



St Mark's Church, Reigate

August 2019

Letter from the Vicar, Father Martin Colton

Dear Friends,

The service of Compline (or 'Night Prayer') is one of my favourite services. At St Mark's we usually only have Compline in Holy Week when it ends our journey through the Stations of the Cross, but perhaps we should have it at other times of the year as well.

A service of quietness and reflection, Compline has deep roots in the Church. It is mentioned from the 4th Century and commended by the great monastic innovator, St Benedict. Its name comes from the Latin for 'completion'. I like to think of it as a way of gathering together the pieces of the day and the different, sometimes fragmented parts of my own self in order to surrender them, before sleep, to God.

All prayer is a kind of surrender to God, a surrender of that territory we try to keep for ourselves. We so often hide from God parts of our lives and ourselves; either out of fear that God will disapprove (of the dingy, unkempt or embarrassing bits) or out of the strange belief that there are parts in which God has no interest! Whatever we surrender (which God has all along known and loved), that territory is transformed into the beautiful, fruitful garden we really desire it to be.

Mother Julian of Norwich wrote that when we are full of peace and love (which we seek in prayer), "then we find no striving in ourselves and are not hindered by the strife that is in us now. For that strife is the cause of our troubles and sorrow." The glory of our redemption through Jesus our Saviour is that God takes our strivings, our hidden struggles and worries, and sends them to heaven, where, Julian says: "they are made more sweet and delectable than heart can think, or tongue can tell. And when we get there we shall find them waiting, all turned into lovely and lasting glory."

Perhaps over the summer we can all reflect on our personal and corporate prayer life and return in September with renewed zeal and a hunger to listen to God in prayer. Together we can learn better how to surrender in prayer and so build that heaven here in Reigate.

With my best wishes