

“Hope” – A Poem about the Coronavirus

The following poem was used by Father Joe Cebula, Pastor of St. Mary's Church, Crescent, NY in his live streamed 10:30 am Mass of Sunday, March 22, 2020. All Catholic Churches are closed due to the Coronavirus)

Hope – a poem about the Coronavirus
by Brother Richard Hendrick, Capuchin Franciscan monk living in Ireland

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 neighborhood
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 neighbors 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.