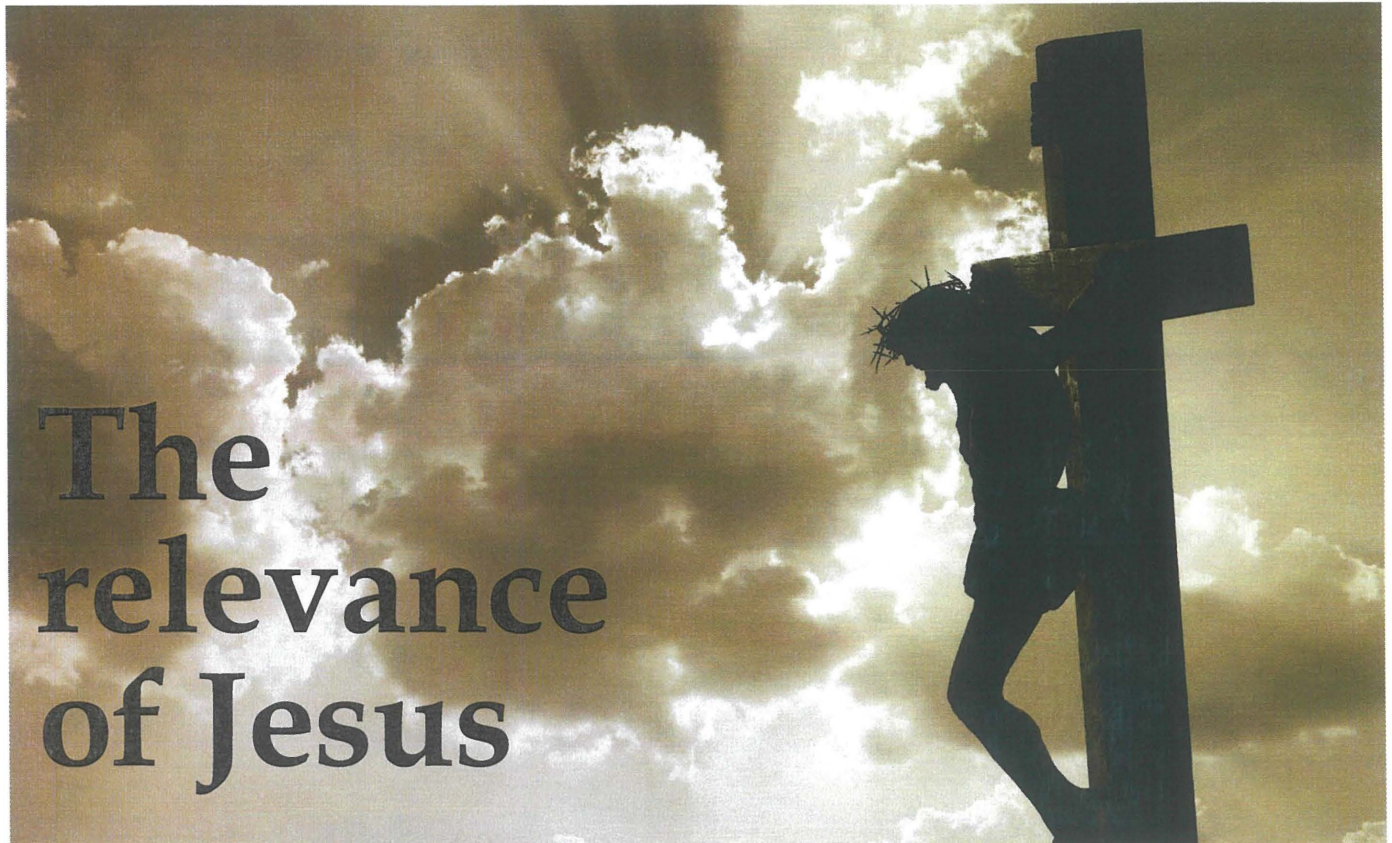




ANDREW ON WEDNESDAY



The relevance of Jesus

Beyond spirituality and our personal beliefs, Jesus remains relevant and pertinent albeit years have passed since he walked the Earth.

As one would expect, this time of the year lends itself to remembering this public figure, greater than life itself, who journeyed some 2,000 years or so ago.

Naturally, I will not write any theological treatise, logically, because that is not my area of competency, but what he accomplished ages ago is a political statement worth taking cognisance of, especially in the high-strung political circumstances we live in (and with an election beckoning). In a way the story of Jesus Christ could become a framework that one can reflect on when setting out the political agenda as the momentum gathers for the forthcoming general election. I will mention some of my favourite stories of this Guru (that might come in handy):

Turning water into wine

This is probably the favourite story of many. It is indeed a situation no one wants to be in, that is hosting a party and finding yourself without enough food or drinks to go around. For me this remains an important story because it shows that Jesus was interested in the individual needs of people – politics is about that, no? It is about looking into the narrative of every individual, trying to dig up what people need – it is about



It is indeed a situation no one wants to be in



who wouldn't? Beyond what the authors of the story wanted to convey, I believe that good politicians are those who lead when the storm gets too dangerous or too much to handle. We have enough circumstances and situations in our society that stir turbulence and create tensions in our existence. What we need now is that people in leadership give direction, show possible ways around puzzling circumstances and help the populace deal with the challenges to redress these imbalances.

Pool of Bethesda

Life is very challenging, we all know this, but this story depicts autonomy, self-reliance, resilience when people put their mind to it. If we want this country to move forward we need to appreciate and realise that it will happen only if we take the proverbial 'bull by the horns'. People in this country cannot be led blindly by family tradition, by the media, by pseud-loyalties to political parties but by a sense of justice, a clear conscious and a strong pronouncement to take control over their own lives – this story is also about this.

Feeding the 5,000

This story has excited people repeatedly. The same thought of having so many people listening to him and running out of food

is enough to get everyone's knickers in a twist. This exciting plot has some very insightful lessons that we can draw from. What is interesting is that Jesus in this story gives a clear message that even though he might have been riding the crest his interest in the crowd was vital. He had this fundamental principle that the basics need to be taken care of. Whatever dream politicians come up with there are ABCs that need to be taken care of because with all the exciting projects that political parties conceive, at the end of the day, what matters most are the essentials for survival; namely, a sense of community and belonging, nourishment and safety.

The prodigal son

This is the story of all stories. We all know what a dilemma and a conundrum this account gets us into. On the one hand we are keen to go with what dad does and his sense of celebration that his 'naughty' one has come back to the fold. On the other hand, our sense of justice that those who have done the right thing should be safeguarded, awarded and supported comes into the equation. This I suppose should be what politicians are struggling against; justice and solidarity, balancing out serenity and support rather than just focusing their time on digging up dirt and grime about each other.



ta-Skri by RADU MALTA and @Ghandi xi ghid

Dr Andrew Azzopardi
Dean Faculty for
Social Wellbeing,
University of Malta &
Broadcaster – Ghandi xi Nghid
www.andrewazzopardi.org

equal opportunities but also equal rights to access those opportunities.

Calming the storm

When Jesus was with his disciples crossing the Sea of Galilee a storm caught up with them. Those on the boat, the story goes, were indeed frightened –