritual deception.
- Destroyed pagan temples and idols; converted entire villages.

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Death

- Final Days: Travelled to Candes in 397 AD to resolve a dispute.
- Chose to lie on ashes in humility as death approached.
- Death: Died on November 8, 397 AD; buried on November 11.
- Body Snatched

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Leading the Martin Way….

Legacy

- Shrine at Tours became a major pilgrimage site
- Influenced monasticism and Christian culture across Europe
- Inspired Christian ideals of charity and humility.
- Augustine and Clovius -Patron saint of soldiers, beggars, and France. - Feast day: November 11.

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Leading the Martin Way…. The three-legged stool



Leading the Martin Way….

Introduction

St Martin of Tours: 4th-century bishop known for humility

Rejected grandeur in favour of simplicity

Used a three-legged stool instead of a bishop’s throne

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Leading the Martin Way….

Historical Context

Christianity becoming institutionalized in the 4th century

Bishops often adopted imperial styles

Martin’s stool symbolized pastoral integrity and servant leadership

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Leading the Martin Way….

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A Metaphor for Chaplaincy



Leading the Martin Way….

In chaplaincy and Christian leadership today Martin of Tours still stands as a timeless example of this holistic approach.

Spiritual Formation – Martin's deep prayer life and monastic discipline.

Pastoral Care – His compassion for the poor, sick, and marginalized.

Missional Engagement – His evangelistic zeal



Leading the Martin Way….

Chaplaincy – The Martin Way

The stool stands therefore for humility in ministry, not passive, or week but deeply rooted in the character of God and his love for those not so acceptable to the church.

The three legs reflect the three vital elements of ministry exampled by Martin, and of equally important relevance in our ministry as chaplains today:

Spiritual Formation.

A deep prayer life and spiritual discipline.

Pastoral Care

A radical compassion for the poor, sick, and marginalised.

Missional Engagement

A present testimony to the character of God.

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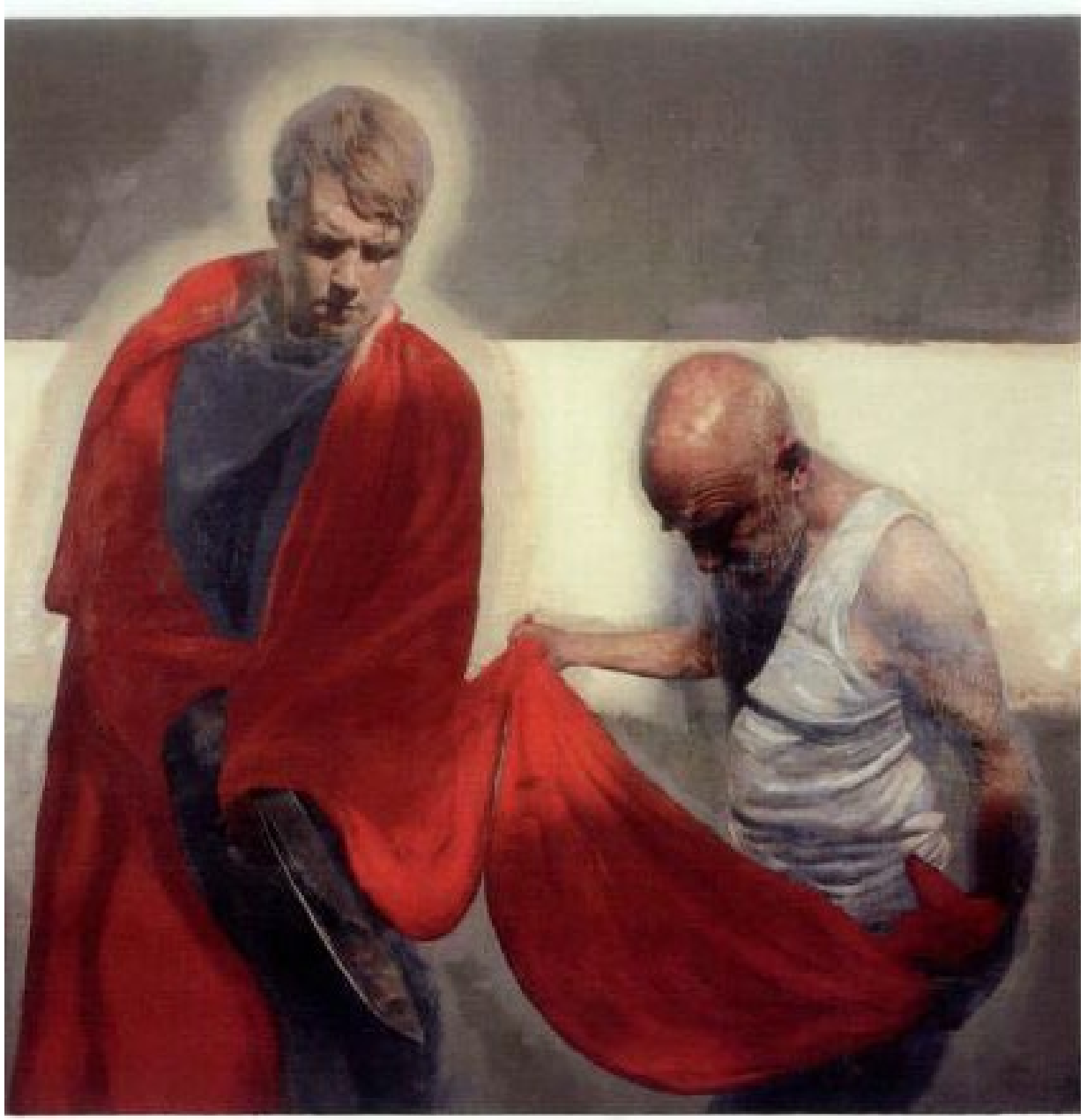

SESSION TWO

Leading the Martin Way…. Share my Cloak ….no the other one!

I am called Alban and
I worship and adore
the true and living
God

St Alban was not the first to exchange a cloak

nor was St Martin the first to give his away

The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called
together the whole company of soldiers. 17 They put a purple robe on him, then
twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. 18 And they began to call out
to him, “Hail, king of the Jews!” 19 Again and again they struck him on the head
with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to
him. 20 And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his
own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.
6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:5-6.

I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has **clothed** me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness,

Isaiah 61:10



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