



“This Christmas, let the light shine through for someone in need”



“I see the beauty in His work ...the wonder of how a tree grows from a seed”

My Dear Friends

There are times in everyone's life, when we may lose sight of the path that God has set for us.

*We stray. Become lost. The darkness surrounds us. And we reach out for help.*

And God is there for each and every one of us! He asks us to have Faith, accept God into our hearts, and His light will shine and lead us safely home.

Through LifeLink, we demonstrate our *Catholic Faith in Action* each and every day. LifeLink is there when people in the community reach out for help. Importantly, by doing so, we are also demonstrating the power of Faith.

Through deed, we are evangelising – spreading God's message of love. Jesus said: *"I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness". (John 8:12)*

This Christmas, I would like to share with you the story of Chris.



"In 1981 (aged 30) I was diagnosed with Bipolar Affective Disorder.

Basically, I suffer from acute depression, which causes me to have an abnormal fear of life - the medical fraternity believes it is probably caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain.

It has almost ruined my life. I become reclusive during the bad times.

For 22 years now, I have rollercoasted from the deepest, darkest lows without medication, to almost unbelievably manic highs when I have taken too many pills to try and rid myself of the condition.

I have found it hard to hold down a job. I lost my marriage of 12 years. I lost precious time with my 2 children, who I love very much indeed. How can I possibly explain to you what it's like? **It has virtually taken everything from me.**

Earlier this year, when I started entering "the dark zone" as I call it, to escape from my dark thoughts, from myself really, I took a trip to Margaret River.

Sr Claude McNamara RSM and Chris

**There, all alone, I prayed for God to forgive me. I prayed for God to make the people I had hurt in my life forgive me too. And I prayed for God's guidance and strength.**

And then something happened. I started feeling better. When I returned, my doctor put me on new medication, and that started working. And then, I found the Shopfront at Maylands.

Shopfront is a small and cosy place filled with gentle and kind people. I go there, and talk to Sr Claude and Julie and the others, escape my worries for a few hours during the day and maybe an hour or two at night. We play games, have some great meals, and just hang out like a family.



# “...shining the light for those in need”

I have accepted there is a God, and that He has been with me in all of my dealings through life. I see the beauty in His work – the wonder of how a tree grows from a seed, how a child grows with their parent’s love. He has given me the strength I need. **I understand now that life placed me in vulnerable and frightening positions – not God.**

I’m not "non-denominational" but rather "all-denominational". I guess I'm looking to find where I fit in best at the moment. I see the people at Shopfront; the way they are, what they do and how they don't push their beliefs on anyone. **I love being around these caring Catholic people.**

Thanks to the people at Shopfront and the friendship and support they offer, things are rosier for me right now, and I am progressing to a better place. The best medicine is my son and daughter who I see regularly, and they always say, "love you dad" when we part."

*This is Chris's story in his own words.*

Shopfront is one of the many agencies supported through your generous support of LifeLink. It provides practical and immediate assistance and support to marginalised people in a relaxed and friendly environment.

**Over 1,300 people each year seek help through Shopfront - homeless people looking for an extra blanket, the lonely seeking companionship, those who are lost looking for a way out – Shopfront is there!**

Together, our LifeLink supported agencies provide professional care and caring services to over 55,500 West Australian families and individuals each year.

This Faith in Action helps us to better understand Jesus’ words, "Your light must shine before people so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in Heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

**PLEASE...** As I launch my Christmas Appeal for LifeLink, I urge you to hear Chris's story. Open your hearts, and help shine light into the darkness this Christmas for someone in need.

**Give generously to my appeal - and by doing so - show your Faith in Action.** Every dollar you give will go directly to caring for people in need – right here at home!

Together, we can make a difference!

Thank you and God bless,

Yours sincerely in Jesus Christ,

The Most Rev Barry J Hickey  
Catholic Archbishop of Perth

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- Shopfront

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