



Do not be afraid

Fourth Sunday of Advent

News of a pregnancy can be terrifying for vulnerable women around the world. Your support, through the Christmas Bowl, is showing these mothers they are not alone.

In today's reading from Luke, an angel of the Lord visits Mary; a young woman, living in Nazareth. He tells her that she has found favour with God. However, this does not come with any of the things that we would think would show favour. She gains no status, riches, or good fortune. Rather, Mary has been chosen as the mother of God's own son.

In that very instant, Mary's world is turned upside down. What fear and uncertainty she must have faced. What would her fiancé say? How would her family react? What would people think of her?

While we cannot understand how Mary must have felt in that moment, the news of a pregnancy can be terrifying for vulnerable women around the world who don't have access to adequate medical care and maternal health programs.

This was true for Souzan, a refugee in Jordan, who at nine months pregnant was in fear for not only her own life, but the life of her baby.

I couldn't get enough nutrition to grow my baby. As a pregnant woman I didn't have enough food or intake to grow the baby and keep it healthy."

"There was no medical insurance and we couldn't afford to go to private medical care. I was two weeks away from delivering and it needed to be a C-section. I still did not know what I could do except hope that my baby and I would not die during the birth."

Thanks to the generous gifts of Christmas Bowl supporters, Souzan received the care needed for the operation and she gave birth to a healthy baby boy. However, there are still thousands of expectant mothers just like Souzan who don't have access to basic medical care.

Through the Christmas Bowl, you are not only providing lifesaving medical support for pregnant women and their babies, but you are helping to take the fear away from an expectant mother, who may be feeling scared, alone or vulnerable.

Mary's response to the angel Gabriel, was "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." As we approach advent, we too must heed God's call in our own lives.

Maternal healthcare

Every day, approximately 830 women die from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. 99% of all maternal deaths occur in developing countries. (World Health Organisation)



Life changing support

\$27 can pay for a refugee mother to attend a mother's group in Jordan, providing essential supports and counselling.