

MAKESHIFT

They're erecting makeshift hospitals, Father.

In some cities,
 thousands are ill,
 hospitals are overwhelmed,
 beds are jumbled into corridors and storerooms.
So they are constructing field hospitals.

Lacking the accoutrements,
 the design beauty,
 the technology,
 the ornaments,
 the space,
Of established buildings,
Inspired workers meet the need,
Using their gifts and their compassion,
And whatever tools they have,
To bring healing.

It reminds me of the church, Father.
In some places,
Thousands are spiritually ill,
So people gather in field churches,
 under trees or rough shelters,
 in homes or sheds.
Lacking the accoutrements,
 the design beauty,
 the technology,

the ornaments,
the space,
Of established buildings,
Inspired workers meet the need,
Using their gifts and compassion,
And whatever tools they have,
To bring healing.

Do we worry too much about buildings, Father?
Do we put too much focus on the façade
And too little on what happens inside—
Inside the building,
Inside our hearts?

The teacher of religion replied, 'Sir, you have spoken a true word in saying that there is only one God and no other. And I know it is far more important to love him with all my heart and understanding and strength, and to love others as myself, than to offer all kinds of sacrifices on the altar of the Temple.' (Mark 12: 32–33, TLB)