

## **“For you are dust, and to dust you shall return”.**

**Genesis 3:19**

This invidiously cruel year of 2020 is certainly a time I won't forget in a hurry. It's now the middle of September and over the next two weeks I'm taking some long overdue time off and time out, to recharge some much depleted batteries. Over the next two weeks I'm going to lean back, if only for a couple of moments each day, to take a breath, reflect and recognize how fragile life is and how beautiful so much of it has been and still remains for us despite the scourge of coronavirus and new restrictions imposed on our lives. The fifteenth century French writer and philosopher Michel de Montaigne, in his selected essays, wrote that a certain tribe in Africa used to put a skull on the table before a major celebration would begin. The reason was not to depress people, but to help them realize how fleeting life was so they would enjoy this important experience even more. I get that. Life is very fleeting; but this is not a version of “Drink and be merry, for tomorrow we may die.” Rather, it's a gentle reminder that we should all be grateful and “drink in” all the precious moments before us. Because, it's just a fact of life that on one of these “tomorrows” we or someone we love will die. All gathering leads to losing, all meeting to separation, every birth ends in death. Realizing this deeply - especially during a holiday - is not a depressing thought, but can offer us a special opportunity. It's a chance for us; because at this point we are not dead yet. Also, those who live in our home, office, neighbourhood, and yes, on our Facebook pages are not gone... yet. Just as in Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, the season isn't gone, we are not dead. We still have a chance! Now, we must take it. If 2020 has taught us anything it should be to “seize the day”! So, please make sure that that you can find some precious time in this challenging year when you find yourself looking at things very closely. Days you go deep down into things; days you find God, whatever you perceive God to be. The following poem has touched me deeply in these days.

### **WE ARE MADE TO RISE:**

**George Macleod**

(adapted from The Whole Earth Shall Cry Glory, Iona prayers)

Invisible we see You, Christ above us.

With earthly eyes we see above us, clouds or sunshine, grey or bright.

But with the eye of faith, we know You reign: instinct in the sun ray,  
speaking in the storm, warming and moving all Creation, Christ above us.

Invisible we see You, Christ beneath us.

With earthly eyes we see beneath us stones and dust and dross.

But with the eye of faith, we know You uphold.

In You all things consist and hang together:

The very atom is light energy, The grass is vibrant, The rocks pulsate.

All is in flux; turn but a stone and an angel moves.