

I had a dream: a post-Covid 19 dream (hopefully) – it involved loss but also gain. I am in a room of my own – rather comfortable – perhaps in bed – but a vague uneasiness begins to arise and I feel the need to stir myself, to steel myself for action. I wonder what's happened to the class I'm employed to teach, so I go and look but can't find them. I search the whole school several times. I wonder what the other teachers make of me, wandering in and out of their classrooms. I can't find any children I recognise, anywhere. A rising panic assails me until I remember the school has an upstairs room. Maybe they are there. And, of course, they are – but not all of them and, far from rioting, the few that are left are peacefully engaged in reading or chatting or preparing U-tube videos. Indeed, they understand my absence. I was ill. I now go into school-teacher mode and try to be useful, asking them how they are and how their various 'projects' are getting on. But this is for my sake rather than theirs. They are actually doing rather well without me.

Now the psycho-analysts among you can have a field-day with this but I did wonder if it's saying something more general about our experience of lock-down and the problems of emergence; of leaving one 'bubble', perhaps, for another, or at least of enlarging the bubble we are in. And then I wondered whether our uncertainty about our post-Covid 19 world isn't analogous to the uncertainty about the nature of the post-resurrectional world that Jesus is inviting his disciples to enter in today's gospel; that it is indeed analogous to the preparations needed for coping with an entirely new reality none of them can experience while Jesus is actually with them. And what Jesus does is choose about the worst bunch of people you could imagine as the ones to lead us into this new reality. This applies to the other 'disciples' too, those they are called to minister to: the sick, the dead, the diseased, the possessed; those who are to form the new body of Christ. We may want to rush back into the classroom and take up where we left off, but it may be useful to just wait a while and see what this new world already has to offer – perhaps the young have more to teach us than we have to teach them. It's a new landscape: the statues may look the same but everyone of them, now, is invested with new meaning. Do we pull them down or let them be seen in a new light? And so with one another. As we emerge from our bunkers the landscape may look the same and become as populated and as busy as ever, but can we now see this, and each other, in a new light also? Jesus is not calling his people to carry on as usual but to enjoy life in the kingdom of God. It's a whole new world – and it's all right. That goes for the missing children, the missing parts of ourselves, too.

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