

When Christ Steps In

“I never felt welcome there.” Even though the man was referring to a different parish than mine, my heart broke. He should feel welcome in any Catholic church. What went wrong? Did someone say something? Or look at him questioningly? How could the actions of a few change a person’s view of an entire parish? Did he misinterpret the situation?

Perhaps the flute players in today’s Gospel felt similarly. They had spent a lifetime practicing. They enjoyed playing in a group, not solo. They may have been friends. They volunteered at funerals, using their gifts to help others. When they heard that the deceased was a little girl from their tight-knit community, they surely experienced their own grief. They went to the funeral with sorrow in their hearts and flutes in their hands. At the signal, they began to play.

Then a strange man walked in, took charge, and commanded them, “Go away!” But they had come only to help. They surely felt offended and embarrassed. They were doing what they always did when someone died. They probably left thinking they’d never return to that house.

They did not know that the man taking charge was the Son of God. Or that he had come not to offend, not to mourn, but to give life.

When we feel unwelcome, we may want to leave and never return. But perhaps something else may be happening. Sometimes we should stay nearby and await the power of Christ.

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