

“Do You Know Who I Am?”

Anyone here heard of Ronnie Pickering? No. I thought not. There was a YouTube video of a road rage incident that went viral a few years ago in which a motorcyclist and a motorist get into an angry altercation. There is no indication of what brought about the row but the exchange between them was recorded on the biker’s helmet camera and gets pretty heated until, at one point, the driver of the car yelled “Do you know who I am?” to which the bemused motorcyclist replied “No, I’ve no idea who you are”. The motorist then shouted “I’m Ronnie Pickering”. “Who?” “Ronnie Pickering!” the driver shouted more loudly. “Who?” asked the biker. An irate Ronnie Pickering then rolled down the window and yelled at the top of his voice “I’M RONNIE PICKERING!!!” This was obviously meant to impress and intimidate the motorcyclist, and make him back off in deference to the great Ronnie Pickering, but he was still none the wiser. And neither was I. Because Ronnie Pickering, whoever he was, is now most famous for shouting “I’m Ronnie Pickering” in that video clip so much so that you have to drill down deep into the archives of search engines to discover that Ronnie Pickering was once a boxer, now retired and now more of an amateur coarse fisherman.

The cry “Do you know who I am?” is often used by those the world calls celebrities to impress or intimidate people who are making difficulties for them. When her husband was pulled over by a police officer for a driving offence, actress Reese Witherspoon, who was in the car with him, confronted the officer, “Don’t you know who I am? You’re about to find out”, she threatened darkly. Someone called Tara Reid, who apparently is also an actress, or I think I’m supposed to say actor these days, caused a commotion in a clothes shop when a sales assistant refused to give her a discount. “Don’t you know who I am?” She screamed as she was escorted out of the shop by security.

I suppose celebrity can go to your head and give you a false impression of your importance, and it is precisely this attitude that Jesus condemns in the Gospel where people who think they are important presume they can just waltz in and take the place of honour at the banquet. Their humiliation is

complete then when someone more important than they comes in and the host tells the first arrival to move down the pecking order.

As Christians we are followers of Jesus who, as the Son of God, made the greatest act and example of humility of all by leaving behind his glory as the Son of God and his rightful place at the right hand of the Father at the banquet table of heavenly life. As St Paul writes in the Letter to the Philippians:

His state was divine, yet he did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave, and became as men are; and being as all men are, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross.
(Phil 2:6-8)

Jesus is our model. He did not flaunt his status as Son of God, indeed he referred to himself as Son of Man and he set us the example of serving our brothers and sisters, especially those in need, rather than lording it over them when he knelt and washed his disciples' feet. May we never think of ourselves as superior to others and always welcome others, however difficult or off-putting with the same deference and respect we would use towards the queen or the pope.

An MP was visiting an old people's home in his constituency and one old lady was completely ignoring him. "Do you know who I am?" He asked. The old lady looked up sympathetically from her knitting "No dear, but ask the nurse, I'm sure she'll be able to tell you".