



St Mark's Church, Reigate

October 2019

Letter from the Vicar, Father Martin Colton

Dear Friends,

If there is one thing that history teaches us, it is that we are not good at learning the lessons of history! The human race tends to repeat the mistakes of the past. This nation stands at a crucial point in its history, having taken a momentous decision to leave the EU, a decision which has deeply divided us. Whichever way we voted in 2016, we need to recognise that almost half of the nation voted the other way! Whatever the outcome of negotiations, the UK is going to face great uncertainties and difficulties over the next six to eighteen months - and almost certainly much longer - as we seek to find new ways of relating to our European friends - who sometimes, for very good reasons of their own, do not seem to be too friendly!

If we believe that the affairs of this world are ultimately governed by our sovereign God who is seated upon his throne, and whose kingdom will never end, then this is the lens through which we should see human history. What is God's purpose and will for us as a nation within the continent of Europe? Every human institution and structure is both inevitably flawed and also subject to God's judgement. If, then, we place our hope on any human institution or structure, we are standing on shaky ground. As the great hymn reminds us "What with care and toil he buildeth, tower and temple fall to dust." There has been much talk of sovereignty in recent times, but the sovereignty of God is the only sovereignty that truly matters. So, as the first line of that hymn says, "All my hope on God is founded".

If our hope is placed on God alone, we know we are standing on solid ground. Our faith in the kingdom also removes fear from us, and enables us to face all the uncertainties of the future. The position we are called as Christ's followers to adopt is one of fervent prayer. Prayer for those in authority (1 Timothy 2.1-4) that this nation, and indeed the world as a whole, will recognise God's sovereign power, and seek first his kingdom and righteousness. Let us be wide awake at this time, and never cease to call upon the Lord to have mercy upon us, that his will and purpose for us, for Europe, and for all the world, will be accomplished. The lessons of history, however, are not encouraging! Yet we should never cease in our prayers and longing for peace and harmony in the world which will only find its fulfilment in God's kingdom - the kingdom that has no end.

With every blessing.