

25 March 2020

'A Candle in the Window'

by Peter Millar
(from the Iona Community)

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 again the song of birds. They say that just after 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 the 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 older folk may have someone to call on.

All over the world, people are preparing to be alongside 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 remember – yes, there is isolation, but that does not mean there has to be loneliness. Yes, there is fear, but that does not have to be hate. Yes, there is panic buying, but that does not have to be meanness. Yes, there is sickness, but that does not have to be sickness of the soul. Yes, there is even death, but there can always be the rebirth of love.

Wake up to the choices you make as to how to live now. Today – breathe – listen – behind the factory noises of your panic, the birds still sing. And we are always encompassed by Love. Open the windows of your soul, and though you may not be able to touch the empty square. Smile and sing and wave to your neighbours! (Words by Richard Hendrick, written earlier this month.)

A Prayer: In these unusual times, where many of the familiar markers are shifting, may the Spirit bless us not only with discomforts or easy answers or half-truths, but with new insights so that we shall live more deeply into our hearts. May we reach out to others in ways we never imagined even a month ago and discover strengths within us which we never believed possible. And be thankful for each precious new morning.

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