



## Archbishop Peter Jensen's 2006 Christmas Message

Dr. Peter Jensen is the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney

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**D**eath came crashing into our place this Christmas. A few weeks ago, a homeless young man was murdered close to the steps of St Andrew's Cathedral.

He was not an anonymous vagrant. His friends called him Mitch. Like all of us he was made in the image of God, but as he slept in Sydney Square he was vulnerable to the attack of a ruthless aggressor.

Amidst all the Christmas flim-flam – the hurried preparations, the good food, the shopping frenzy – the realities of our world still confront us. We are in the grip of drought, our troops are serving abroad, there is a murder in the heart of our city.

That is the real world. Jesus Christ came from beyond our world, but his birth as a baby signalled to us that the Son of God has entered the world with all its limitations and sufferings. He has really joined us, not merely pretended to be one of us. He came for a reason.

He came to tell us that, despite all appearances, the world has a purpose; our life has a meaning. More than that, he sacrificed himself so that, in the end, we may share in the love and mercy of God. His death brings forgiveness, one of the great needs of the human soul.

With the community apparently in the grip of an aggressive secularism in some quarters, and a drear misunderstanding of multiculturalism in others, the tinsel side of Christmas has come to predominate. The very name of our celebration is being suppressed, as though we are frightened to hear that God himself has visited us.

Christmas is a time of great joy, but our joy arises from the presence of God himself in our midst. In the face of the evils of this world that is our only hope. But it is a hope so big that I can say to you with all my heart, have a very happy Christmas.

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