

Archbishop's Christmas Message Christmas: the promise of a different future

Video Christmas message 2014 by the Anglican Primate of Australia, Melbourne

Archbishop Philip Freier.

<http://www.melbourneanglican.org.au/Christmas>

As the world becomes more focused on its sea of troubles it is easy to believe the fracture lines between peoples are inevitably etched deeply on our future.

The world into which Jesus was born had this same heavy weight of foreboding. His own people, the Jews, chafed under the heel of the Roman Empire, and his family knew displacement and exile.

Christmas celebrates God's action in human affairs to give a different future, one of peace, reconciliation and hope.

Christians understand that the birth of Jesus is the fulfilment of God's promise to renew our relationship with him. Even at his birth Jesus serves to unify many of these deeply etched identities in the ancient world, be they poor shepherds watching their flocks or oriental monarchs.

Christmas tells us about the unfolding of God's promise then and now. It tells us about the direction of God's working amongst people. And it challenges our imaginations as we look at the world.

Australians of every background can find good reason to be dismayed about contemporary events near and far. Conflict is part of the human condition. But Jesus' birth points us all to a different reality. His birth reveals a power to change and transform that is greater than ourselves.

The baby of Bethlehem remains the glory of God's people and a light to enlighten all those who live apart from God. He is the one sent from God to change human existence one person at a time and for all of us together.

Have a blessed celebration of Jesus' birth and may your Christmas bring you the knowledge of his love and peace.

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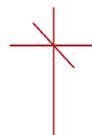
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CONTACT

ST JOHN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH, CAMBERWELL
Christmas 2014

My Dear Friends,

On behalf of clergy colleagues, all our parish staff, our Wardens, and Parish Council, I extend to you a warm St John's welcome. May Christ's Mass be a great blessing to you - and to all those who you offer in prayer at Christ's Crib and Altar at this feast. Whether you have worshipped here a thousand times, or whether this be your first time, be assured that Christ is the host at the Table – welcoming and embracing every one of us equally, without distinction.

The celebration of Christ's incarnation presents great challenges for us latter-day Christians. We cannot be unaware of the many disturbing winds blowing through this third millennium, which, cumulatively, leave us feeling not quite as certain as we might once have about Christianity's 'importance'. But attempts to wind back the clock cannot ultimately work. No, the good news of the gospel of God's Incarnation will have to find a place to be born in the stable of *this* world in which we live – not in some imagined former state of certainty or security.

An effective 'acid test' of Christmas celebrations is this: does our celebration lead us into *more reality*? For like no other time of the year, and like no other Christian symbol, Christmas is so readily perverted and undermined by consumerism, entertainment, and nostalgia. The symbols of Christmas naturally speak into deep aspects of ourselves, hidden in the childhood of our lives well insulated from the complexity, the suffering, the tragedies, and the brokenness of adult experience – re-kindling, if only for a moment, that innate and natural spirituality which was ours before the Spirit of life drove us out of gardens of Eden. However, if this time of the year lures us back into a childhood state, then it is not in fact 'Christ-mass' at all – only mere regression.

The doctrine of Incarnation declares that the Divine permeates flesh, matter – all flesh, all matter. Thus the whole of creation is the birthing table of the Divine. Jesus' birth in Bethlehem a couple of thousand of years is only half the equation – the crucial other half of which is Christ's ongoing birth in the human heart across all time. "Christ is not only the name of an historical personage," wrote Raymond Panikkar, "but a reality in our own lives." It is for this reason that Christ's Mass draws us forward, into greater reality, more truth. Christ's Mass beckons us into the mystery of the whole of life's unfolding, evolving mystery.

Christ's Mass enables us, then, to see the birthing of Divine Love as much in recent tragic events in Martin Place, Peshawar, Cairns, Glasgow, as in any and every other part of God's world. We see God's birthing as much, in fact, in darkness as in light. For in the Divine Mystery the light and the darkness are part of the one, indivisible reality - the celebration of Christ's Mass in the middle of the night being its profound symbol. Christ's Mass invites us into this indivisible Reality, to see and embrace and offer *more* reality, not less – so that we too may give birth to the Divine Love who urges all creation to fulfilment. May our celebration enable us all to deepen into this indivisible Love.

Christmas blessings and love, David

SERVICES

WELCOME! to this sacred space. May you find fresh encounter here with the Holy. We are glad to have you join us in the sacred liturgy. With generations of Christ's followers we are all welcomed around the banquet table of the Word made flesh—regardless of gender, race, colour, sexual orientation, social status or any other distinction. And you are warmly invited to join us for morning tea in the Rutherford Room following the 10 am liturgy.

