

Faith Comment published in the Petersfield Post

11 January 2017: Ann Saunders, St Laurence Catholic Church

Manners Cost Nothing



One Sunday the front entrance at Waitrose was a bit congested — customers were queuing for their free hot drink, boxes of fruit and veg were waiting to be put on shelves — with only a narrow route to the first aisle. A kind soul was helping an old lady in a wheel-chair choose a sandwich from a cabinet and they momentarily were blocking the way. A woman behind tutted and her eyes lifted heavenwards showing annoyance, and she begrudgingly had to change direction. This is just one of the many examples of people's lack of courtesy and thoughtfulness I have witnessed all too frequently.

On the roads drivers seem to be more and more in a hurry, seldom thanking fellow drivers for waving them through, and I've seen impatient drivers hooting and intimidating P-Plate drivers. On pathways, some cyclists don't show courtesy to pedestrians, and many shoppers don't express thanks when a door is held open for them. Is it because everyone seems to be more stressed nowadays?

We could all be a little more caring and understanding in our everyday lives. A small act of kindness can snowball. If you let someone jump the queue as they only have one or two items, they will probably do a kind act to someone else, and so on. Following on from the novel and subsequent film, there's now a 'Pay It Forward' Day (April 27th this year) where good deeds received are passed on to others. Why wait till April?

We all know how difficult it is to keep New Year Resolutions. My Ancient Greek Beginners' Book (yes really!) lies gathering dust and I only got to the fourth Lesson of the 'Seven Brief Lessons on Physics' last year. There is nothing wrong with setting ambitious goals, but aiming to be more courteous and kind to others in 2017 should be both realistic and easy to achieve, and studies have even revealed that kindness helps relieve stress.

After you!