



St Mark's Church, Reigate

January 2018

Letter from the Vicar, Father Martin Colton

Dear Friends

'All in good time'

Your travel plans may well have suffered some disruption in November due to the emergency roadworks on London Road just south of the Level Crossing. As a safety measure, the road was closed to south-bound traffic with a diversion along Raglan Road and Croydon Road. Although this was a relatively short redirection, given the volume of traffic that uses Reigate Hill, long and slow moving queues of motorists became a common occurrence along Raglan Road, especially at the junction with Croydon Road. As the maintenance work progressed it was a real eye opener to see how some drivers navigated the road closure.

Despite many signs stating that the road was closed and bollards on Reigate Hill at the junction with Raglan Road offering a physical barrier, numerous drivers simply ignored the road works and signage. Some cars by weaving around the signs drove down to the Level Crossing to discover no way through even if they tried going over the crossing on the wrong side of the road! Others weaved around Alma Road and Holmesdale Road and other streets in the area, which eventually led to new signs closing Holmesdale Road as well from the Croydon Road end.

Although only a brief picture of modern life, I think it illuminated how busy and time pressured life has become, of how waiting is seen as something to be avoided and how easy it is to ignore the signs telling us to change direction. I'm sure that there are many of us who, despite trying to be patient, don't like waiting. We find, when we get delayed, increasing levels of anxiety, fretfulness and frustration. It's really difficult to stop these forces building up in us so as our waiting drags on, we find it hard to be graceful and still when we experience a delay.

We are in such a rush, so much of the time, unforgiving in the pressure we place on ourselves in our haste. We have come to see waiting as nothing more than a problem, a nuisance, an interruption in our stream of life which breaks the control we think we have over time. The idea that waiting is often necessary, or occasionally valuable, seems hopelessly at odds with the rhythm of life we create and sustain for ourselves. However, having to wait and be at the mercy of another challenges the illusion that our timetable, our busy plans for getting things done, should take priority over everybody and everything else that matters.

Chronic busyness, when we start to define ourselves by how busy we are, is addictive and it conspires to deaden our understanding of the true value and purpose of God-given time. It takes hold when we have not asked ourselves what is important in our lives and had the strength to stick to these priorities.

I pray that 2018 will be a year where we don't attempt to drive through the roadworks, that it will be filled with unavoidable slowness. A year where we can fully live out the refrain 'all in good time' and discover the growth and wisdom that comes from patient and graceful waiting. If there's still room for another New Year's resolution, make it your intention to find the space and stillness in 2018 to breathe fully, to stop the rush and to experience the wholeness and blessing that God pours into all our lives.

May I wish you all a happy and fruitful New Year.

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