

## St Paul's Cathedral and the Protestors

As most people are aware, there is an on-going encampment of protestors in the vicinity of St. Paul's Cathedral which resulted, in October, in the Cathedral being closed to the public on Health and Safety grounds. The protest is about cuts to benefits and services being imposed as a result of the financial crisis and the huge excesses of pay and bonuses being paid to a small number of bankers and heads of large corporations whilst many ordinary people are having small or no increases in their remuneration.

Can Cairo come to London?



It seemed that the Cathedral never closed during World War 2 even though London suffered immensely from bombing by the Luftwaffe but that a number of tents in the Cathedral grounds achieved what the Nazis failed to do. I thought that the reaction of the Cathedral Authorities was ludicrous and I was proved correct when the Cathedral was reopened to the public after negotiations with the protestors achieved a safe access and egress for the visitors to the Cathedral.

I thought that the resignation of the Dean of St. Paul's was inevitable as his reaction to the protest in closing the Cathedral was an overreaction which has proved to be the case.

What is not widely known is that St. Paul's has suppressed an internal report on Banker's Bonuses and practices in the City of London which is highly critical of the activities therein.

St. Paul's relies, to a large extent, on financial support from the City and there is a great reluctance of the hierarchy to upset the donors. This has widely been suggested as the true reason why St. Paul's wants to see the protestors banished from the vicinity of the Cathedral.

I think that we should ask the question, "What would Jesus do in this situation and where would He be?" I suggest that Jesus would be with the protestors. Did Jesus confront the rich and powerful and the religious leaders of his time? They killed Him because he made life very uncomfortable for them and they were worried that His teachings would result in the people taking away their power.



Although the protestors are making life a little difficult for us today, I think that they should be left to carry on their protest. No action should be taken to force them to leave the grounds of St. Paul's. On the contrary, the Church has a history of offering sanctuary to those who are persecuted and this service should be given to the protestors. Also, the Church should enthusiastically take on the message of justice and fairness for all and confront the greed and avarice which is exhibited in financial institutions in general and the City of London in particular.

I am concerned that the Establishment will resort to the use of force and violence to end the protest and evict the protestors from the grounds of St. Paul's. I hope that this will not happen.

I would prefer to let the protest run its course which will probably take a long time – it could be years. The Church should actively embrace and encourage the protest and prove to all that it really stands four square on the side of the poor and the persecuted in our society and in the world.

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1<sup>st</sup> November 2011.

