

Rector's diary entry: meet wife in Norwich, have coffee.

However, having arrived a bit early for my "appointment," I had to wait for a shopping hiatus. (Later, I neatly body-swerved John Lewis but was then tackled from behind by Fat Face.) My hiatus was spent in St Stephen's churchyard, people-watching, as they passed through between Chapelfield and Market Place.

It's a curious thing that all they who were trying to sport a particular image - a "look" - seemed to be so frozen or stone-faced in presenting themselves to the public gaze; it was almost as if a smile or relaxation might spoil the make-up, dishevel the ensemble or break the moulded hair-do - crack the mask.

Conversely, a whole host of people seemed full of joy: parents bouncing along with children, old people glad just to be out in the community, grant-reliant students enjoying each other's company, bedecked in the cast-offs recycled by charity shops.

I suspect people of the "masked" group might be missing what the other group had kept: the ability to be themselves. Possibly a bit fanciful, but the people of the former group seemed prisoners of the world's fads, quite literally slaves to fashion; the others appeared to be living the moment as a testimony to their own uniqueness the way God made them.

We're well past Easter now but every Sunday celebrates the resurrection - the giving back of our freedom to the full life God gave and which Jesus regained for us. Free from the world's expectations and pretensions; a testimony to its own uniqueness. God is God irrespective of fashion. The story of His son, Jesus, is not done up for "acceptable" presentation to power brokers or "polite society." It is what it is: a message unfashionably joyful.

Perhaps so many take offence at it because secretly they know this message will show who we really are in the greater scheme of things: vulnerable in our conception, unique in our existence, dependant on God at our end.

Green with blue, flip-flops in church, afro or short-back-and-sides? It really doesn't matter because nothing counts for anything without Christ risen from the dead, without which there is no freedom, no real life. Let's take off our metaphorical make-up and be the people Jesus set free.