

# JESUS

was born into  
this world's night,  
into the harsh  
reality of poverty  
and need,  
as an eternal sign  
that in darkness  
and distress  
God's glory shines.

MB

## Christmas – A Time to Forgive

Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

Luke 6:37

*“Take care that you do not keep track of anything bad said or done to you. Forgive, and God will not withhold from you that most precious gift of grace: the forgiveness of your sins.”*

TAKEN FROM MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD BY M. BASILEA SCHLINK

Christmas! What comes to mind? Family, friends, fun? Or something else? Sad memories of better times? Worse still, unresolved issues? It's no secret that Christmas can be a stressful time of year. But what makes it even more stressful is when you find yourself avoiding family members, gatherings, or harbouring resentment towards others – where a single word can unleash pain stretching back for years. It doesn't take much to stoke the flames. The truth is, it can be exhausting to hold on to the bitterness and resentment.

Does it have to be that way? Jesus shows us a better way. Can you hear Him speaking to your heart? “Give Me your pain, and hurt. Let go. Withholding forgiveness eats away at your heart like gangrene. It is toxic and only makes the other person worse.” Why do we find it so hard to forgive? Is it because we want to hold on to unforgiveness and make others pay for what they did to us?

You will all be familiar with Dicken's “Christmas Carol”. Remember the scene of where Jacob Marley appears to Scrooge? He is weighed down by a chain made up of cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses wrought in steel.

Does unforgiveness drag after us like a ball and chain? Has unforgiveness accumulated in our hearts over the years?

Christmas is a time to forgive. Jesus came to set us free—free from sin. That is the meaning of His name. In the story of the nativity the angel said to Joseph, “You are to give him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21 NIV). Today just as it was 2000 years ago when Jesus was born, people need one thing more than anything else: forgiveness. And with forgiveness from God comes the ability to forgive others. When you choose to forgive and be reconciled—you also receive a special gift yourself. You may now let go of your hurt and bitterness.

Perhaps you felt you had moved past the bitter coworker, the family member, or the former friend, but now every time you think about them, a tiny bit of anger creeps into your heart. Wouldn't it be wonderful to be free of such emotions? Wouldn't it be wonderful to live without that pain and have God's joy and peace instead? You can if you are willing to offer forgiveness.

But forgiveness is so hard. “The other person isn't even sorry!” we can hear ourselves say. Peter even asked Jesus, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?” And what was Jesus' answer? “Not seven times, but seventy-seven times.” (Matthew 18:21–22) Jesus taught us in the Lord's prayer to say: “Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.” And on the cross He prayed, “Father, forgive... They know not what they do.”

So may this Christmas be different. If you haven't already done it, let this be an opportunity to make your peace with God, and then with others. Let us celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ and give thanks for His life and atonement by forgiving others as He has forgiven us. Then we will receive the blessings God has in store for us: freedom, love, joy, serenity, and more!

This Christmas, give your best gift ... your love, your forgiveness, and your acceptance of others. Make this Christmas, as well as all future ones, a season of letting go of those who have wounded you. Don't miss the opportunity to extend the hand of forgiveness.

*Thank you for your prayers, friendship and support.  
May God bless each one of you abundantly!*

*The Evangelical Sisters of Mary*



## **WE HAVE A NEW SISTER!**

We want to take this opportunity to share with you, that the Lord has called a new Sister into our branch, here in Australia.

Some of you may know that Lisa—originally from New Zealand, has been serving with us in the branch for almost 6 years now. During this time the Lord made it clear to Lisa that He was asking her to give up serving in New Zealand, and that He was asking her to serve in Australia, as a Crown of Thorns Sister within our Sisterhood.

Lisa applied for Australian citizenship and was recently granted this, and she received the following Bible verse from Ephesians 2:19 “Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of His household.”

Lisa first came to Canaan in Australia in 1992, after reading Sister Claudia’s book, “If I only Love Jesus.” Lisa experienced that the Holy Spirit awakened her own spirit through the transformation Sister Claudia experienced in her personal life journey within the Sisterhood. Lisa later attended Bible College here in Australia, before spending a year at Kanaan in Germany 1995, returning to New Zealand in 1996.

From 2011 – 2017 Lisa experienced God coming ever anew to her, challenging her that He had a different pathway and calling for her.

In 2017, when helping with a Canaan retreat in South Korea, the Lord showed her, He was going to bring her career to an end, and He was calling her back to Canaan in Australia to serve.

At that time Lisa did not know in what capacity the Lord was calling her to Canaan, how this could even happen, and most of all, she did not want to turn her life upside down.

However, she read something very important that was written by Mother Basilea Schlink that said, "When you are praying and there seems to be no answers to those prayers, just keep going as you are. Just take the next step. Fulfil your obligations. When He gives us no specific guidance, no clarity, it is on purpose. He is testing our relationship with Him and revealing what is deep down inside of us."

Lisa committed to putting these words into practice and assured the Lord she was not about to turn her life upside down. However, she would continue to walk and fulfil all her obligations, and if the Lord wanted to change the direction for her, He would have to make each step clear. And, as He made each step clear, Lisa committed to taking those steps in obedience to Him.

In 2019-2020, the Lord revealed to Lisa that He was calling her by name to follow Him, sacrificing everything, to live for Jesus alone with the single hearted love of a bride - and serve at Canaan in Australia.