Christmas Eve

- 5.00pm** Christingle Service
- 11.00pm** Carols by the Choir
- 11.30pm** Midnight Mass

Christmas Day

- 9.00am** Sung Eucharist

Sunday 28 December 2014

Holy Innocents

Readings for the Day

Jeremiah 31.15-20; Psalm 124;

1 John 1.5-2.2; Matthew 2.13-18

- 8.00am** Eucharist
- 10.00am** Eucharist
- 3.00pm** Indonesian Service with *Holy Baptism.*
- 6.00pm** Contemplative Service

Thursday January 1

The Naming & Circumcision of Jesus

- 12 noon** Eucharist

HAVE LUNCH WITH US on

- **Christmas Day** (Eucharist 9am, Morning Tea 10.30am, Lunch 12.30pm) and
- **New Year's Day** (Eucharist 12 noon, Lunch 1pm)

Please put your names on the boards at the back of the church.

COMMUNION AND CURRY is on January 7. Commencing at 6.30pm in the Chapel for the Eucharist followed by a curry meal in the Rutherford Room. All are welcome.

SUNDAY LITURGIES at St John's.

- **8am—Eucharist**
- **10am—Sung Eucharist**
- **3pm Indonesian Congregation**
- **6pm Contemplative Service**

January 4: *The Epiphany: Isaiah 60.1-6; Psalm 72.1-7, 10-14; Ephesians 3.1-12; Matthew 2.1-12. (Holy Baptism at 10am)*

January 11: *Baptism of Christ*
Genesis 1.1-5; Psalm 29;
Acts 19.1-7; Mark 1.4-11

January 18: *Epiphany 2*

1 Samuel 3.1-10; Psalm 139.1-5, 12-18;
1 Corinthians 6.12-20; John 1.43-51

January 25: *Epiphany 3*

Jonah 3.1-10; Psalm 62.5-12;
1 Corinthians 7.29-31; Mark 1.14-20

February 1: *CandleMass*

Deuteronomy 18.15-20; Psalm 111;
1 Corinthians 8. 1-13; Mark 1.21-28

12 NOON TUESDAY EUCHARISTS continue throughout January.

11.30am WEDNESDAY EUCHARISTS resume on Wednesday on 7 January. BYO lunch in the Dempster Room follows this eucharist.

THE SEASON—A Resource Booklet is available at the back of the church. *'Advent-Christmas-Epiphany: a guide to the season'*. Please take a copy.

EMILY FRASER'S last Sunday with us is **January 25**. There will be a lunch in the Rutherford Room to say farewell to Emily. There is a list on the noticeboard for you to put your name if you intend being present at the lunch and also what food you could bring. If you would like to contribute to a gift for Emily place it in a clearly marked envelope in the Sunday offering.

THANKS!

My heartfelt thanks to all who have contributed so much, in so many ways, in preparations for and in leading our Christmas celebrations. Cleaners, cooks, gardeners, musicians, singers, readers, intercessors, welcomers, printers, flower arrangers, servers, money counters - what a tremendous act of communal celebration. Thank you all very much! *Fr David.*

THE OFFICE will be closed from 25 December 2014 to 27 January 2015 inclusive, opening at 10am on **Wednesday 28 January 2015**. During this time clergy will be available and the office phone will be monitored. be in the office by 1 pm on Thursday 29 January.

2015 PARISH RETREAT:

Conductor: The Revd John Stewart
Booked at Pallotti College for the weekend of Friday 27 February to Sunday 1 March.

All are welcome and warmly encouraged. Full details to come. Please indicate your interest by writing on the form on the notice in church, or email David, vicar@stjohnscamberwell.org.au

YEAR'S MIND: We remember before God, Maisie Johnson, Marjorie Lambert, Ernest Legg, Russell MacDougall, Jean Carter, and Neil MacKenzie, whose anniversaries occur at this time.

THANK YOU from the Flower Guild for the donations towards the cost of Christmas Flowers and thank you from the congregation for the wonderful arrangements that the members of the Flower Guild do during the year.

THANK YOU to all at St John's for the help given to me throughout the year in the office and for many kindnesses shown. I am very appreciative. *Dawn Sullivan.*

SERVERS NEEDED: At present we have a shortage of Altar Servers, whose ministry is assisting at the liturgy in the sanctuary at St John's. If you are interested in joining the serving team please speak with the vicar or Ross Smith. Training will be provided.

ENVELOPES are available for donations to The Christmas Bowl (Act for Peace) and also for ABM Advent 2014. See noticeboard for more details of their programs.

MINISTRY OF HEALING: On the first Sunday of the month from 9.30 to 9.50am clergy will be in the chapel. All are welcome to receive laying on of hands and anointing. Healing Ministry is always available at any time, simply contact one of the clergy.

THANK YOU for the wonderful response to the Anglicare Christmas Toy and Food appeal.

LENT AND HOLY WEEK 2015

Ash Wednesday—18 Feb. 11.30am; 7pm
Palm Sunday—29 March
Holy Thursday—2 April- 8.00pm
Good Friday—3 April—9.30am
Easter Vigil—5 April- 6.00am