

Power, and who has it

Here's an interesting collision; the season of Advent and the General Election. In their different ways both speak about power and about how the world is to be shaped.

Come time for us to vote, if we can, we'll briefly hold the future of the UK in our hands, balancing on the tip of a pencil in a voting booth or hidden in the envelope already posted. It's a moment when power is given to all of us. And we hand it over within hours as the votes are counted, winners are revealed, and a new government assembles. Power is handled, held and handed on to those elected. They then seek to shape and reshape as much of the world as they can for the few years that they have.

Advent includes plenty of power. There's the power, enforced through military supremacy, of the Roman

Empire which can even get the people of a far-removed minor province to travel to their places of birth to be counted in a census. There's the power of a puppet king who rules with terror and kills a village's infant boys to try to snuff out a rival.

And there's the power of God. Advent invites us to pause and consider the power of this God who is credited with creating all things, but who chooses to enter in to the ordinary miracle of all things by being born a baby boy to a teenage (probably) mother. Advent leads to the Christmas story which leads on to this baby being bundled up and whisked away to Egypt to escape the murdering king; God not just come as a baby but running as a refugee.

And in this baby, Advent offers, rests all power. In this baby, Advent promises, the world is transformed for ever.



And in this baby comes the challenge to every tyrant and ruler, every army that ever marched, every empire that ever rose, every party seeking our votes, every politician ever elected, every leader ever given power by the people.

When it comes to time to vote it is no little thing for me to hold that pencil, read the names, and wonder, profoundly wonder, "What would Jesus have me do?" That's what tests and shapes my choices.

Some of you, reading this, will not have a vote in this election. I hope I may be worthy of voting wisely enough to help shape a world you can treasure too.

“Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.”

Paulo Freire

Fabulous Five Stars!



Eating is far more than simply fuelling our bodies. Sharing food is one of the most beautiful ways we have to share love, honour guests, shape community. Conversation around a meal flows and grows in ways more natural and generous than many meetings.

It is no accident at all that Westminster is renowned for the quality of our food and the quality of the ways in which it is

prepared and served. Long before our redevelopment of 2013-14, Westminster's lunches were famous across the Cambridge Theological Federation and students did all they could to engineer eating with us.

But, my goodness, how we've built on that foundation. A few days before I wrote this, Igor and the team in the kitchen had an unannounced inspection. The outcome? A renewed 5 Star food hygiene certificate. That's a public confirmation of what we all know: you are the best. We must never take for granted your dedication and skill.

