

We come today to celebrate the marriage of Jennifer and Alex. In one sense this has all happened very quickly and in another this is a culmination of your whole life together. We are celebrating the love that you have found in and for each other, a love that has sustained you up to the present moment.

It is a story that began back in 1990 when Jennifer and Alex met through a shared love of sailing, introduced by mutual friends. The friendship obviously blossomed and then in 1998, following his retirement, Alex moved from Dorset and arrived in Ireland with Nipper the cat. Since that time Jennifer and Alex have shared their life and their love

And so today they come to declare that love before us all in this simple marriage ceremony. Each marriage I perform is different, because each couple bring something of themselves as individuals and as a couple in the choice of clothes, in their choice of readings. I love the passages that Jennifer and Alex have chosen for their wedding day. They reflect something of their down to earth practical wisdom.

We have heard that lovely passage from Ecclesiastes in which the preacher talks of the rhythm of life, the light and the dark, the sadness and the joy. You have found a common rhythm as your lives have come closer and closer together. When two people fall in love, there is a harmony, a resonance in which individuality is maintained. Just to stay with the musical metaphor for a moment; a harmony in music requires two or more distinct notes that when sounded together have a richness and a fullness that is greater than any of them

The love you have for each other comes out of that unity and individuality is what your friends and family celebrate with you today. Love is essentially relational – it is directed out from ourselves towards the other. There is give and take in our loving. We love each other as real people, with all our strengths and our weaknesses, all our little idiosyncrasies. In our love, we give each other space to be the people we are. Paul puts it beautifully in the passage we read from his first letter to the Corinthians:

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

This day we give thanks to God for the love that you have found in each other, for the ways in which you have grown as a couple and as individuals in that love, for the strength and comfort you have found in each other.

May God bless and sustain you in all that lies ahead for you both.