



---

## The 85th BBC Radio 4 St Martin-in-the-Fields Christmas Appeal

Revd Richard Carter

Sunday, 4 December 2011

---

It's cold in the mornings, especially if you've been out all night with no where to sleep. Philip looks exhausted when he arrives at St Martin's. "The worst thing," he says, "is trying to sleep when your clothes are wet and your sleeping bag is soaked and your head's down on the pavement." Last night Philip tried to keep warm on the all night bus; fifty minutes to the bus depot, and then changing bus and back again until he gets thrown off. It's hard enough finding a job when you have a home, it feels impossible when you've no where to sleep. Philip is trapped and just at the moment he can't see how things can ever change. But here at St Martin's, I see change all the time.

Dennis was homeless for two years. "I've got a job," he tells me. He pushes £40 into my hand. "It's so you can help other people," he says. It was from his first wage packet.

Half the money given to this annual Christmas Appeal goes to The Connection at St Martin's, which gives real practical support to more than 5,000 homeless and vulnerable people each year. People like Dennis. It's a catalyst for change. 80% of those who come are able to rebuild their lives off the streets.

The other half of the money goes to the Vicar's Relief Fund. Requests come from all over the UK for small grants averaging £180 which help people with urgent needs. We can respond immediately.

- A deposit for accommodation gets a homeless person a flat,
- A cooker means a hot meal,
- Bedding for a mother and her children keeps them warm in an unfurnished flat.

Clare from County Durham had never been late with her rent, until the death of her seven month old baby. With the cost of the funeral and struggling with grief she fell into arrears. £220 paid the rent she owed, so she could begin to get her life back together.

For 85 years the Radio 4 St Martin-in-the-Fields Christmas Appeal giving people like Philip, Dennis and Clare another chance.

There are so many reasons that can lead to homelessness. It can happen to anyone.

What better Christmas present, during this time of economic hardship, could you give to than one to prevent homelessness?

Please give what you can by calling 0800 082 82 84.

Or give online on the BBC Radio 4 website.

Or send a cheque to the : St Martin-in-the-Fields Christmas Appeal  
Trafalgar Square  
London WC2N 4JJ.

Thank you so much, and may we all have a very Happy Christmas.