



April 2017 · #018

Dear praying friends in Europe –

As we pray for our continent, we seek to align ourselves with God’s plans and this is never more important than at times of national or European elections because the results will determine our pathway in following His plans. Acts 1:24 Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen”.’ At times of elections we need to remember the importance of our responsibility to seek God’s guidance. What is past is past but as we seek Him we are reassured that He has plans to give us a hope and a future. (Jer. 29:11) This prayer in Acts followed the death of Judas but what followed was the choice of Matthias and then the miracle of Pentecost!

Homily
by Ian Jeal

Main Topic
by Elizabeth Shaffer

French Elections

In May, the French will elect their next President, and in June, all the French National Assembly. There are 5 major Presidential candidates: Marine LePen (National Front, extreme right, anti-Europe, anti-immigration), François Fillon, (Republicans, right and center-right, professing Catholic, pro-life, pro-family, pro-Europe), Emmanuel Macron (“neither left nor right,” 39 year-old member of the Socialist Hollande government), Benoit Hamon, (left wing of the Socialist/Ecologist Party), and Jean Luc Melenchon, (extreme left, anti-Europe, pro-abortion, pro-assisted suicide).

Never, since 1958 has a Presidential election campaign been so unpredictable or so acrimonious with mid-campaign accusations and charges of fraud and theft conveniently attacking Fillon (the only professing Christian running). Rarely have so many French people felt so confused and unsure of how to vote or whether to vote at all.

France has almost 10% unemployed, 9 million poor people, a 2147 € billion public debt. Industries leave or fail because of high taxes, and France has not made the structural reforms necessary to change the situation, creating a general mistrust of politicians’ promises.

Further Prayer points

- Give thanks for the speech of Antonio Tajani (European Parliament president) where he spoke about Christian values and said: “We shouldn’t be ashamed of saying we’re Christian. We’re Christian, it is our history.” May other leaders be as bold!
- Pray for the start of Brexit negotiations, that a good process can be agreed upon between the 27 remaining EU countries and the UK.

Three major Islamic terrorist attacks have hit France since 2015, killing almost 200 and injuring hundreds more and this, as well as massive immigration from mostly Arab countries, has created a climate of insecurity, suspicion, and fear. At stake are the health of France’s economy, its continuing role in Europe, and the future well-being of succeeding generations.

The Risks

- Xenophobia and nationalism: “France first” leading to a turning inward and withdrawal from Europe.
- Economic catastrophe if France leaves the euro.
- A “vote for change,” based on either a general distrust of “politicians”, on fear or hate, or utopian economic promises in the hope of protecting current entitlements
- Threat to religious freedom *for all*, from fear of Muslims.

How to Pray

- That God continue to bring to light the truth and all that is hidden in campaign agendas
- That Christians vote with God’s discernment. Prov. 3:5-6; Psalm 75:7