

# **Christmas an answer to our deepest yearnings**

## **Christmas Message from Dr Philip Freier, Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne**

The Occupy Movement, which began in Wall St, and spread to other parts of the world, including Australia, has essentially been a protest against what was once described as “the unacceptable face of capitalism.”

This is when wealth creation becomes divorced from social and moral responsibility.

But I believe that at its heart, the Occupy Movement has been an expression of something basic to our humanity. This is the sense of powerlessness, frustration and alienation that many increasingly feel in the face of market forces which can seem impersonal, uncaring and immoral.

What does this have to do with Christmas?

Jesus Christ was born into a time when many were poor and powerless. First Century Palestine was controlled by the ruthless and often brutal Roman Empire, and life for the great majority was subject to harsh, cruel and impersonal forces.

Into this unpromising situation the God who is love gave his only Son, Jesus. Born into an extremely poor and vulnerable peasant family, Jesus' birth was a powerful act of solidarity with the poor and vulnerable of all times and places.

In the timeless words of John's Gospel, “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us... full of grace and truth.”

Two millennia ago Jesus began a movement which is about love, love of God and love of neighbour. This love is always profoundly personal, self-giving and centred on the care and well-being of others.

God loves each one of us, and each one of us matters personally to God.

Christmas is a joyful celebration of the fact that we are all, whether we are rich or poor, invited to take our place in God's commonwealth of love.

This Christmas I invite you to open your hearts to the love of Christ, to the “light that shines in the darkness”; and in that light let us all commit ourselves to being more loving towards our neighbours, far and near.

## **Archbishop Freier's YouTube Christmas Message is at:**

<http://www.melbourne.anglican.com.au/Whoweare/Archbishop/Messages/Pages/Archbishop-Christmas-message-2011.aspx>