

Gospel Fantasy

The front door bell rings one evening. You open the door, and there to your utter amazement is Jesus, the Risen Lord. There's no doubt about it: it really is him.

You don't quite know what to do. You can hardly leave him standing there on the doorstep. You can't really say; "Would you mind coming back on Sunday.

You invite him in. Naturally you offer him a drink."Tea, coffee?" "No, thank you, I prefer wine." Then you remember how in the Gospel they said that he was rather partial to wine, some said too much so. You are not quite sure what to do next. So you tell him to make himself at home., which sounds a bit odd.

Didn't he say that he would come and make his home with us. Well yes, but we didn't think he actually meant it.

Jesus takes you at your word, and stays in your spare room. Imagine now that he has been with you for a fortnight. How are you getting on?

He watches the TV news with you, and then starts asking awkward questions.

"Is it true that your country makes a lot of money selling weapons around the world?", he asks. "Well yes, as a matter of fact it is, but we only do that to keep the peace," you reply. He looks rather doubtful. He was very shocked to see pictures of people, young and old, sleeping on the streets. He asks how that can happen. You agree that it is all very shocking. Then he asks you "What are you doing about it?" Now you feel better: " Well Lord, I gave ten pounds to a collection at Mass recently." He doesn't seem as impressed as you had expected.

You had told him to make himself at home, and he has done just that and invited people around, very much the same crowd he associated with in the Gospel..... The neighbours are not pleased. It is not going to do anything for property prices in the area.

You decide that he ought to give a talk in the Parish Hall. When it is too late you remember the talk he gave to the Chief Priests and The Pharisees, and how he told them that prostitutes and tax gatherers would enter the Kingdom of God before they did. He says much the same thing here. It does not go down well. That kind of thing is all very well in Capernaum but not in Ashtead, not in Surrey.

You apologise for any offence given, and make your escape. What is to be done.

He has caused trouble at home, trouble with the neighbours and trouble in the Parish. The easiest thing would be to ask him to go, but you can hardly say that to the Risen Lord. Then the answer comes: You look around the house for a suitably large cupboard. You clean it thoroughly, decorate it to look smart, and fit a good string lock on the door. You place Jesus safely inside the cupboard and lock the door. You light a lamp outside the door and keep fresh flowers there. Each time you pass by you bow on deep reverence. You now have Jesus where you want him, and he doesn't interfere anymore.

It really doesn't do to let Jesus affect life in the real world does it?

NB. This homily is based on an idea in a book by a Jesuit priest, Fr Gerard Hughes, if I remember correctly.