**CANDLES OF HOPE**

**Queen Elizabeth’s Christmas Message**

December 28, 2015 (LifeSite News) – Every Christmas Day since 1952, the year she became Queen of England and the British Commonwealth, Queen Elizabeth has broadcast a Christmas Day message to the British and Commonwealth nations.

Queen Elizabeth reveals that she still knows what Christmas is really all about and is not even slightly embarrassed to state it.

Following are some excerpts from the full text of the Christmas message from the now 90-year-old, longest reigning monarch ever in British history.

Many people say the first Christmas after losing a loved one is particularly hard. But it's also a time to remember all that we have to be thankful for.

It is true that the world has had to confront moments of darkness this year, but the Gospel of John contains a verse of great hope, often read at Christmas carol services: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

The custom of topping a tree also goes back to Prince Albert's time. For his family's tree, he chose an angel, helping to remind us that the focus of the Christmas story is on one particular family.

For Joseph and Mary, the circumstances of Jesus's birth - in a stable - were far from ideal, but worse was to come as the family was forced to flee the country.

It's no surprise that such a human story still captures our imagination and continues to inspire all of us who are Christians, the world over.

Despite being displaced and persecuted throughout his short life, Christ's unchanging message was not one of revenge or violence but simply that we should love one another.

Although it is not an easy message to follow, we shouldn't be discouraged; rather, it inspires us to try harder: to be thankful for the people who bring love and happiness into our own lives, and to look for ways of spreading that love to others, whenever and wherever we can.

There's an old saying that "It’s better to light a candle than to curse the darkness."

There are millions of people lighting candles of hope in our world today.

Christmas is a good time to be thankful for them, and for all that brings light to our lives.

I wish you a very Happy Christmas.