

Anguish

The anguish of our faith groups
is deep and is profound
as we are able now to gather
but only in such tiny numbers.
Who can come and who can not?
Is it only open now for those familiar with the internet
or confident enough to overcome
the barriers of phoning for a slot?
Who needs to come the most,
the faithful few who always come
or the many who now feel a need to come?

We know but little of the Buddha and the Prophet,
but we know that Christ
both knew the power of the crowd,
and the dangers that it brings.
He stood on hills and even on a boat
to speak in safety to the gathered throngs.
He fed them in the wilderness.
He then was welcomed to the city of Jerusalem
but hounded next to death by baying mobs,
who chose Barabbas in His place.

He will understand the dangers of the crowded place
as He once raged against the sellers in the temple,
but His heart goes out to friends and foes alike
and wishes always for the open door and welcome in,
in which He says we'll meet our God.
Anguish then is ours today
as the few are welcomed in,
and the many must content themselves
by streaming still, or deep togetherness in prayer,
as once the workers in the fields,
and the prisoners in the camp or cell,
stretched out in union
with the church bell or the rhythm of the day,
to forge that oneness in our God,
which Christ achieves for all.
Thank God that Christ as one of us
can heal our anguish and our feelings of rejection,
and build a union
which still is far beyond all human powers
but brings such inner peace,
a peace that's searched for by us all.

(Canon Andrew Monaghan)