



St Mark's Church, Reigate

May 2021

Letter from the Vicar, Father Martin Colton

Dear Friends,

Mindfulness, meditation and prayer

At this time of year we are mindful of spring, new life and a renewal – 'mindful' being the operative word. The practice of mindfulness keeps us grounded and enables us to check in with how we really feel deep down and what state of mind we are in. It also brings us back into the present moment, calling us away from worrying about the past or the future.

It can be difficult keeping in touch with how we are doing within ourselves and what our present state our mind is. Often, we only become acutely aware when we are in or approaching a crisis point. Many of us will currently be aware of the potential for a looming mental health crisis due to the pandemic.

A paper written by Mind in June 2020 makes the following two points, amongst others:

- More than half of adults (60%) and over two thirds of young people (68%) have said their mental health got worse during lockdown.
- The coronavirus pandemic will leave a deep and lasting scar on the mental health of millions in this country.

There are several techniques or practices that can both enhance our awareness and increase the wellbeing of our mental health. They might also act as a crisis prevention measure and reduce our risk of being included in those statistics. Mindfulness is one, but others include silent meditation and prayer. These can also be used in conjunction with walking – mindful walking, prayer walking, which also enable us to take in the health benefits of the natural environment.

There are many verses in the Bible that bring hope, encouragement, reassurance, comfort and peace. But, unfortunately, in some cases when people have struggled with poor mental health these have only served to cause guilt and condemnation. The thought being, that if you read the Bible and believe then you 'should' be able to overcome. This ignores the love and compassion that God offers us, and that God knows that our humanity comes with earthly challenges and struggles.

The Christian life reminds us that every day is a new opportunity to receive new life, renewal, acceptance and love. Every day is a fresh start! Maybe today is your day to try mindfulness, meditation or prayer.

With my best wishes