



ANDREW ON WEDNESDAY

Some keywords

Some of the keywords that top our national agenda at this time:

Abortion: An issue waiting on the side raring to be discussed. Even if most of us strongly oppose this issue it is still imperative, or might I say crucial, that such a debate takes place in this country, yes, even in schools and church clubs.

ALS: Bjorn, via a Facebook post, has invited us to reflect on (another) challenge he is facing; what comes first, quality of life or a long(er) life?

Blogging: Our ability to make news has been further strengthened by journalists not attached to any newsroom – that is fine, as long as done courteously, ethically and respectfully. What I find terribly irritating is the Comments Board, which often turns into a verbal diarrhoea.

Brothel: If there is any truth in the brothel-gate story, that has captivated our attention, I think it is wrong on two grounds. First this was a minister on public duties and focus should be solely on seeing to his core business and secondly, an issue that we choose to ignore is that most of the women involved in this business are abused, mistreated and potentially victims of trafficking – and subscribing to such leisure carries responsibility. I must admit I'm pretty surprised that this issue has not been raised by women's organisations.

Church: This is a Catholic Church that is lost for words.

Apart from the occasional squabble it finds itself in, it is a Church that lacks the spark and really needs to get its act together, first and foremost by actively engaging in the community rather than drifting away from it. 'Dear Church, do the honourable thing and stop preaching to the converted!'

Corruption: Perception of corruption is already pungent – when there is truth in these allegations it is a challenge to our democracy, to what we have worked for so hard and it damages our social fabric.

Environment: We keep messing it up. The little we have is already in danger. This is not just about development or no development but about social wellbeing and quality of life. The pendulum needs to tilt towards safeguarding the environment and our heritage – once it goes it never comes back. At this rate we will be taking our children to a walk on our roofs to get some fresh air.

Euthanasia: This is another theme that needs to be placed on our national agenda. We (people on the ground) need to discuss and debate these issues thoroughly if we want our country to get away from the fear of challenging these notions.

Ftira: Merkel has eaten our ftira and was impressed how good it was. I think Merkel has a place in our heart now!

Journalists: It is unfortunate that journalism, especially those

attached to political parties, is turning into a jab-for-jab affair. The style of journalism whereby stories are investigated in a decent and professional way is slowly becoming obsolete.

Migration: A never ending problem of people piling up at the bottom of the seabed as European leaders spend the morning taking photos feeling good about themselves. We know that all they have managed to do is displace the problem – once again.

Pastizzi: I think all has been said about this traditional pastry. Nothing to add for now, obviously until the next wave of hatred towards our beloved pastizzi. Notwithstanding it triggers cholesterol and is the dietician's and health worker's nightmare, let's face it, it still remains one of the nicest bites.

Politics: Never thought our political discourse would get so truculent. Politicians think that we have so much time on our hand that we constantly wait for their theatrics.

Post-secondary education: It is being touted that this needs to be introduced as part of our compulsory education. Still caught in between two minds on this one. Not too sure our education should be based on coercion.

Poverty: So many people are living in precarious situations. We really need to get our head straight and start realising that what we decide to do (or not to

do) will have a life and death impact so might as well take this issue seriously.

Public officials: Being a public official is also about setting an example. Useless trying to get away from the fact that a public role needs to ooze respect.

Rental market: If there is any issue that needs to be addressed ASAP in our country it is the spiking of the rental costs. If this issue is not dealt with quickly we are in for some serious problems especially for low-income earners.

Social class: The issue raised, thanks to Dr Anne Fenech's Facebook status, which has caused distress for some, shows that people are still very sensitive when it comes to social class matters.

Students: If we can do without O-levels it would be brilliant. I just cannot understand the logic of having O-Levels when we are also speaking about needing more students that pursue their studies.

Traffic: It can't get any worse and I see no silver lining. When you think it cannot get any worse – you soon realise that there is a new speed camera, a new zebra crossing, a new roundabout, some new roadworks, new potholes...we have failed.

Traffic police: What's that? Traffic police! Shouldn't traffic police be organising our streets instead of leaving it in the hands

of those poor Transport Malta officials who have no idea what to do except flap their hands and in the process risk getting run over? Traffic wardens on the other hand are simply standing under bridges waiting to pounce on those not wearing a seat belt – but how low can we go?

VIPs: I do understand that there are circumstances when VIPs need to get priority but creating mayhem (as happened last week in Attard) because an idiot wanted to play C.H.I.P.S. is irritating especially as he almost rammed me into a pavement. If these so called VIPs risk getting attacked, and that is why they need to get quickly from Point A to Point B, they should use a helicopter, if not, they wait like I do and listen to *Drive Time*.

Vote 16: Never have I been more convinced that the current political climate needs the young vote to bring a much needed change in our political landscape. It is sad that we are in a state of no return.



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New Queen proclaimed for UK

Princess Elizabeth has formally proclaimed herself Queen and Head of the Commonwealth and Defender of the Faith. Lords of the Council – numbering 150 – representatives from the Commonwealth, officials from the City of London – including the Lord Mayor – and other dignitaries witnessed the accession of the deceased king's eldest daughter this morning.

The new monarch read an official Proclamation – also ordered to be published – declaring her reign as Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second.

Queen Elizabeth II read: "By the sudden death of my dear father I am called to assume the duties and responsibilities of sovereignty."

"My heart is too full for me to say more to



you today than I shall always work, as my father did throughout his reign, to advance the happiness and prosperity of my people, spread as they are all the world over."

Her husband, Prince Philip of Greece, the Duke of Edinburgh, was also present at the 20-minute meeting at St James' Palace.

The couple returned to the UK yesterday

after cutting short a tour of the Commonwealth – beginning in Kenya a week ago – because of King George VI's sudden death on 6 February.

After the Accession Declaration, at 10am, the new Queen held her first Privy Council meeting and her Proclamation was signed by the Lord Chancellor, the

prime minister, and many other privy counsellors along with representatives of the Commonwealth and the City and the Lord Mayor of London.

During the ceremonies the 25-year-old Queen also took an oath to assure the security of the Church of Scotland and approved several other Orders in Council. Other dignitaries formally announced the new sovereign across the UK and Commonwealth.

In a statement this evening the Home Secretary, Sir David Fyfe, asked the nation for two minutes' silence on 15 February when the late King will be buried at St George's Chapel, Windsor.

King George VI's body lay in state in the Great Hall in Westminster from 11 February until the funeral.

Many thousands of people queued for hours to pay their respects. His funeral was held on 15 February, 1952.

Queen Elizabeth II's coronation was held in Westminster Abbey on 2 June, 1953.

In 2002, the Queen enjoyed a year of celebrations and special visits to commemorate 50 years on the British throne.