

'Shalom'
[Reflections 2^a]

ANGELUS

1975, barely half a month old now, does seem to have got off to a rather depressing and acrimonious start in HK, doesn't it? What with the Tube project, the Telephone Co. fuss and other local news items that reflect an uneasy feeling in people here who are worried and anxious about a lot of things — for some, even about their livelihood, in these days of world depression. Depression: that's a word that's used about people too — and in an acute form, it describes a kind of mental illness. From time to time, I suppose we all have our "down"-periods, of low-spirits and what we call depression: and there are many people around who'd say there's plenty to be depressed about. But that's not the kind of isolation and withdrawal from others that really is a sickness. Curiously, the current sickness in the western economic world is not only called a depression but shows signs too of nations isolating themselves, withdrawing from others and becoming more self-centred in many ways. Being neither an economist nor a psychiatrist I'd better not push or insist on that parallel: just note its interest, and the fact that there seem to be more people these days who do think there's an in-built sickness in much of the organisation of our economic world. I haven't noticed much suggestion that the world depression we keep hearing about might also be a mental illness... that there is something vital missing. The science and technology that have shaped our world have little room for God or indeed for anything that can't be measured, weighed, seen, quantified, programmed. There's a lack of an adequate understanding and acceptance of man as an individual person besides his economic and social dimension, a person with his own individual

needs, abilities and destiny, his or her relationships with other persons and with God. People protesting, or 'opting-out', or going for astrology, the occult, mysticism (and there's more of this, at a deep level, than often appears) — they're hungry for what's missing in the organisation of our world. We are both social and individual personal beings — if you neglect, ignore or deny one side of our humanness, you end up with a system, a philosophy, a way of living that is sick. Maybe that's what's becoming more clearly evident behind all the crises, conflicts and so on that fill much of our daily newspapers.

But what about you, by yourself I suppose, listening to me talking now? You may be, as I hope you are, happy and in good spirits generally, coping reasonably well with all the problems and difficulties that life brings to everyone in one form or another: or you may be feeling isolated and alone, depressed for some reason. But you know, however bad it is, you're never really alone: God is with you, unseen perhaps and unfelt. The worst thing would be to refuse to accept His existence with you — for then you would have completely isolated yourself, giving in to an illness to which we're all prone to fall. It is remarkable how people do survive even prolonged solitary confinement. Nobody has to put themselves into that position. Perhaps you may wonder if anyone else really does feel the way you do, if anyone cares about you. Well, if you've understood a little why we celebrated Christmas just a couple of weeks ago, you may begin to find an answer there: and besides that, don't give up on other people yourself — we all do need each other, and in the mysterious ways of God there are people you can help, as well as those who can help you; maybe with just a little word of encouragement or hope. Keep your heart open to others.... think about it, and let

"L. Love"
2³

us pray together now. listening first to a prayer in song, based on the Psalms: Hear My Cry

MUSIC - PRAYERS

To follow up what I was saying just then, I'd like to make a suggestion to those of you who listen regularly at this time of day. Surely you too have your own thoughts & reflections on living, on your Xth. life — it's often surprising what effect on people quite a simple, ordinary comment or reflection can have: something you think is an obvious fact, idea, truth can hit some one else as a kind of revelation which gives courage, hope or inspiration. I'm sure many of you listening do have sth. to say which could be of value to others — why not share it with them? Even just a one-sentence reflection, or a quotation that has helped you, might be a good addition to the thoughts and ideas that I give out in these programmes — and it would be good to have some variety of approval, and of voice. Why not put something on a postcard and send it to me Love or RHH — I'd like to try to use it, so that we can all help each other better and realize our community with each other & with Christ.