Spirituality
News
Soul Seeing



(Unsplash/Jose Antonio Gallego-Vazquez)

by Richard Hendrick

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April 14, 2020
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Editor's note: *Br. Richard Hendrick, a Capuchin Franciscan who lives in Dublin, posted this poem March 13 on his Facebook page. Anderson Cooper read part of the*

poem March 20 on CNN. The poem then went viral. Hendricks told the Huffington Post that "no matter the restrictions or dangers that this pandemic may bring, it will never touch the human soul and that we always have the opportunity to see beauty, offer compassion and touch the Divine, no matter our circumstances." NCR is reprinting the poem with permission.

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 and friends around them.

They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland

Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.

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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.

[Br. Richard Hendrick is a Capuchin Franciscan living in Dublin.]

Editor's note: *We can send you an email every time Soul Seeing is published so you don't miss it. Go to our sign-up page and select Soul Seeing.*

This story appears in the **Coronavirus** feature series. View the full series.
A version of this story appeared in the **April 17-30, 2020** print issue under the headline: 'Open the windows of your soul'.