

24th May 'Comfort my People'

A reflection for Easter written by the archbishop of Lima, Peru.

This reflection springs from the Latin American cultural and religious reality, somewhat different from our own.

However, it may help us experience our solidarity with populations who have suffered in the pandemic in far greater numbers than we have. The archbishop reflects on the love and sufferings of the one and only Christ – before Pilate, on the Cross, and amid the life of the world today.

Who says that Christ is not coming out this year,
when in fact he is dressed in white, blue and green in
hospitals.

Who says that the Nazarene cannot do penance
when they are all self-sacrificing,
by attending to the sick in emergency rooms.

Who says that the fallen Jesus
is not coming out on Holy Wednesday?
Look at him in our doctors
who fall tired and exhausted,

with humble Simon of Cyrene helping at each step -
nurses, care-givers, janitors –
side by side with them without rest.

Like Jesus who passed through the earth on a donkey
so do our heroic truck-drivers spend the nights awake
to supply markets, neighbourhoods, pharmacies, and shops

The military and police patrol deserted streets
and they are not with their families
because they are taking care of ours.

And far from the cities
Jesus is bent on the furrows of earth.
He goes to sea on a boat,
lays cables, digs wells, or grazes the cattle.

Let no one say that the LORD is not present in the streets
when, in empty churches, priests celebrate daily Mass.

Let no one say that the Condemned one
is not coming out this year

as long as there is a kindly voice invoking the one locked up.

Let no one say that the All-powerful One
will not take his walk this year
when so many are praying and offering their lives in love
with tiredness, good humour and without fail.

Christ is also present in supermarkets
replenishing shelves or charging at the cash register.

Jesus comes in a truck painted in white,
collects our garbage and goes away unnoticed.

When I see so many people who have buried their own,
I feel that the patroness of the slums,
the Virgin of Sorrows, has come out with her Son.

And even if passing through the Sepulchre frightens us all
there is where the strength lies
of the One who has conquered the world.

Perhaps there will be no processions with carved images

but now you see Christ meeting you amid life,
hidden in a thousand faces, without candles and bells.

And even if there will be no processions this autumn
We will continue to smell the incense of the faith of your
people.

Love leaps over the walls, the heart does not lock up.

It will be a Holy Week - more than ever true.