



**St Mark's Church, Reigate**

March 2020

## **Letter from the Vicar, Father Martin Colton**

Dear Friends,

### **Fulfilling Potential**

For my letter this month, I want to quote from the introduction to our Lent course, written by Hilary Brand, and based upon the film *The King's Speech*.

"Over the centuries, Lent has lost its radical edge. For most people now it is a residual custom involving the brief forswearing of chocolate or booze, and perhaps in some church quarters getting together in groups to chat about religious stuff – in these strange things we call Lent courses.

"It was intended to be much more. Historically, Lent was a time for strengthening and for preparation: a time when fasting strengthened flagging will-power; when prayer and meditation prepared for Easter when baptismal vows were renewed. It was based on Christ's forty days in the wilderness. Just as Jesus knew how vital was that strengthening and preparation for what was to come, so it seems did his early followers. In those tough times, they understood, rather more than we do, what a radical and crucial calling they had to fulfil.

"Followers of Jesus Christ are described in the New Testament as "a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2.9) and as the recipients of a "glorious inheritance" and an "incomparably great power" (Ephesians 1.18-19) – people with incredible potential and enormous responsibility; people with a duty – to speak with authority about that which is loving and true.

"Yet these days many of us seem to have lost our voice. So eloquent are the voices raised against faith – and often so subtly dismissive – that we no longer believe we have a right to be heard. So private has our religion become that propriety prevents us either revealing our pain or offering encouragement. So flabby are our wills and so strong are our fears that we have lost the sense of who we could become and what together we might accomplish.

"That is why Lent remains important and why Lent courses, if entered into with honesty and commitment, can be vital staging posts in the journey towards fulfilling spiritual potential. And why, in this case, a film like *The King's Speech* is such a powerful tool."

I will be running the course in Church on Wednesday evenings at 8pm starting on 4 March and repeated on Thursday mornings at 9.30am starting on 5 March for 5 weeks. All are welcome whether you have followed this sort of course before or not. Later in the magazine we have reproduced the full introduction to the course.

With every blessing.

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