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## Release Women Email - November 2020

Hello Friend

### Light in the darkness

As we near the end of November thoughts turn inevitably towards Christmas. This is even more so this year as we start to work out what sort of Christmas we can have safely in the middle of a global pandemic!

This Sunday is the first Sunday of Advent, a season of preparation and expectation as we await the celebration of the birth of Jesus, the light of the world, on Christmas Day. In Isaiah 9:2 we read one of the prophecies of the coming of Jesus: *'The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.'* The people of Israel were expecting a Messiah to come and to redeem them, but His arrival was not as a warrior King, as they expected, but as a helpless baby, born to a lowly mother.



Let's take a moment to reflect on Mary and on Elizabeth her cousin, mother of John the Baptist. Neither woman was 'special'. One a young girl, pledged to be married and about to face the trauma of the possible rejection by having a child out of wedlock and the other apparently barren and facing the possible humiliation of God withholding the blessing of children from her. Yet, God used each woman to bring about His purpose, one as the mother of Jesus and one as the mother of John the Baptist who *'came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.'* (John 1:7-8)

Many of the women Release International serves know what it is to be rejected or humiliated, abused or downtrodden. Yet, just as God used Mary and Elizabeth to play their part in making known Jesus, the light of the world, so do our sisters in Christ as they are 'light' in their communities. Women like the mothers in Eritrea who make food for the Christian prisoners. The women in the Strength to Stand groups in Egypt who learn to discipline their children in a godly way, and not by beating them. Widows in Nigeria who forgive their husband's killers. The aunt in Sri Lanka bringing up her orphaned nephew and niece after the Easter Sunday bombing last year.

As we enter the season of Advent and maybe light candles on an Advent wreath, let's also remember to pray for our sisters in Christ who suffer today for His sake, but who are like 'spiritual beacons' in the darkness as they point to Jesus by their faith and actions.



Blessings,

Release Women Team

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