

There must have been a moment, maybe just one, maybe more, maybe every week, when you have sat in this or another church on a Sunday morning and thought 'what on earth am I doing here?' Believe me it's something I've asked myself many a time, though not at St Mary's, of course. I know *precisely* what I'm doing here. And it's not what you think...

Anyway, I'm boring, back to you. It would be a reasonable wager that at least one of you this morning has been thinking 'what *am* I doing here'? I can see it in your faces: psychology degrees have their uses. No need to fess up or put your hands in the air, but I'm sure it must have flicked across somebody's mind. Why am I doing this when I could be back home, lounging on the sofa, leafing through the papers, binging on chocolate, tv droning in the background, nice cup of tea. Sounds good! So let's do it. Lets go home, let's all go round to your place.

That didn't take long did it? It's amazing how quickly people can get themselves organised to get out of church. Nice sofa. I see you've tidied up for the rector. Is that Shake & Vac I can smell? Milk, no sugar, thanks. Are you settled down on the sofa? Remote in one hand, cuppa in the other? Don't. Don't get settled. There is an ulterior motive. There's always one of those. There is a reason 100 odd people from church are in your living room. Now that time has come. In fact, now it's time to say your prayers. Because the nightmare of all house hosts is about to begin. The white cotton gloves are being pulled on. You'd better say your prayers... we're going up your stairs.

Can you feel the fear? The cold beads of iced-sweat on your forehead. Your hands suddenly hot and clammy. Yep. Upstairs. Don't expect visitors upstairs do you? Oh no! They might go in the bathroom! The kid's room! But it's even worse than that, because we've lunged directly to your bedroom and are heading straight.... for the wardrobe! ! and, yes it's that serious !

What horrors lurk in your closet? I wonder. Are there perhaps those implausibly skinny clothes that you could squeeze into before ahem, maturity aka middle aged spread wobbled its way into your life, sorry, before your hips / waistline expanded to match your intelligence, you know that stuff that, hope triumphing over experience as usual, you know you will be able to fit back into one day?

What about the stuff you're hanging on to because it might come back into fashion. Anything with shoulder pads? Something made out of a nice indestructible fungus-loving man-made fabric from the 70s? That pastel something that creates so much

static that you electrocute yourself every time you touch the door handle? Perhaps a mini-skirt or a crop top? But less of the Men's Group. Blue-suede shoes, a taffeta dress, tie-died shirt or some fluorescent baggy rave gear?

Of course, priests only ever wear one style and black is always in fashion, so I don't suffer this particular wardrobe embarrassment, but just casting my eye over you now I see the sharpest dressed church congregation ever so I know you've always been at the cutting edge of sartorial elegance. But fashions change and they quickly pass their wear-by date and thus you may well have something at the back of your closet that you might want to stay right there, something that might cause those of a sensitive disposition to faint dead away, something that was once the height of fashion but you wouldn't be seen dead in now. You do, I know, I've seen the photos.

The best advice in such circumstances is to be brutal. Out with the black plastic bags. It's highly unlikely you're ever going to be that thin again, and if it ever does come back into fashion, you'll be 30 years too old to carry it off anyway. That's just the way it is: different ages require different dress senses. That stuff is just wasting wardrobe space and subtly anchoring you to the past. Yesterday is gone. Done. Finito. Finished. O-V-E-R over. Yesterday will never, ever come back.

But how hard it is to let go. How hard it is to put the past behind us. How hard it is, to jettison the accumulations of the years. How hard it is to move on from a place that once made us happy, to leave the niche we have carved for ourselves, to fill the bin-bags and admit to ourselves that things have moved on. It is hard. I know it is hard. Letting go and moving on. Not easy. But if it is *too* hard, I suggest you leave church now.

Because today is Easter day. It is the time of the celestial clean sweep, it is the day of the resurrection, it is the day that changes *everything*. This is neither the time nor the place for holy hoarders.

Today is the first day of the week, but it is also in a so much more than real sense, the very first day of the very first week, because in the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth that we celebrate today God's transforming action has re-created his world. There is a New, a second, Adam who has overridden the mistaken, catastrophic pride of the first. Creation is fallen no longer. This is day one of year zero. The brightest, zingiest, sharpest of fresh starts. It's still you- the hands and the feet still bear the marks of the nails- but it's a *new* you.

So away with yesterday's grave-clothes. Leave them rolled up, neatly folded if you want, or just crumpled in a corner : it doesn't matter, you don't need them.

The resurrection life is not something that will happen at some indefinite point in the future, when we all die, the end is nigh and God decides to roll up the world and end the game. The resurrection has already happened. This is the resurrection age.

And what does that mean? It means that however it was before today it does not have to be that way anymore. The rulers of this world have been thrown down. Greed and exploitation and prejudice and indifference and selfishness and cruelty and suffering will NOT triumph. God's is the victory. We no longer have to play that game, we no longer have to follow the I, Me Mine rules. God's is the victory.

The resurrection changes everything. And that, my dear siblings, includes you.

*Yours is the glory, risen conquering Son!
Endless is the victory, you over death have one.*

He is risen indeed. Alleluia