

April is the cruelest month, breeding Lilacs out of the dead land

The opening words of T S Eliot's famous poem *The Wasteland* are not especially uplifting – and indeed that poem written in 1922 in the aftermath of the First World War and the Spanish Flu pandemic is a complex, dark and dystopian take on the way the world had emerged from those two catastrophes.

A century on and Easter is late this year with the first part of the month firmly rooted in Passiontide so Eliot's poem might not seem out of kilter with the times. We too are emerging from a pandemic and an uneasy world faces climate change, a resurgence of cold war rhetoric, profound economic challenges and a struggle to integrate different cultures and creeds with society in flux. The Church itself can seem out of sorts, lacking in confidence, struggling to pay its way with numbers apparently continuing to decline.

And yet this is also the month when we, as a church, celebrate the miracle of Easter.

Against all the odds and every expectation, we shall once again declare: Christ is Risen!
When all seems lost, and every hope dashed, Jesus comes to Mary Magdalene in the Garden and asks: "Woman, why are you weeping?"

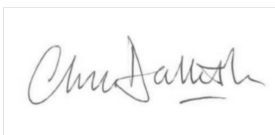
The fact is that she like, the other disciples, like Jesus' enemies could never have imagined this moment. But here and now, in the Garden, Jesus demonstrates that nothing can prevail

against the unstoppable power of God's love.

That was a truth that TS Eliot owned. Twenty-two years after *The Wasteland*, as the Second World War reached its climax, he published another great work: *The Four Quartets* which ends by speaking of the fusion of pain and love (the fire and the rose) that unmistakably speak of Christ's self-sacrifice and by referencing the words of Julian of Norwich, "all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well" that assure us that, despite it all April is in fact the month when our hopes are rekindled and God's promises fulfilled:

*And all shall be well and
All manner of thing shall be well
When the tongues of flame are
in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are
one.*

May joy and peace be yours this
Easter



The Very Revd Chris Dalliston
Dean of Peterborough

