

7 November, 2018

PROTECT THE MIRACLE OF MOTHERHOOD THIS CHRISTMAS WITH A CARITAS GLOBAL GIFT

A baby's first breath, the softness of their skin, the first time they open their eyes. These moments are precious and for a mother they bring a new purpose: to protect the child that rests in her arms.

But childbirth does not always end in joy. According to the latest UN estimates, more than 300,000 women each year die in childbirth or as a result of complications arising from pregnancy. This equates to about 830 women a day.¹

This Christmas, Caritas Australia, the international aid and development agency of the Catholic Church, is urging its supporters to protect the miracle of motherhood by purchasing a Global Gift. Money raised goes to support aid and development programs across Africa, Asia, the Pacific and within First Australian communities.

Ranging in price from \$10 to \$150 each Global Gift, available for purchase by visiting the Caritas website, comes with a card which can be given to a friend or a loved one.

Richard Landels, Caritas Australia's Head of Engagement and Sustainability said we are all part of the one human family and by purchasing a Global Gift this Christmas you are putting your "love and compassion" into action globally.

"Christmas is about giving and sharing. It's about connecting with the ones that you love the most, as well as our brothers and sisters across the world.

"There are three gift cards available - food, water and sustainable livelihoods. Global Gift purchases go towards community projects that help the most marginalised globally including women and children."

Since 2008, Caritas Australia has been working with our partner Caritas Bangladesh to protect the miracle of motherhood in the Mirpur District of Dhaka. Through our Safe Motherhood initiative, Caritas has trained midwives and provided healthcare and health education to women and children.

Lima, who is 23 years old, is just one woman who has been supported by the Safe Motherhood initiative. Lima has given birth three times, but sadly her first child did not survive.

"My dear daughter died on the second day," Lima said.

Lima described her second birth as an equally "frightening experience" due to a lack of support from her untrained birth attendant.

Understandably, when Lima fell pregnant for the third time she was fearful for her own safety and that of her unborn baby.

A local woman, Monika, had recently trained as a midwife through the Safe Motherhood initiative. Monika's expert care meant that, Lima felt safe, supported and confident whilst bringing her child in the world. Her daughter Jyoti was born safe and well.

Last year, Caritas Australia assisted more than 2 million people directly.

To purchase a global gift or to make a donation call Caritas Australia on 1800 024 413 or visit:

www.caritas.org.au/globalgifts

A photo of Lima with her baby and three Global Gift card can be downloaded by visiting:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7m3ulxrp0j6aovb/AAC8wnpuiTbBcpDxZtu_Foiea?dl=0

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¹ World Health Organisation (2018). "Maternal mortality." Available online: <http://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/maternal-mortality>

Notes to the editor

Maternal mortality – The facts

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO):

- The maternal mortality ratio in developing countries in 2015 is 239 per 100 000 live births.ⁱ
- The maternal mortality ratio in developed countries in 2015 is 12 per 100 000 live births.ⁱⁱ
- In 2015, the latest year for which figures are available, for every 100,000 live births in Bangladesh, 167 women died.ⁱⁱⁱ
- In 2015, for every 100,000 live births in Australia, 6 women died.^{iv}

ⁱ World Health Organisation (2018). “Maternal mortality.” Available online: <http://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/maternal-mortality>

ⁱⁱ World Health Organisation (2018). “Maternal mortality.” Available online: <http://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/maternal-mortality>

ⁱⁱⁱ World Health Organisation (2015). “Maternal mortality 1990 – 2015, Bangladesh.” Available online: http://www.who.int/gho/maternal_health/countries/bgd.pdf?ua=1

^{iv} World Health Organisation (2015). “Maternal mortality 1990 – 2015, Australia.” Available online: http://www.who.int/gho/maternal_health/countries/aus.pdf?ua=1