



ANDREW ON WEDNESDAY

Christmas musings

Foodbank

Recently the Department of Social Policy and Social Work within the Faculty for Social Wellbeing organised a foodbank, a commendable initiative by the staff.

However, I feel it is despondent that in this day and age we still need to have collection boxes and foodbanks because there are people out there who are at the bottom of the heap, unable to make it through the day. When will we see an end to handouts? When will poverty really be wiped out? I cannot understand this terrible contradiction; on one hand we have a booming economy, surplus recorded in our budget, practically no unemployment and yet here we are organising foodbanks. Don't you agree that there is something fundamentally perplexing?

L-Istrina

If anything, *L-Istrina* is an occasion where we can focus on the fact that there are people who, for no choice of their own, are struggling big time. It is an occasion to make people happy and to share a collective objective that the whole Country could focus on. My only concern is if *L-Istrina* alienates us from the fact that charity needs to begin where you would least expect it (probably round the corner from where you live!), the only thing is that you need to have your eyes wide open.

Katriel Zahra

No doubt that the protagonist of this year's *L-Istrina* telethon will be Katriel. Much as I dislike that we have to parade children and their narratives on television and squeeze every ounce of pity, mercy and compassion out of them yet the way this boy positions himself is incredible. He talks about the basics that make up humanity; solidarity, sharing, community, forgiveness, distribution of wealth, sharing of joy, integration, social mobility and stability – wow! Now wouldn't that boy make an outstanding politician (MPs please note the 'botta')?

Christmas Lunch

Isn't it terrible that someone has to organise a lunch for you because if not you end up eating all alone on Christmas day?

Real Madrid

This is a knockout. MP Edward Zammit Lewis compares the Labour Party to Real Madrid! I was waiting for Hon. Zammit Lewis to refer to the Prime Minister Joseph Muscat as Ronaldo in the next sentence, but it didn't seem to happen – uff! This adulation and hero worship is facetious.

I agree that Joseph Muscat is a born winner. He is the unbeatable formula and until he remains at the helm of the Labour Party he will keep winning, no doubt about that. However, the metaphor used on Sunday is to say the least cheesy. It is not only the spin doctors and strategists that he has surrounded with (they put RCC to shame) but he has managed to converge good communication skills with bold decisions and has cut the corners making possible matters that used to take ages to happen. For example, the over-cautious line of attack of the Gonzi Government, whilst commendable in a number of matters, was a self-destructive button as everything took forever to happen. People want things to materialise fast and Muscat managed to respond to that.

Back to Zammit Lewis. I find it intriguing that Zammit Lewis, a friend of Joseph Muscat, appeals to him to keep leading Real Madrid, oops sorry, I meant the Labour Party. Could this be the first in a series of appeals that will 'compel' Muscat to review his decision and lead on? Could it be that the Delia variable, unlike Busuttil, is being perceived as a threat? I've learnt that nothing in politics is done without prior thought.

(PS. Knowing that the Prime Minister is a passionate Milan FC fan, I find the comparison of Zammit Lewis with Real Madrid a tease. I bet that if he doesn't retract the metaphor and go for 'il-PL qisu il-Milan', the chances of Zammit Lewis ever getting a Ministry is compromised!)

Positive vs Negative politics

The PN is trying to overcome the 'negative' ticket that the PL gave it with the new 'ahna partit pozittiv' mantra. Once again, I believe, the PN are strategically wrong, responding to the PL rather than attempting to create their own 'personality'. Undoing this label and endorsing a Government initiative every now and then is not good enough. What we need to see is if a political party that has character, that is ready to Govern and with an alternative model of doing politics. So far I see none of this in the PN but at least there is some heart, a quantity of enthusiasm and desire – elements that were long gone.

'Giddieb'

I enjoy hearing Parliament



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and PD coalition ever took off. Like every other divorce it has a degree of bitterness and acidity. Who is to lose and gain from this split-up? We wait and see.

Vote 16

On Monday, Hon Julia Farrugia Portelli MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Reform, Citizenship and Simplification of Administrative Processes presented the first reading in Parliament to amend the electoral law allowing young people from the age of 16 upwards to vote in the MEP and General elections. Kudos to Hon. Farrugia Portelli who has led this process backed by the two main parties. I am so delighted that we have arrived at this point, but I still want more! I hope that it won't be too long before young people can contest all elections as well.

Republic Day Speech

Another excellent speech by Her Excellency the President Marie Louise Coleiro Preca. I find some of the issues she raised as fascinating and topical. It is a pity that the media is caught up with all sorts of rubbish and we fail to debate the contents of such a weighty speech. The Republic Day speech has always been a point where citizens are given food for thought. Why do people tend to focus more on non-news than on debates that can help improve their life?

Abstaining

I cannot yet understand how being in the same school thirty or so years ago, offering condolences and sharing birthday greetings makes one unsound to listen to facts that would lead to the compilation of evidence in the pre-trial proceedings. Are we expecting Magistrates to live in a bubble? Are we trying to turn our Court in a joke?

Sam Pearson Debattista

Some weeks ago I had a very interesting conversation during my radio show *Ghandi xi Nghid* on Radju Malta with this young person who has been diagnosed, in her words, 'with Huntington's disease, a neurodegenerative disease, that's incurable'. I found this 'euthanasia' activist fascinating. I myself have problems with this concept (euthanasia) but having said that, the fact that a young person who has her own difficulties still finds the energy to kick up is so refreshing. But isn't this a perfect example in engagement and self-giving?

whenever I have a chance. I find the debates intriguing, well most of the times (an emphasis on the 'most'). Today I was listening to a debate when all of a sudden it was mayhem with one politician calling the other 'giddieb'. Beyond the argument that was taking place, can't we have a Parliamentary debate that does not try to take to bits the opponent?

Coalition bye-bye

The only serious attempt at having a coalition is now officially kaput. Not sure if the PN

Ghandi xi Nghid

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