

Lockdown

Yes, there is fear.
Yes, there is isolation.
Yes, there is panic buying.
Yes, there is sickness.
Yes, there is even death.
But, they say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise,
You can hear the birds again.

They say that after just a few weeks of quiet,
The sky is no longer thick with fumes
But blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi
People are singing to each other
Across the empty squares,
Keeping their windows open
So that those who are alone
May hear the sounds of family around them.

They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland
Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.
Today a young woman I know,
Is busy spreading fliers with her number
Through the neighbourhood,
So that the elders may have someone to call on.

Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples
Are preparing to welcome
And shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary

All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting.
All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in a new way.
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality,
To how big we really are.
To how little control we really have.

To what really matters.
To Love.

So, we pray, and we remember that
Yes, there is fear.
But there does not have to be hate.

Yes, there is isolation
But there does not have to be loneliness.

Yes, there is panic buying
But there does not have to be meanness.

Yes, there is sickness
But there does not have to be disease of the soul.

Yes, there is even death
But there can always be a rebirth of love.

Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.
Today, breathe.

Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic
The birds are singing again.
The sky is clearing,
Spring is coming,
And we are always encompassed by Love.

Open the windows of your soul
And though you may not be able
To touch across the empty square,
Sing.

Fr. Richard Hendrick, OFM