

17th January 2018

Hello there, Mr Rees-Mogg.

I was at my Auntie Edna's today for a cuppa and I obviously looked a bit down in the mouth. Perhaps it was Donald Trump getting a clean bill of mental health from his doctor. That's what I love about private medicine: the customer is always right. Do you go private, Mr Rees-Mogg?

Or perhaps it was all those Parliamentarians who lack the balls to carry out their representative function and instead take the safely impotent option of voting Nick Clegg's 'How to Stop Brexit' as their Book of the Year. With representatives like these, who needs you, I'm tempted to ask.

Anyway, whatever it was, I must have been below par because she came out with one of those Auntie Ednarisms that have endeared her so much to me down the years: "Just remember, Peter," she said, "that however low you get, however miserable and loathsome you feel, however much you think people hate you, there's always someone worse off, more miserable, more loathsome, more out of sorts with the world, more lonely and more deserving of both other people's scorn and their sympathy than you, so why don't you just snap out of it you snowflake?"

So I came straight home to drop you this line. I do love my Auntie Edna.

Coincidentally – so that I'd have something to write about and don't simply bang on about those two easy questions I asked you when this tired World was young, but more of those later – I did discover today that you claimed that only a tiny number of people in the UK would like to remain in the European Union. Of course I may simply have been misinformed or glimpsed it in *The Daily Nosebleed*. (Same thing, really.) If so, please accept my apologies and do correct me using the contact details with which I hope you are now familiar. But I can imagine you did say it. It's the kind of thing you would.

Now making that claim, Mr Rees-Mogg, is what is known down here on earth as a "lie". Such a barefaced one that I'm not even going to contest it. My pupils often "lie" to me: about having done homework for which they provide not even chewed evidence; about having kicked their little fellows under the table; about making farting noises during the register and such like. I have a line on the matter that I find works with them. I hope – though I might be better off praying (wouldn't we all, Sir!) – that it might work with you.

"Lying," I tell them, "is a sin. It's a sin for Christians, for Muslims, for Jews – it's a sin in any religion you care to name and, speaking as an atheist, it's a bloody sin in my eyes as well so don't do it again *or by Christ ...*" I'm sure you get my drift.

The difference between you and my little charges, though, is that they are young, impressionable, mostly poor, and are trying to find their often arduous way in a hostile world where the only uplifting thing they may ever see is a food bank. You, Mr Rees-Mogg, are by contrast old beyond your years, as unimpressionable as a petrified Triassic fish, rich beyond my wildest nightmares and seem to believe that you know the world far better than you do. (All YOU did was go to Eton. You know, it's always puzzled me why you Old-Etonian pillow-biters seem so sure that the world's secrets are yours when the very purpose of that institution appears to be to insulate you from it. Perhaps that's why the country is in such a parlous state of vicious, incompetent paralysis

... Just a thought.) Moreover, unlike my little devils, you are conspicuous in your religiosity. You also have a sanctimonious tendency to lecture others on moral issues while – as in your claim about the amount of support there is for keeping this nation fully afloat and even half decent – playing fast and loose with your God all the hours He rather indulgently affords you.

You are, in short – and here I go again – a hypocrite, and a nasty and deliberately deceptive one at that. I really do believe that the eminent political and economic commentator who recently described you to me as “that tortured man” hit the needle in the eye of which your angels so painfully dance. Or whatever it is. But anyway, what must it feel like for you, a man who boasts of representing the constituency of Rome Central in the House of Commons, to be a walking, talking advertisement for the benefits to the world of contraception? (Or even – but I’ll let your delightful colleague Ben Bradley take the rap for this one – sterilisation?) How can you reconcile your religious beliefs with your public persona as a spotlight-craving political cardsharp? Why is it not as obvious to your victims as it is to me? What is wrong with me?

Oh dear, I think I shall have to ask Auntie Edna to put the kettle on again ...

But while she potters off to the outside tap, my dredging up your “I take my whip from the hierarchy of the Catholic Church” line does remind me of something. You’ll recall that you made the comment because on the subject concerned – gay marriage, I think it was; I imagine it might be over abortion or such like in the future – you would happily vote with your conscience as a Catholic and, if necessary, defy the beliefs and wishes of your constituents. Do correct me if I’m wrong, but it seems as plain as the nose on your self-righteous face. So plain, in fact, that if I do not hear from you in contradiction I’ll consider the point well taken. Or badly taken: I care not a jot.

Why do I raise it again? You know why, Mr Rees-Mogg. Because on 20th June 2017 you declared that, with regard to leaving the European Union, our sovereign Parliament should be the servant of the people and make it happen regardless of its members’ consciences and concern for the future well-being of our nation and the generations to come. That’s to say that you’ve arrogated to yourself a right that you would deny others. You weren’t challenged at the time and haven’t been since except by me – and a constituent of yours who, I believe, still awaits the courtesy of a reply from you. Oh, and by Private Eye of course, who kindly asked you the very same questions and got diddly-squat back from you as well.

You do go all quiet when the going gets tough, don’t you? And it IS tough at the moment, isn’t it? Come on: all I asked was your opinion about the principle which underpins the constitution of our representative democracy – and which you so correctly and admirably employ when the matter of your Church’s doctrine is concerned.

1. Do you consider that Edmund Burke was wrong in his address to the electors of Bristol in 1774?

2. If so, with what principle would you replace that which he set out in it?

Come on! I don’t tolerate this kind of stuff from school pupils so humour me if I don’t tolerate it from you. I will have those questions answered.

Yours,

Peter Roberts