



St Mark's Church, Reigate

August 2017

Letter from the Vicar, Father Martin Colton

Dear Friends

What is courage?

There's a prayer that asks God to help us live out faith with "generosity and joy, imagination and courage." These words will speak to everyone in different ways but the theme of courage has been very evident in the news in recent weeks and months. In the terror attacks that have taken place, one of the people who was murdered was an Australian nurse called Kirsty Boden. She died when running to help other victims on London Bridge. Her family issued a statement that described her as "the most outgoing, kind and generous person who loved to help people. Helping people was what she loved to do in her job as a nurse and in her daily life." They went on to describe how they were so proud of her "brave actions which demonstrate how selfless, caring and heroic she was, not only on that night, but throughout all of her life." The same qualities have also been evident in the stories emerging from the appalling events surrounding what has taken place at Grenfell Tower. In these tragic events courageous individuals, alongside the emergency services, instinctively reached out and helped others.

If we are ever asked about who is an example of courage, there is a good chance that we might think about people who acted on behalf of others. There's also a possibility that there will be times when we have been afraid when facing something and are not sure how to move forward. Courage can come in different ways. I remember someone saying that courage is not having no fear, but having fear and doing the right thing anyway. These recent events are examples of extraordinary times, whilst most of life is caught up with the ordinary hours when we spend time with family or friends, go shopping, or commute to work or go on the school run. Courage is also evident in the ordinary times and can be seen in numerous ways. It might be dealing with bereavement, an illness, caring for a family member, getting through a time of crisis, or helping someone who is in need. The list can be very long but often involves times when a person is unsure that they will find the strength to keep going.

When there is a major incident you see the best and sadly the worst of human nature on display. The worst side can often dominate the headlines, but when saying that prayer I'm very thankful for the many courageous people there are who show that quality in so many diverse ways.

I encourage you all to use this prayer:

Living God, draw us deeper into your love;
Jesus our Lord, send us to care and serve;
Holy Spirit, make us heralds of good news.
Stir us, strengthen us, teach and inspire us
to live your love with generosity and joy,
imagination and courage;
for the sake of your world
and in the name of Jesus. Amen.

With my best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Martin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'M'.