

“So what do you think about Brexit, rector?” It’s tempting to think that someone would be interested in my opinion, however, it’s more likely I’m being tested on whose “side” I’m on. I can’t help but think of Jesus stood before Pilate saying, “My kingdom is not of this world.” He was not going to be drawn into the power politics of his time because his message and sacrifice were ultimately for the whole world. I, therefore, as a follower of Jesus, find myself unavoidably believing the commonality of all peoples - at home and abroad.

But I still need to vote, so let’s rule out all the xenophobic arguments as red herrings; fear of other people is not how this nation became a world influence (even if some people think it is not now). In fact, our influence in Europe - our neighbours - has not had too much interest from the British until now. Only about 1 in 3 of us has been voting in the European Parliament elections since its inception (the lowest turnout of the major EU contributors), so if our MEPs have not been doing what we want, guess who’s to blame...

Nonetheless, interest in what’s going on in Brussels and Strasbourg is now in our thinking, which is good because it might be that we’ll make up our own mind which way to vote - not have other people tell us what to think. And *think* we really need to do.

I am worried about the lack of clarity in EU accounts. Where does all that money go? I’m worried, too, about employers whose businesses are stifled by over-regulation, affecting jobs. I am bewildered by official paranoia about English (and I do mean English) and Christian symbols. On the other hand, I’m worried about the effects of poorer cooperation with our neighbours and the lack of a voice in their debating chambers and *our* freedom of movement across the channel.

Jesus said to Philip to reassure him of what and who was of God, “...at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves.” Based on that thinking, the EU does at least seem to have stopped its members from going to war with one another.

But at the time of writing, I genuinely do not know which way to vote. Facts and figures are manipulated by whoever is making an argument for or against, so it is very difficult to see what the choice is we’re being asked to make.

Jesus said we should first love God with everything we are; second, love our neighbour as ourselves. So let’s not listen to arguments of selfishness or hatred or the devaluation of other peoples. Challenge deception and demand the facts. Vote for what you think is fair, just, equitable, objective, honourable - and Godly.