



## **Reflection for the New Year**

**by the Archbishop of  
Canterbury**

### **The text of Archbishop Justin Welby's New Year Message broadcast on BBC One on New Year's Day**

Starting somewhere new is always a bizarre experience. There's so much to get used to, and things come at you at such a pace. It's been a huge year of contrasts. It's had some incredible high points. One of them being the baptism of Prince George, and to be honest I had to pinch myself to think I was actually there.

And another one was my installation at Canterbury Cathedral, a wonderful service in a packed cathedral, very exciting, and a weight of history coming down on one's shoulders.

And then there's been other real high points, and one of them is today, coming here to this Church Urban Fund-supported centre, the Ace of Clubs.

They care for people on the very edge. They enable people to find their way back into the mainstream of life when they want to. And that's one of the greatest excitements of this job – being part of an organisation that is in many places that's holding the whole of society together.

Whenever Christians speak out on issues of poverty or social issues of all kinds, we always get letter saying 'Why don't you just talk about God and stop getting muddled up in other subjects?'

When I go to my bible and think, okay, what's God saying and how do I talk more about God and get closer to God, and encourage other people to get closer to God, the thing I find is that God says: Love me, and show you love me by loving your neighbour. And if you love your neighbour you're going to be deeply concerned in the things that trouble them, whether it's about heating bills, whether it's about insecurity in families and the need for good community life.

The church is involved in those because we want to demonstrate that we have freely received the love of God and we want to share that with others. It's not about politics, it's about love.

I know it's the New Year, and I don't want to sound like scrooge, but I never make New Year resolutions, I'm just hopeless at them. It's not that they aren't a very good thing, it's just that I know I'm not going to keep them, and I have this vague sense that there's no point in doing them.

Except there's one I want to think about this year. I want to suggest this year that each of us makes a resolution to try and change the world a bit where we are.

Nelson Mandela said that dealing with poverty is not an act of charity, it's an act of justice. He said every generation has the chance to be a great generation, and we can be that great generation.

I look around and I see many signs of hope, but also there are many communities, many families, many individuals struggling.

Perhaps our New Year's resolution is therefore not just to do something slightly differently, but to set our eyes on changing the world around us. That would really change our country in the most amazing way.