



**"What I am going to tell you,  
I want you to remember for  
the rest of your life..."**

## Archbishop speaks to students

■ By Jamie O'Brien

One question grabbed attention during last week's live webcast for the Lifelink Appeal, as a secondary school student asked Archbishop Barry Hickey about homeless people.

Schools had the opportunity to email questions to the Archbishop and Auxiliary Bishop Donald Sproxton and to view and hear their responses, although the volume of traffic was so great most questions were not answered.

The Prendiville College student asked the Archbishop, "Your Grace, do you have to face a lot of people who are homeless and wanting food and water?"

"What I am going to say," replied Archbishop Hickey, "I want you to remember for the rest of your life.

"It's the most important question I have had so far - do I have to face a lot of people who are homeless and wanting food and water?"

"Most of us don't.

"We live out in the suburbs and people have got their own homes, but I live in the centre of the city - that's where God has placed me if you like - and in the centre of the city there are a lot of homeless people.

"Many of them have found a refuge on my front verandah.

"Last night there were eight homeless people wrapped up in blankets.

"I give them food...a little. I give them water.

"I give them coffee and I could say these people are unwashed, they're smelly, they're dirty and I don't want them, they should go elsewhere.

"But there is nowhere else for them to go!

"Wherever they go they get kicked out. So what is God asking me to do? Is he asking me to kick them out like everybody else?"

"Jesus said words that I can't forget. He said, 'whatever you do to the least of my brothers and sisters, you do to me.'

"So I am challenged to see Jesus in all these homeless people with tons of problems and I have to respond as if I am responding to Jesus.

"So do you!

"So does everybody who has been baptised.

"It is the most important lesson that we can learn.

"I have had to learn it the hard way, and it is still hard."

More than 120 primary and secondary schools took part in the two 45-minute sessions.

Students logged on through the IT facilities of the Catholic Education Office. Lifelink Day is an annual event that encourages young people to show they care for people in the community who need help.

Lifelink is the umbrella organisation through which the Archdiocese funds 13 agencies that help more than 60,000 West Australian families and individuals each year.

The agencies provide practical assistance and supportive programs for the unemployed, homeless, migrants and refugees, people with physical and intellectual disabilities, those suffering from HIV/AIDS, families in crises, those battling addictions and abused women and children.

The appeal is ongoing, and many schools use it as the foundations for practical education in Christian charity.

The Archbishop said that classes and groups of students in Catholic schools showed creativity and leadership in developing service programs within the schools through Lifelink agencies, in the general community and in mission experiences elsewhere in the State or overseas.

The complete recording of last Wednesday's webcast is available at [www.lifelink.com.au](http://www.lifelink.com.au). Information is also available about the Lifelink agencies and there are facilities for donations to be made.

All 13 agencies of Lifelink deliver more than \$24 million in services each year.

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