

Praying for the Australian nation

- December 2022

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of his government
and peace there will be no end.

- Isaiah 9:6-7

Giving thanks for the authorities at Christmas

Almighty God, during the Advent season we especially give thanks to you for the gift of Jesus your Son. We are mindful of Mary and Joseph dutifully travelling to Bethlehem, when the census was decreed by Caesar.

Give each Christian the same dutiful, respectful and cooperative attitude to the civic authorities, we pray.

Yet as we see Joseph and Mary fleeing with Jesus to Egypt, we pray your people would discern between helpful laws that commend what is right, in contrast to legislation that undermines the common good.

We stand against tyranny and arbitrary government and instead pray that we would be Godly and quietly governed by leaders with hearts of service.

We pray for the police over the Christmas season that sadly is often the busiest day of the year for the officers who defend the thin blue line of good order.

Bless our police officers who are on duty at Christmas, and especially for those who must deliver awful news about deaths, homicides and suicides at Christmas.

Be with the families of the police as they are often stressed by the challenges faced by the constabulary.

As police officers put on their uniform each day, may they be reminded by the cross of Jesus Christ that is shown on each shoulder, and may they be refreshed in the vocation as servant leaders who will work with neutrality, bravery and dedication to duty, as they seek to keep the peace.



Officers of South Australia Police brave the raging waters of the swollen Sturt River to rescue a boy.

To serve and protect

In 1996, 10 year old Christopher Matthews was swept away in the raging waters of the Sturt River that runs across metropolitan Adelaide. He was courageously rescued by police officers, one of whom later received the following letter, sent from a prisoner held in New South Wales, who had seen the rescue on television:

> *All through my life I have felt nothing but contempt and hate for the police force. Now I am of a different opinion that the police force is needed to protect society from people such as myself but more importantly to come to the aid of those in time of need, that I know in my heart that these gallant policeman will risk their own lives to save any boy, no matter of what race or religion from dire circumstances.*
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> *As a father of a young child, I feel comforted that there are officers of this calibre in the force if he was ever placed in peril.*

Those comments were related by Chief Inspector David O'Donovan (the rescuer at the left of the image).

Our Father, we pray for a restoration of respect for all the civic authorities, and especially for the police. May your people support, pray for, and encourage each member of the constabulary.

We also pray for prisoners and their families at the Christmas season especially. May prisoners obtain the necessary rehabilitation in gaol, so they may be reintegrated successfully in the wider community on release from confinement. We also pray for correctional services officers in their important work.

For those on duty over Christmas

We pray for all manner of volunteer and professional people who remain on duty at Christmas, as they serve. Father, protect brave **fire-fighters** as they respond to bush fires over the summer season. We give thanks for the many thousands of volunteer fire-fighters who place themselves in danger in the line of duty.



Good Father, be with **ambulance officers** - in their stressful and often thankless tasks including responding to accidents and road traumas that multiply at Christmas time.



Lord, we pray that your peace will rule in their hearts, especially when they receive physical abuse and verbal violence from drug-affected or mentally challenged patients.

As ambulance officers put on the uniform each day, may they ponder the cross of Jesus Christ, and draw strength from him as Saviour and Lord - recognising that the government shall be upon his shoulders.

May wisdom be upon the nation and its leaders

Father, although the world and the nation increasingly seem to be rejecting the claims of Christ, we give thanks for his birth, life, death and resurrection. We give thanks for the powerful influence of the Gospel, and for its effect to enrich Australia with peace and prosperity.

At this Christmas season, we pray especially for civic authorities and the challenging issues they must resolve. We pray they will be refreshed and renewed in their recognition of Jesus who is the reason for the season. Hear our prayers we ask, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.



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