

## Pastoral Letter – East Anglia District

Chair of the District - Revd. Julian M. Pursehouse

October 2020

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The people who know me well, my family and friends, would most likely say that I am a naturally optimistic person who tends to see the good in all situations and in the people, I meet. Whilst this may well be the default setting of my soul; I have to confess that there have been moments of utter despair over the last seven months as we have struggled with the reality of the viral pandemic and the vast disruptions to our settled ways of life. The sense of looking into a dark and never-ending tunnel that appears to have no end or light to beckon has been an image that has sometimes played upon my mind. Most of the time I have been able to breathe deeply, collect my thoughts, find consolation in the faith and the arts and regroup – like many of you I've faithfully continued to put one foot forward and take the next step in the day!

One of the sources of consolation and delight has been the rich treasure-trove of poetry - English literature and poetry has been a lifelong passion! Earlier this month, one of Ireland's leading poets, Derek Mahon died and I was reminded of his beautifully reassuring poem: **'Everything is going to be all Right'**. At the heart of this poem is the simple truth that *all things pass* and that is not to say that life will be easy or perfect; far from it; but it is to suggest that there is a *seasonal* nature to much of what happens to us in the rich tapestry of human experience. Mahon references the awful reality of suffering and death but it is followed by the encouragement not to dwell here longer than is necessary. Reassurance comes through being attentive to the gift of the present moment – *'How should I not be glad to contemplate the clouds clearing beyond the dormer window and a high tide reflected on the ceiling?'* Later in the poem there is the simple but profound realisation that *'The sun rises in spite of everything and the far cities are beautiful and bright.'* I wonder whether there is a note of both realism and reassurance for us here; particularly as we face the spectre of a further six months of disruption, uncertainty and intermittent lockdowns of varying severity? Here is the poem in its entirety – read, enjoy and think!

### **Everything is Going to be All Right**

*How should I not be glad to contemplate  
the clouds clearing beyond the dormer window  
and a high tide reflected on the ceiling?  
There will be dying, there will be dying,  
but there is no need to go into that.  
The lines flow from the hand unbidden  
and the hidden source is the watchful heart.  
The sun rises in spite of everything  
and the far cities are beautiful and bright.  
I lie here in a riot of sunlight  
watching the day break and the clouds flying.  
Everything is going to be all right.*

**Derek Mahon.**

*Peace and Blessing, Julian*