



ANDREW ON WEDNESDAY

Oddments and questions

Joseph Muscat will resign

'No circumstance will convince me to contest another election'. This is what Prime Minister Joseph Muscat declared just one year ago. I heard from the rumour mill that this statement he had made during my radio show *Ghandi xi Nghid* had put the Office of the Prime Minister and the 'Fourth Floor' in meltdown. I got my own, 'Madonna x' *ghamiltina* comments directed at me when I had asked the question and elicited this reply from the prime minister. The question that comes to mind is: What will be the state of the Labour Party once he is gone? I reiterate that though the PL is working tirelessly to try and limit the damage when Joseph Muscat is gone, they will still have to deal with a big dent. The truth of the matter is that Joseph Muscat has grown so much in stature that he is now bigger than the party. Who knows, maybe a long shot, but could this be an opportunity for the PN?

Intolerance

The bigotry this country has to put up with is second to none. Whatever we speak about, the 'opponents' of that respective position, will come down like a ton of bricks on their adversaries. This has happened to me when I declared myself against the legalization of marijuana (except for medical use). It is unfortunate that in this country we have not managed to feel more secure about our ideas without having to knock people off their feet because they oppose us. Should this insecurity be addressed in our formal and non-formal education?

Samantha

Samantha Pace Gasan is a young woman, one of the most resilient I know. She speaks of a health condition that almost cost her her life a year ago. She says that this situation could have scarred her instead of bringing out the sheer spirit it did. This alumna of the Faculty for Social Wellbeing is the embodiment of a person who despite staring death straight in the eyes, remains buoyant, spirited and hard-wearing. Samantha is an inspiration. Quoting from her Facebook page: "Little did I know that I would be cut open, having a heart valve replaced with a titanium one, and left with a huge scar on my chest. Little did I know, the tremendous impact that all of this would have on my mental wellbeing. Have you ever had to think that today is your last day to live? Have you ever had to write your last wishes? Think about this. Would your life change if you had to survive through such experience?"

Ghandi xi Nghid

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Fr Kevin on Xarabank

Never have I heard such a lively and hearty priest in a long time. His passion and love were incredible and impressive when he spoke about gay and lesbian persons. He spoke with such candidness, intelligence and gentleness that made you want to keep listening to him. Not that this changes my opinion on the Church and how it has been one of the protagonists in oppressing this minority but finally I see a glimpse of Christ in his discourse. Should the Curia take the cue and behave like Fr Kevin?

Chatting

Xarabank carried a story about this 13-year-old person who was really an adult with a fake profile. The abuse and behaviour of the people on the other side of the screen were impressive. The danger that our teenagers are exposed to is incredible. What worries me is that these predators come wearing sheep skin. Is our social policy airtight? Does it really protect the individuals who are most vulnerable in our society?

He admits, and yet...

A man in his 40s admitted his addiction to child pornography. How do we react? By splashing his name on the front pages and in the headline stories of our online news portals. The insensitivity of our media at times is bewildering. His behaviour and having to admit to it are bad

enough, I suppose, for him and the people around him. His behaviour remains despicable and should be spoken about, discussed and dealt with, but it shouldn't give us the right to lynch people in the name of justice. In what way is this in the interest of the people? Or, should I say, is it in the interest of our basic instinct to retaliate because we are a 'civilized society, you know'?!

Quotas, no - temporary positive measures

It might seem like playing with words but let's face it, try as we may, women remain at the bottom of the heap in many circumstances. The pay gap is scandalous, promotion opportunities hard to come by, leadership positions few and far between. All the political decisions we've made (or haven't made) have left us nowhere close to breaking the glass ceiling. I see no other option but to take temporary positive measures. Can we afford, in such a small country that depends almost entirely on its human resources, to have all this potential bottled up?

Abortion

I oppose abortion. There is nothing pro-choice about it in my opinion, and neither does it entail any emancipation, liberation or freedom. I do appreciate the plight of people who feel that there may be issues that are complex and specific to every situation; however, I am still not convinced. Opening this Pandora's box will get us into a conundrum. However, I can also see another situation unfolding in the *pro-life* versus *pro-choice* movements, if they only have the patience to listen to each other, instead of 'them-selves'. They forget that they agree on one important principle and that we should decriminalise people who have an abortion. But then again, agreeing is not sexy I suppose?

Child care centres

The concept around child care centres is commendable. It has released a lot of people and given opportunity for many mothers (especially) to go out and get themselves employed. The positives in terms of the personal development of the mothers (in particular) and the economy are second to none; however, I believe it is the right time to discuss the impact that this situation has had on the children. I am sure we agree that unless something is intrinsically very wrong in the household, nothing beats the positives that come from the nourishment that is provided within homes. Having children shifted from child

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care to kindergarten and the 3 to 16 programs is an issue that concerns me. Sometimes children are left at 'school' for hours on end - preposterous, to say the least. Apart from the economic impact and the impact on our ambitions, should we be studying this phenomenon and how it is impacting the development of children?

Vote 16

Some people are still uncertain of the ability of young people to make the right decisions when faced with the ballot. I still believe and will reiterate my conviction that young people should be allowed to vote and also contest elections. Their insight into what they want for themselves and the community is way more astute than we want to believe. The wisdom of young people is blameless - that is, if we let them out of the cage we have conveniently placed them in. But are we ready to listen to critical voices; voices of people who do not just speak conveniently but also reproach and scorn when necessary?