



St Mark's Church, Reigate

August 2022

Letter from the Vicar, Father Martin Colton

Dear Friends,

What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.
No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows.
No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.
No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.
No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance.
No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began.
A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

These words, from the poem *Leisure* by W H Davies were written over a hundred years ago, yet, despite the massive shifts in technology and culture we still cheat ourselves of time to "stop and stare". I can imagine the poet dreaming of a future time when technology might transform our living, slowing us down offering more leisure, more opportunities to reflect on what it is to be a human or just **to be**.

Confounding that dream, technology has done the opposite. It has filled our activities even more. We might stop and stare, but we stare at the TV, our laptops, our tablets. But we, as followers of Jesus, are encouraged to stop and stare. Jesus said: "Do not worry and labour? Consider the lilies of the field. They do not labour or spin. Yet, I tell you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these."

Take time, stop, stare and ...

Pray (and prayer doesn't always mean to prattle on without leaving space to listen). Our lives are busy, frenetic and always on the go and God didn't create us to withstand that constant tsunami of information, technology and communication.

Take time. God offered us Sabbath; time, not exclusively a Sunday, when we can contemplate and pray deeply about things. We need to read our Bibles, sit silently and see that Jesus often went off to "a certain place" to pray with God, to reflect to make space for God and stop and stare. If Jesus needed that then we must follow his example.

So I encourage you to take space, take time, grasp opportunity to just stop, stare and see and listen for what God has for you: "a poor life this if, full of care, / We have no time to stand and stare." And "Consider the lilies..."

With my best wishes