

As I was leaving school earlier this week I stopped to talk to some nursery children in the playground and one of them, for no obvious reason, shouted at me, "Quit talking about Jesus." I confess that I was silent for just a moment, surprised, before I answered "Sorry, I don't think that will ever happen." A group of much older students from 'Friern Barnet' heard the exchange standing by their school fence next-door. When I walked past on my way out, one of them tried to 'high five' me, not an easy thing to do through a fence, and said, "Go, priest"! I smiled all the way to the car; talk about inverted expectations! This term we have been travelling with Jesus' parables, poignant, wonderful, stories revealing God's vision for creation. At assembly that morning we had been thinking of the Good Samaritan, a parable told in answer to the question, "Who is my neighbour" (Luke 10.25-37). A brutally injured man, robbed and discarded for dead, a priest, a church worker and the hated enemy, lowest of the low, all find themselves at the scene. Who will show compassion and love? Jesus' stories turn our world on its head because God's world demands upside down. The hated and persecuted enemy was neighbour to the man bleeding by the roadside, not the priest, not the church worker. At the end of his tale, Jesus, says "Go and do likewise". So be it...