

Mercedes visitors

It was Saturday morning around 11:30 a.m. A silver colored Mercedes car stood near my gate. A short time later, I heard the gate open and I noticed a middle aged man and woman walk up the driveway.

I wondered who my guests might be. Were they some rick folks from the States and hired a upscale car to tour the country. Maybe, they had known me or being an acquaintance in my former life and wanted to check up on me. Maybe, it was a sales call, trying to sell me “one of a kind” exclusive necessity for my house. Maybe it was someone from the National Lottery coming to bring me good news even though I didn’t buy a ticket.

I soon found out the real intent. I watched the couple walk up the driveway and near my door. Soon, I heard the doorbell. Moments later, I opened it. The woman greeted me with, “It seems winter has returned.” She was speaking about the misty rain that was falling gently on man and beast alike. She was wearing a dark coat over a blue dress and her companion wore a black trousers, a white shirt, blue tie and a light overcoat. I detected a British accent and presumed that the man was also British even though he didn’t speak. “We would like to leave you some material,” she continued. With that, she pushed two magazines into my outstretched hand. I accepted them, thanked them and ended the conversation with, “have a nice day.”

In our countryside, we have a neighborhood watch looking out for each other and any “out of the ordinary” activity, visitors or unusual behavior. I, too, had learned to have a healthy suspicion of people who were not native or familiar with the area.

A few minutes later, I noticed five cars converging on the church’s parking lot right next to my home. As I watched, I noticed several couples, exit the cars, walk around some as if to stretch their limbs. Some time later, I noticed car trunks being opened and people were transferring what seemed like literature from one car to another. A few minutes later, the five cars took off in various directions to knock on other doors.

I found it interesting that they should stop at a church parking lot to strategize their next move but, maybe, then again, it could seem a natural place to meet. I also found it interesting that all the cars had the same county registration, namely Dublin. I presumed two things: First of all, all the drivers and occupants were English and secondly, they had probably rented the cars to take them to the byways of Ireland.

Another interesting thing I noticed was that the ones who came to visit me were traveling in a Mercedes car. Either they were the leaders or very important persons or, on seeing my house, decided that its occupant deserved the best and were willing to oblige.

Obviously, they didn’t realize that yours truly was a priest and would be celebrating Mass in the church across the road that same weekend. Of course, I was intent on keeping my own secret and savoring the moment, which I did.

I began to compare my experiences now with the past. In the past, I received literature from white shirted, black tied, young men, on bicycles, even though then, I lived next to the church. Now, the scenario was the same except, they traveled around the countryside, not on a bicycle but in a Mercedes car.

Oh! You may wonder about the literature they gave me. Sadly, I did not open it. Only one word was needed to catch my eye and the decision to send it to file 13 was easily made. What was that one word, you may ask: “Watchtower.”