

Traveling Companion: There goes the doorbell

Fr. Michael Tracey

I had just come home after celebrating the Sunday morning Masses. It was 12:20 p.m. I was looking forward to a few hours of rest and relaxation in my favorite recliner when the doorbell rang. I did not answer it.

Where I live – sans a rectory – my doorbell rarely rings. I like it that way because when I leave the office in the evenings and do not have any meetings, I like to vegetate with a good book or work on some project without any interruptions.

Why did I not answer the door bell on Sunday afternoon? Basically, I knew who was at the door and choose not to answer it. Let me explain! I drove to the house and, as I neared it, I noticed a golden colored mini-van pull up outside. Inside, I noticed three adults. They were immaculately dressed in their Sunday best. One was a gentleman and the others were two ladies.

I zapped my remote garage opener and the door opened its ready mouth to receive me. Once inside, I zapped the remote again and it brought its metal curtain down to protect me. As I opened the door leading from the garage to the house, I heard the doorbell call out. I had already decided to ignore it.

From behind closed doors, I did some investigating. The threesome had divided up and were canvassing for recruits. A man and a woman worked the other side of the street. The other woman worked my side of the street. I watched as they rang doorbells. No doors seemed to be opening to receive them, even though I noticed some cars parked outside them. When the recruiters didn't get an answer, they pressed some literature under the door and headed to the next house, hoping for a warmer reception. About twenty minutes later, they came back to their van and drove off to canvas some other areas.

Later on, I decided to check out my gift by the front door. The front of the flyer showed a picture of Jesus with a crown of thorns. The caption said, "No greater love was ever seen." The back of the flyer was an invitation to attend the local Kingdom Hall on the Saturday before Easter Sunday where why Jesus' sacrifice was the demonstration of a love beyond compare would be explained to me. I would also be able to hear a talk entitled, "Who is qualified to rule mankind? Humorously, I checked my calendar and found out that I had prior commitments on both days.

Deep down, I admire people like the three adults who tried to get me to open my door to receive their invitation. Unapologetic about their faith, they were not embarrassed to go door to door to invite people to share a part of their services with them.

I wonder how many Catholics would be willing to go door to door to invite people to attend Holy Week Services or Easter Services. Obviously, it is not our nature or disposition as Catholics to go out and invite people to any of our services. Usually, Catholics are very private about their faith. Often in climates where Catholics are a minority, we seem even apologetic for being Catholic.

I wonder how many converts to the Catholic faith have come through an invitation to attend. I wonder about the thousands of people who participate in the R.C.I.A. (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) each year; how many of them were "canvassed" into becoming Catholic? I have heard stories of many spouses who became Catholic, not because they were invited to become Catholic but because no one put any pressure of them to consider becoming Catholic. I wonder how many Catholics ever invite a neighbor or friend who possesses no religious affiliation to come and see what the Catholic Church offers. I wonder how many Catholics have ever invited family members who have given up the practice of their Catholic faith to reconsider.

In the near future, I don't anticipate any knock at my door from a fellow Catholic inviting me to my Church. If they do knock at my door, it probably will be one of my good Catholic neighbors with some homemade goodies for my tea.