

## Thoughts from the Rectory July 2024

It may not have escaped your notice but there is a General Election coming up on July 4<sup>th</sup>.

Over the last few weeks since the election was announced the political parties of all persuasions have been jockeying for position – and for your vote. They have been busy with publishing their manifestos, holding interviews with all the prominent political journalists, touring the key marginals, publicity stunts, posting on social media, challenging each other in live debates and watching the polls for signs that what they are saying and doing is winning over the voters.



Politicians are very good in the lead up to elections at making promises, promises they might or might not be able to keep come the day after the election. Of course, whilst some in our community may be energised at the thought of an election and are keenly watching the debates or even campaigning for their party, eager to see the promises come to fruition, many in our country have become sceptical, mistrustful and sometimes disinterested as we wonder if our vote will make any significant difference to the things we care deeply about anyway. Some in our community may have already decided not to vote at all.

But our country, and indeed the world, currently faces significant challenges – from the big questions around war and peace, injustice and poverty to concerns about health care, education, climate change and biodiversity. In the face of such big challenges how should we respond as we prepare to cast our vote?

Firstly, Christians are called to prayer, to pray for our country, for those seeking to lead it and represent us in parliament and for those who are to vote. Secondly, we should use our vote wisely, weighing up the political parties and promises against our own values.

St John Bosco, a 19<sup>th</sup> century Italian Catholic Priest and educator famously said:

*'My political views are those of the Lord's Prayer'.*

I think he just might be on to something valuable here. The Lord's Prayer talks about God's Kingdom coming on earth. In God's Kingdom there is no more poverty, injustice, war, greed, hatred and all the other things that spoil a perfect world. Perhaps now, as we wrestle with how to vote it might be a good time to reacquaint ourselves with the profound words this prayer contains, especially if we haven't encountered it for a while.

When we pray the words of the Lord's Prayer, our prayer speaks to the politics of the day, whatever day it is and wherever we happen to be. And if these are the values we align with and we truly want God's Kingdom to come here on earth then we must be careful to use our vote wisely.

On 4<sup>th</sup> July I hope and pray for God's will to be done in our country.

Every blessing for July

Rev Ruth