

Dean's Christmas message



Many Australians face a Christmas surrounded by smoke, some in fear of their lives and property. Communities rally together to share their grief in loss of loved ones and the difficulties of rebuilding their lives and communities. Normality has been lost and anxiety and despair are evident.

Others are suffering the ongoing effects of drought and others again are affected by death and suffering caused by the volcanic eruption on White Island.

World disasters, civil wars, brutal regimes, displacement from homelands, hunger and suffering bring out the worst in humanity, but often bring out the best too.

We see it in the sacrifice of fire fighters and emergency responders who are risking their lives for others throughout the Australian continent at the moment and the NZ emergency workers who have risked their lives to retrieve the bodies of those killed on White Island. Aid workers in refugee camps, doctors and nurses in war torn regions. Neighbours helping neighbours in communities across our cities and regions.

The notion of loving sacrifice runs as a thread throughout human history.

Christians believe that we see loving sacrifice best represented in the life and death of Jesus.
That is why we celebrate his coming among us at Christmas.

But those celebrations are always in the shadow of the cross. As the famous Christmas hymn *Hark the Herald Angels Sing* says

*mild he lays his glory by,
born that we no more need die,
born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.*

This Christmas as we celebrate the birth of the one who lived and died for us, let's do our best to make Christmastime a little better for those who are suffering.

On behalf of the Cathedral Staff and wardens of St Saviour's Cathedral I wish you all a safe, happy and holy Christmas this year.

Dean Phillip Saunders

