

A Brief Corner Visit

By Christ Hirschhorn

Howard, my gentleman friend, brought me to visit his parents who were observant Orthodox Jews. They lived on the first floor of a high rise in Queens. First floor is important for Orthodox Jews because they can't use electric things including elevators during the Sabbath. On Friday evenings before sundown, Howard's mom would light one stove burner and also turn on the needed lights in the bedroom, kitchen, bathroom and living room before sundown.

When Howard brought me to visit his folks, his dad sat in a distant corner of the room far away from where I was seated so he shouldn't catch a bit of suspected Irish-ness or Catholicism from me.

Mom, on the other hand, pulled her chair close to me and peered closely at me and asked: "So Where do you live? I answered, "in the Bronx". Her face was blank. I continued. "Where I live there are mostly Jews. South of where I live is where the Irish Catholics live by Sacred Heart Church.

She excitedly said: "Louis did you hear? The Catholics live south of where Chris lives." I then realized that she interpreted my reply incorrectly or maybe she was trying to encourage dad to be happy about me, the woman her son loved. Dad persisted in sitting in his distant corner trying to determine what this meeting meant.

When Howard and I left his parents, mom said "Goodbye" and Dad said "Goodbye Christ". My appalled self told me not to correct dad's pronunciation. Our first meeting was as good as it could be.