

# Fools step in...



## ...where angels fear to tread.

Your chaplain is about to step on shaky ground... but with 'footsteps in faith' !

It's election week and we are all conflicted with the statistics and spin on offer from our various candidates and political parties.

As observed by Laura Kuenssberg, verbal battles about the economy, immigration, and taxes have dominated the manifestos and debates.

Those issues which really matter have had little attention – like the dangers the world faces – technological advances, the environment, climate change, tense world political issues; also the crisis within prisons, our overstretched legal system, the provision of social care for the vulnerable and elderly, managing the ever-increasing demands on our health services... These are the big issues facing whichever party is elected to govern us.

As our world becomes more complicated, so too are the choices before us – no one party can ever meet all our expectations. Of deep concern is the way our disenchantment with the main parties are driving us towards the far-right populist parties. We see this in Europe and also in the UK.

I have been saddened by a few of the conversations I have had with people recently, including some members, who are genuinely worried about immigration but who seem to believe that this country is being overrun by asylum seekers. **Reality check:** Home office figures show that asylum seekers make up only **6%** of the total immigration figures per year. Most of them are desperately escaping countries where Christians are endangered (eg Iran, Afghanistan).

**Reality check:** take all the 'immigrants' out of the NHS and it would collapse overnight. So too the social care services. Whether cleaners or consultants we rely on them. Brexit showed us how farmers and the hospitality industry rely on foreign workers – why? because there aren't enough applicants here for the jobs.

So be wary of false prophets, who use selective immigration statistics to raise fear and promise national prosperity within a fragile world. It's a false dream. Let's support those candidates who have a local heart and a world-wide vision, even if they don't 'tick all our boxes'.