

**PRAY** POSTED ON JANUARY 2, 2019

**Pray for Jonathan and Thelma Nambu, caring for and empowering women in the Philippines and partnering to combat human trafficking in Asia and around the world.**



BOB SANTILLI

Jonathan and Thelma are associate missionaries appointed by International Ministries in partnership with Samaritana Transformation Ministries, an organization committed to sharing and living out the gospel among women caught in prostitution. The Nambus' ministry involves caring for and empowering women in the Philippines, as well as developing partnerships in Asia and around the world towards prostitution-free societies.

They write – The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. – Isaiah 9:2

I reviewed my calendar the other day, and was stunned. Beginning with the death of my (Jonathan) mother last November, over the past 13 months Thelma and I have attended 13 wakes/funerals of friends and friends' loved ones – one a month. For eight of them, I was asked to share a message at the service. Thelma and I have also been privileged to accompany a handful of people going through very painful situations and seasons of deep loss, confusion, and pain. Likewise, our ongoing ministry with Samaritana is filled with both joy and pain, as the women we minister to go through ups and downs towards healing and recovery.

It has felt at times like a particularly heavy year, with moments and days where Thelma and I have felt the darkness. Some days did really feel like passing through a space filled with shadows of death.

My heart finds courage in Isaiah's words: a light – a great light – has dawned, and still dawns on a weary world (O Holy Night). ... So too, the light of Christ's coming into the world and into our lives may some days seem still faint and fuzzy. But we hold on in expectant Advent certainty that the full and glorious dawning of Christ's light will surely arrive. If you, like me, have found yourself in shadowy, death-filled places, or are weary, then let us take courage as we wait for and peer into the growing light of Christ's dawning in our hearts, and in the world.

There were moments of deep joy, too! ... In October, we visited dear friends in Delhi, and helped to coordinate an ICAP Asia conference in Guwahati, providing spiritual renewal and capacity building for over 80 anti-trafficking practitioners from around Asia, particularly from South Asia.

- Pray for us as we venture into new areas in 2019 – deepening our efforts at preventive work among vulnerable communities and individuals, and continuing to explore and study how Samaritana can move towards social enterprise, to help provide sustainable employment for women survivors of prostitution and human trafficking.