

Happy New Year
by Joan Wilkinson

As we come to the New Year I find myself looking back at the year just gone, remembering so many good things that have happened but also the not so good. Losing my sister in September reminds me of the last time we celebrated the New Year together – her childlike excitement at seeing another year of surviving the cancer which would finally claim her life. Loss and life will always remain close bedfellows but it is the image of celebrating the coming of a New Year with those who are close to us, which remains with me at this time of welcoming in 2019.

Whatever our last year has brought, there is the thought that as we move forward the days will become lighter and new life will constantly emerge. Walking round the garden only a few days before Christmas I felt an upsurge of joy to see that the many spring bulbs I had planted in the Autumn, were already above ground. No doubt there will be many cold snaps to delay their growth, but nevertheless I felt this to be a sign that the dark days will pass.

2018 has not been a good year in the world, as war has killed and maimed many, and millions of people are without homes and food. Politicians at home and abroad cannot work together leaving the people they are supposed to care for, in their ordering of society, disillusioned. Seasons are in disarray due to climate change with leaders of nations shrugging off their responsibilities to even discuss the ways in which our planet can be cared for or failing to notice that our seas are awash with plastics, which we carelessly toss away without thought.

And yet there are, as there have always been, voices calling in the wilderness. We must take heed of these voices as we move forward into the New Year. Many, many times it is the young who are showing us the way, the young who will be here long after I have gone. It is to these I look, as we enter 2019. It is these who give me hope and who demonstrate that life is indeed a precious gift and one we should always be grateful for.

So, whilst recognizing what has gone before we can face the future with hope, in fact we must face the future with hope and gratitude for all that is good and all that which will make the world a better place for all. The daffodils will continue to bloom in the spring.

May I wish you all joy and peace for 2019.