

## Thoughts on Life and Faith – June 2017

By the time you read this I expect that many of you will be wishing that the General Election was over. Whatever our political views, we will be making choices- some difficult, Person or party? Tactical or what some call tribal, some instinctive? Whatever choice we make and however ambivalent we may feel, voting is important. On June 19<sup>th</sup> 1917, one hundred years ago, the House of Commons passed the motion giving, for the first time votes to all men over 21 and to some women over 30. It had been a hard fight and was still not over and not one to be disregarded however disenchanted we may feel. So June 8<sup>th</sup> is an important day.

But June is important to me for another reason. On the 29<sup>th</sup>, we celebrate St. Peter's Day. Over the years I have been associated with several churches dedicated to St. Peter and mention of it always conjures up for me a particular altar frontal, scarlet and resplendent with the golden keys of heaven and the pyrethrus which filled the vases nearby.

When I have asked people which is the disciple with whom they most closely identify Peter is the most frequent response. There is something about his impetuosity, his rash and subsequently unfulfilled promises, his capacity to get it wrong, which strike a chord. There must have been many who found his nickname The Rock a bit of a joke, They must have wondered at the wisdom of Jesus in choosing him. I have often wondered what Peter's wife thought- we know he had a mother in law!

But this was man who grew into his role, who did indeed become a rock: the Rock on which Jesus said "I will build my church".

Not for nothing is Petertide, the season of St. Peter, the time at which many clergy are ordained, our own Pauline Hart among them and when this month many men and women across the country will commit themselves to follow in his footsteps in the particular office of deacon and priest, not always an easy choice in this secular age, Nor, it seems to me, in our increasingly cynical age, is it an easy choice to stand for political office, especially as this month marks the first anniversary of the murder of Jo Cox M.P. so there is reason to remember in our prayers all parliamentary candidates as well as, of course, all those who are to be ordained.

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