



# ANDREW ON WEDNESDAY

## These people must not win

Regrettably it is becoming customary for columnists to write about the 'latest' attacks linked to terrorism or the most recent heartbreak related to the sinking of boats and people.

**B**ut can one expect better within this context of human displacement and instability that is happening all over the world because of wars, poverty and social distress?

It is so utterly heart-rending that we have to be faced with writing about these issues day in, day out. It is starting to sound like a broken record with hardly any progress being registered on this matter.

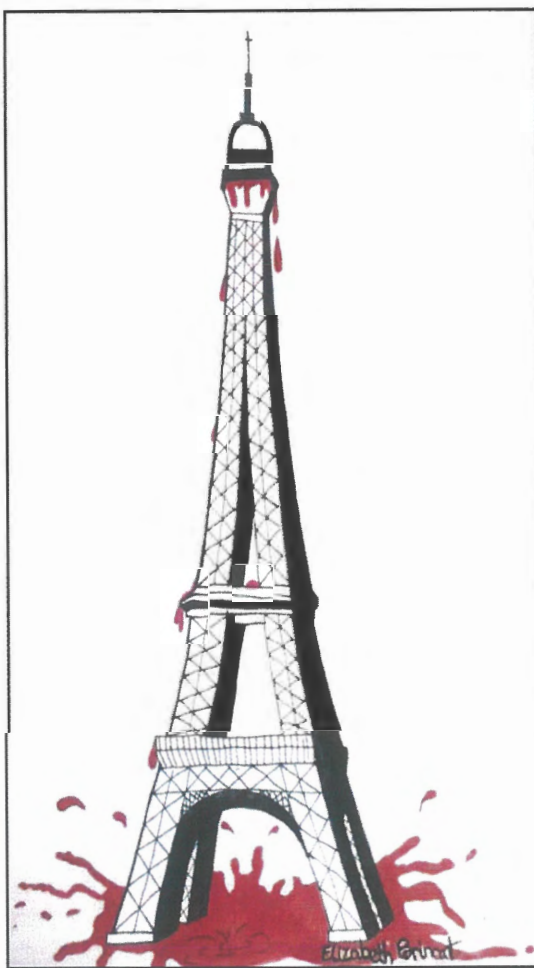
I, for one, believe that people who are in distress need to be helped whether it's our neighbour round the corner from where 'we' live or if it is an issue involving people living a thousand miles away. I've been brought up to try and give without expecting anything back, to show solidarity, to work towards social justice, to support where I can with the resources that I have.

They used to call it Christian values. I think it is more a question of 'ordinary human values' which should be the key to coaching us on how to live together in serenity, without having to agree to all, without having to pledge the same lifestyles.

I know that many people subscribe to these same principles I am so passionate about. Then again I find it terribly confusing when I see these same individuals declare on their Facebook profiles (probably posing with their favourite 'Patrun') speak about wanting people out from our shores and to send 'them' back from where they came', to promote pushback policies and repatriation indiscriminately and recommend that if possible we build walls and fortify the whole of Europe. The cherry on the cake is in advocating the 'us' versus 'them' as if it was their favourite mantra. This makes me sick to my stomach!

If people are leaving their country of origin, common sense dictates that they are in pain, traumatised and living in fear. In other words, they have serious problems back home and that the situation is unbearable and they are looking for survival. If this thinking is not clear enough in our minds, it means that our reasoning is really scraping the bottom of the barrel.

That is why I think that the Valletta Summit was relevant and timely and lays out some very interesting initiatives, some might consider as it all being more of the same, but at least there is an attempt at being proactive. When people discuss these matters and sign agreements it gives a teeny-weeny bit of hope that what has been discussed will see fruition.



Apart from that, international leaders have been met with so much cynicism by the people who have voted them in that it is becoming all the time more difficult for these heads of states to continue taking people for a ride. So yes I am hopeful that some good will come out of the summit and the forthcoming CHOGM as well.

What I am afraid of is the hidden enemy that has struck in Paris once again. Let us be deceived, these aren't 'Muslims'. These are brainless, dim-witted, obtuse people who are brainwashed into thinking that some god would want this from them. The truth of the matter is that if there is any god, they will go so straight to hell for the pain and atrocities they are responsible for.

These narratives of pain and anguish that such tragedies instil are truly devastating. How sad that we are witnessing such a state of hostility. The Parisians are taking the brunt of

these monsters who hide behind explosive vests and Kalashnikovs and strike young people who are enjoying their music, innocent bystanders and football fans. As France is still reeling from the Charlie Hebdo murders that happened earlier on in the year this is a situation that has rocked the roots of secularism and free speech in a country where the principle of freedom of expression is sacrosanct. My heart goes out to France as it does to all those countries and their citizens that are suffering because of this madness and hatred.

What happened in Sharm el-Sheikh, Lebanon, Afghanistan and in so many other countries is further proof that this is not about religion but about warped political thought, about power, about people salivating for control - maniacs, nothing less. As we 'talk', France is puncturing Syria with heavy arms to show its strength, 'deliver a message' and retaliate

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because attack is the best defence we are made to believe. But while it is comprehensible that people might develop this resentment, hatred and a sense of vendetta crops in, this matter does not get sorted out with even more hatred and violence. These tactics generate more fundamentalism, create heroes out of these zeroes, makes them look martyrs whilst what we need to do is to expose their cowardice, their lack of respect towards God, their people and themselves. One death and another to follow - repulsive. Sad indeed that we have to witness all of this.

This world is intrinsically confused. We don't even seem to understand what the problem is, let alone what the solutions should be. The answers that people are coming up with are essentially based on abhorrence and detestation. But the problem is even more deep-rooted.

Firstly, we are reaping the fruit of years of colonisation and of having drained these countries from their own resources and wealth. Secondly, we are living in a constant state of suspicion and mistrust making it increasingly difficult for diverse cultures to live together because religion and skin colour seem to be insurmountable challenges.

Differences become polarities - a threat rather than an opportunity.

We have choices to make here and now, but we need to understand that fundamentalism is the result of an innate reaction to feeling threatened and endangered. It is not easy to work towards creating a reassuring world but somehow we need to step up our efforts, even though I hate to admit that I'm starting to lose hope.

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