



Archbishop's Christmas Appeal for LifeLink 2006

"The Challenge of Faith"



Most Rev Barry J Hickey
Catholic Archbishop of Perth



My Dear Friends,

My Christmas message this year is a powerful one... **Love**

God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him
(I Jn 4:16)

Love is at the very heart of Christian Faith. It is Love that guides and inspires the hundreds of people and volunteers who work tirelessly for our LifeLink social service agencies. It is a pure expression of Love, when they reach out to people in need within our community. It is Love which inspires our supporters to continue their financial support each year.

It is appropriate that the logo used by LifeLink is a heart, used to represent that everything we do first comes from Love. **This loving service is provided on behalf of us all. It is through the work of the LifeLink agencies that our Church responds to need right across WA.**

Over 50,000 families and individuals this year alone will be directly helped by a LifeLink agency at a cost exceeding \$27 million. But how can such need exist when I see on my television and read in papers that we are now living through a time of unrivalled prosperity.

Headlines say we are booming, we are surging, we are wealth creating. I hear of terms like high nett-worth individuals, mining millionaires and property kings. News reports are full of home values soaring, share portfolios out-performing and salaries exploding.

But obviously we haven't all been "blessed" by this boom! During my webcast to schools over the internet this year, a young student asked me...'Do you have to face a lot of people who are homeless or wanting food and water?'

The simple answer is **Yes, I do!**

In my response to the question I said:

"Most people don't, as they live in the suburbs and have their own homes, but I live in the centre of the city - that's where God has placed me if you like. **In the centre of the city there are a lot of homeless people.**

Many of them have found a refuge on my front verandah. Some nights there are as many as eight people wrapped up in blankets. I give them food. I give them water. I give them coffee. I could say to these people that they are unwashed, they are smelly and dirty and that I don't want them there, that they should go elsewhere.

But there is no-where else for them ...wherever they go they get kicked out.



**"Charity is an integral component of Faith,
even though it may be difficult or confronting"**

“The duty of

charity is a

responsibility

incumbent

upon the whole

Church...”

Pope Benedict XVI



So what is God asking me to do? Is he asking me to kick them out like everyone else? Jesus said words I can't forget. He said 'whatever you do to the least of my brothers and sisters, you do to me.'

So I am personally challenged to see Jesus in all these homeless people and I have to respond as if I am responding to Jesus.

So do you, so does everybody who has been baptised. It is the most important lesson that we can learn. **Expressing the act of Charity is as integral to Faith, as is receiving the Sacraments and the hearing the Word of God through the Liturgy.**

I am reminded of Pope Benedict's words in his encyclical letter, Deus Caritas Est:

The duty of charity is a responsibility incumbent upon the whole Church and the exercise of Charity is an action of the Church, and like the ministry of Word and Sacrament, it too is an essential part of her mission from the beginning.

*Christ took the lowest place in the world - the Cross - and by this radical humility he redeemed us and constantly comes to our aid. Those who are in a position to help others will realise that in doing so they themselves receive help: **Being able to help others is no merit or achievement of their own. This duty is a Grace.***

I urge you to show your love for people in need within our community.

As I launch my annual Christmas Appeal for LifeLink, let us challenge each other, as brothers and sisters of our Church community, to raise a minimum of \$400,000. **Please, complete the form at the bottom of this letter and mail your gift today!**

In the tradition of the season I have provided a special card which reminds us that we are all members of God's family - each has been blessed by Bishop Don Sproxton.

May I take this opportunity of thanking you in advance for your generosity and compassion. I wish you, your family and loved ones a very safe, happy and Holy Christmas.

May God protect and watch over us all, and grant us peace in the world.

Yours sincerely in Jesus Christ,

The Most Rev Barry J Hickey
Catholic Archbishop of Perth



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Yes, I will accept the challenge and help people in need this Christmas

Please accept my donation of (please tick one box only)

\$300 \$150 \$75 \$50 \$500 Other \$ _____

Title Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms / Dr / Sr / Fr / Rev

Surname _____

Christian Name _____

Address _____

Postcode

My Parish is _____

Enclosed is my cheque payable to LifeLink OR

Please debit my credit card

Visacard Mastercard Amex

Credit Card Number

Expiry date /

Name on card _____

Signature _____

Donations over \$2 are tax deductible if a name and address are supplied

LifeLink
Catholic Caring Agencies