



St Mark's Church, Reigate

March 2018

Letter from the Vicar, Father Martin Colton

Dear Friends

Cracks in our lives

How are you getting on with your Lenten discipline? Perhaps you are struggling, or maybe the change of behaviour you committed to hasn't been easy to keep up. Possibly you can't see the point, questioning why anyone would want to try and change their behaviour anyway.

Recently I was having a chat with a friend over coffee. By chance a song that we both liked started to play in the café which, like a piece of bait, caught our attention, drawing us into a conversation about pieces of music which stirred our hearts. The discussion continued for some time as we reminisced over what we were doing when certain songs were in the charts. We then started quoting lyrics from songs which had become almost like totem poles in our lives; words that had held a deep spiritual significance at key times in our existence.

My friend explained that there was a line in Leonard Cohen's song 'Anthem' which he had returned to many times over the years. These words held a special significance, as a reminder to him to pay attention to those places in his life where dissatisfaction and hurt lurked. The collection of words drawn from the chorus simply say 'There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in'.

The more I have thought about those words, the more I have come to realise that we all have cracks in us and that these cracks are a good thing. Whether they are caused by the discomfort from living in the wrong way, the ache of guilt hanging on from the past or the self-imposed suffering from viewing ourselves negatively, most of us are held back from living life to the full. But cracks are necessary because they act as a conduit for light. Without a crack we would be sealed off, immune to the growth that light facilitates.

Lent is a time of seriousness and restraint, a period of preparation before we enter the movement from death to life during Holy Week. It's the season where we turn inward to our own hearts, seeking out those spaces of emptiness in us, those cracks in our wholeness which we so often ignore. This may involve giving up a habit which in some way restricts our sense of wholeness or it may mean making a determined effort to cultivate a new way of being which will make us feel more alive.

Lent gives us the opportunity to follow Jesus out into the wilderness, to recognise and struggle with our inner demons, to name and feel the sorrow that comes with a deepening awareness of the cracks which are in all of us. I hope and pray that as Lent continues we all have the courage and strength to find our cracks, turning them gently to the source of light which is Christ. For it is only by allowing the light to penetrate through our fractures that we will discover the healing and new life gifted to us through the Resurrection at Easter.

With my best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Manton', written in a cursive style.