However, He also showed her she would go through a testing time, but to trust Him as He needed to create a foundation of unshakeable faith and implicit trust in Him. He showed her that during the trials she would go through, it would be important that she never lose confidence in Him. As the Bridegroom of her soul He would always bring her through. This was a long journey of believing, walking by faith and holding on to all the promises He had given her, until it was the right time for Him to bring them to fulfilment. Together with Lisa, we rejoice in what the Lord has done, and we sing this verse from Mother Basilea's song, "God's promises come true – whatever He says, He'll do! No doubt my heart can hold, of all that He has told! – Hallelujah!"



*Lisa Murphy*



We mourn the loss of civilian life in the ongoing conflict taking place on all sides because war is never something to celebrate.

In the middle of all of this, we are aware that, as Christians, we have been given the mission of bringing about reconciliation in the name of Jesus. Those who are suffering and in the greatest need right now can receive hope & healing from us Christians.

To truly empathise with many people in this region, we must make space for profound compassion. Recall that we do not need to be anti-Palestinian in order to love and support Israel. Furthermore, we don't have to oppose Israel in order to love Palestinians.

- Offer up prayers for the families in Israel who have experienced tremendous trauma, the loss of loved ones, and destruction of property.
- Offer up prayers for safety and peace over Israel, Gaza, and the surrounding area. That there wouldn't be further fronts in the conflict and that God would preserve life and keep innocent Israeli and Palestinian civilians safe.



- Pray also for Israelis and those in Gaza who are wounded and/or displaced.
- Pray for the people of Gaza who have experienced loss and sorrow, that they will soon be released from the harsh rule of Hamas.
- Pray for the truth to be revealed, and may the Lord expose and destroy every lie, misleading news & propaganda, and the false narrative that is directed against Israel.
- Pray that fear, hatred, and incitement would cease.
- Pray that the Lord makes us cautious of imbalanced extremist Palestinian Liberation Theology and toxic theologies that are against Israel.

**"It is even more scandalous  
that those who suffer most from conflicts  
are not those who decide whether or not  
to start them ."**

**Archbishop Paul Gallagher**

**JESUS  
IS VICTOR!**

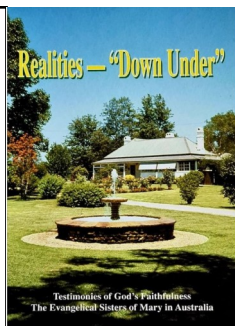
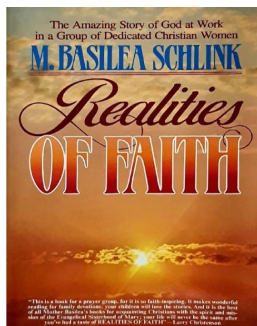
## **Faith into Practice**

- Please pray that when we open up, the Lord will call those He wants to participate in the “Faith into Practice” volunteer programme at Canaan.
- Please pray for volunteers from a variety of countries, so that there is a good multicultural balance in the group.
- We are happy that many young people from overseas have previously taken part in our “Faith into Practice” volunteer programme. Please pray for the former participants, that the Lord would continue to bless them in their spiritual walk and make them a blessing for many others.
- For those former helpers who are praying about their future pathways, please pray that they will discern God’s guidance.

## **Outreach**

- Please pray that the Lord continues to provide innovative ideas for outreach in the wider community during these Covid-19 times.
- Please pray that the Lord would continue to show us new ideas for outreach through our website and other social media avenues.
- We would be grateful if you would support us in prayer for our ongoing ministry of love and reconciliation—especially to the Jewish community, Aboriginals, and the various ethnic communities in the Sydney area.
- Please pray for the e-mailings, literature and DVDs being sent out from Canaan, that God will use them to bring much blessing to people.

- Pray that people will ask for the Canaan publications at their local Christian bookshops, as this helps to make the literature more widely known. Some of the things that Mother Basilea wrote prophetically more than 50 years ago have been dramatically fulfilled in the meantime, and friends are often “re-discovering” the books and finding them so relevant for today. Pray that God will continue to use Canaan’s legacy to change lives, and to help prepare the Bride of Christ.
- Please remember our brothers and sisters who are being persecuted in many of the countries we serve. We thank the Lord that our internet ministry enables us to have contact with many of them. They are so grateful for the contact, prayer support and literature when it can be sent safely or read online.
- Pray for all of us here at Canaan as we seek to put the Lord first and to be obedient to His leadings. Since our time and strength are limited, pray that we will always know what God wants us to take on and what He would have us say no to, especially moving forward when restrictions lift.
- Pray for continuing protection, strength, wisdom, and unity for everyone at Canaan, and also for the wider fellowship groups of Canaan.
- Please continue to pray for Sister Theophania, who is living in residential care off Canaan.
- Most of all, we pray that as Sisters and Friends of Canaan we will all love our Lord Jesus more day by day, helping to extend His kingdom and prepare His Bride.



## GOD HEARS BELIEVING PRAYER

### God seeks those who will pray.

In our times God, as a true Father, will show us His help and His wonders as never before—if we call out to Him in deepest need, trust Him, and in prayer *actually reckon upon His help*. For He stands ready to help those who believe in His love, who truly reckon upon His Almighty power, who truly reckon that He still works miracles today.

A whole complex of buildings on the grounds of the Canaan stands today as a testimony to how real God's help was in our business affairs, how literally He answered prayer. These buildings cost great sums of money. We had no savings, nor did we receive any subsidy from official sources. They were built and paid for only through prayer and belief in God's help.

*To all our friends,  
You are thought so much of,  
All throughout the year.  
And the nicest time to say so,  
Is when Christmas time is here.*

*As well as praying that you  
experience happiness,  
Peace and Joy,  
We pray also you may have a  
special New Year that is perfect,  
In each and every way!*

*Have a very blessed Christmas  
And New Year!*