

## **A few words from the Vicar ....**

Well, it's December. What shall I write about?

Hmm, I suppose I could write about the election on 12<sup>th</sup> December. I could even advise (tell!) you who to vote for, but I won't.

I wouldn't dare! I suspect I would be tarred and feathered if I tried to pull that stunt!

It worries me when Church leaders make politically partisan comments, even if they attempt to disguise what they are doing by using vicar-speak. Likewise, when they make partisan comments about Brexit, especially as (according to Sociologist Linda Woodhead) 66% of the CofE's flock voted for Brexit whereas most clergy, well, obviously didn't.

As your Parish Priest, I try my best not to be partisan. With good reason; if I come across as partisan, I immediately annoy those in the congregation (and the wider community) who, perhaps, have a different viewpoint to mine. That, in turn, could easily undermine my priestly ministry amongst you.

The pulpit is a powerful platform (as, by extension, is my slot in the magazine) and is not to be abused!

So, I have no intention of telling you who I'm voting for, and I wouldn't dare for a single moment to suggest who you should vote for either. I'm sure you would, rightly, ignore me (or tell me to get lost) anyway. The only piece of political advice I will offer is simply this; prayerfully cast your vote in accordance with your Christian conscience; vote as you think fit. But, whatever you do, please vote!

Not that the Church shouldn't engage in the political life of the country (political with a small 'p', that is). For example, we have a duty to speak up for the oppressed and for those who suffer injustice; we have a duty to work towards a better world; and

we have a duty to speak up on the moral issues of the day. All in a non-party political way.

Indeed, politics has affected Church life since the beginning. For, at a human level, it was a political decision that led to Mary and Joseph making the long and difficult journey to Bethlehem. *'In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered.'* (Luke 2:1)

It was a political decision taken by the tyrant Herod that led to the Holy Family's fleeing to Egypt and safety (Matthew 2:16).

And it was the ultimate Roman politician, Pilate, who allowed Jesus to be beaten and crucified. *'So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves."'* (Matthew 27:24)

Anyway, enough said.

I'm sure we'll all have had a belly full of politics by December 12<sup>th</sup>. So, come to any of our Advent and Christmas services, and I give you a solemn promise, a cast iron guarantee; you will be entering a politics free zone!

Every Blessing

*Dave*