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Silver Linings

"My help comes from God, the maker of heaven and earth." Psalm 121:1

Dear Ones,

It hardly feels possible that it is Friday! All my usual markers for a Friday are gone. I almost forgot to put the garbage out, every day looks so much like another without the routines that make up the shape of life. But I am discovering new routines, which seem to give good shape to my day, so that it has a beginning, a middle and an end. Life feels simpler, in some ways.

Last week Jacqui sent the following lovely poem to me, and I tucked it away to pass long to you in a letter. Since then, it has been shared around the world on Facebook over 41,000 times! It was written by Capuchin brother Richard Hendrick of Ireland. I hope it speaks to you, as it has spoken to so many.

"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.

Br. Richard Hendrick, OFM

Grace to you, and peace,

Kate

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*"Our relationship with God and each other strengthens us, and helps make the world a better place.
We welcome and include **everyone** into congregational life."*