

"LOCKDOWN"

*a poem by Richard Hendrick,
a priest in Ireland*

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.

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