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Dear friends,

Where does the time go? We are now over halfway through this year and heading towards the end of the school year. It is not just that the year races along at break neck speed, but each day appears to move along. How is it that we just cannot find the time to do all of the activities we want to do? I spend my life prioritising, as well as responding to situations. And I am sure the same is true of you as well, whether you are in paid employment, looking after young children, or retired. Everyone is in a rush. When I was in Kentucky last summer, I sat on the porch and watched a humming bird feeding at a special nectar feeder. The tiny bird's wings were moving so quickly they were just a blur. The feeding activity was very rapid, before it dashed off to find another feeder or flower. There was still plenty of nectar in the feeder, but the bird clearly decided not to stay there, but dash to something different. The parallel with many of us and the way we live is startlingly obvious.

There is a biography of Desmond Tutu now available in the shops, 'Rabble-rouser for Peace'. We all know how much this remarkable man has achieved in his life. Despite suffering from prostate cancer and now seeing the advancement of years, he is a bundle of energy. Yet if you read this book, you will see the remarkable fact that he spends six hours each day in prayer, worship, Bible reading and religious reading. Six hours! I meet people all the time who say they cannot find the time to pray, to read the Bible, or indeed come regularly to church. The point clearly is that giving time to our spiritual growth helps us realise the things in life that really matter. As another year flies along, perhaps we do all need to re-examine our priorities and our use of time. I spent three days in May on a Cursillo weekend at Pleshey organised for people in the Diocese. I went as many of my friends in the U.S.A. have been to these weekends, which happen in countries all around the world. I also went to see if this was something I could recommend to people in the parish and also the Readers in the Deanery for which I have a level of

responsibility. There was also the possibility that I could be involved with running these events which happen twice a year in our diocese. It was a remarkable time, a few days where I saw many people visibly grow in their faith as they received a new realisation of God's love for them. The weekend was unlike anything I have experienced before. The style would certainly not suit everyone, but I can think of many people who would benefit. I have further information and would be happy to talk to anyone about Cursillo. There is more information available by just putting 'Chelmsford Cursillo' in your web browser. I have information about all kinds of retreats available around the country and also around the world. Information is also available on the internet from the Retreat Association at [retreats.org.uk](http://retreats.org.uk).

We should expect to be surprised by God all of the time. I am delighted to say that some time next year Revd. Miranda Seaman will be joining our team. Miranda has been the curate at St. Peter's South Weald for two years. She is leaving there, and taking maternity leave from her full time job as a partner in a firm of solicitors, to have her first child. Miranda will be working with us three Sundays out of four and one evening a week. I have nothing but admiration for people like Sue, Frances and Miranda. Priests who trained in the evenings, then give time to ministry and hold down paid jobs and juggle with family and other commitments. When we consider the use of time and prioritising our activities, such people are shining examples. Of course they are many other people in our churches who also give freely of their time to God. Our Annual Parochial Church Meetings were times when these good people were thanked. Our community is also blessed with many people who are involved with the numerous organisations that give life to villages. The Horticultural Society, The Historical Society, The Choral Society, etc, etc. Groups that have life through the willing giving of time by many. These numerous societies deserve our support. The village would be a life-less place without them. God calls us to live in community, not isolated. Time spent chatting with an elderly neighbour or an under-pressure young mum, or indeed anyone, is time well spent, not a waste of time.

Yours in Christ, *Patrick*