

LAMBETH PALACE, LONDON, S.E.1  
CHRISTMAS 1971

Your Beatitude,

Beloved Brother in Christ,

*"And when they were come into the house they saw  
the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down  
and worshipped him".*

(St. Matthew, 2:11)

The wise men had come on a long journey to meet their Saviour. They had also come on a long journey through their lives. One of the attractions of the Christmas narrative is in the fact that age bows down to youth, and that the wisdom of aged men reverences the innocence of a Baby who is also the Son of God. Those who were used to receiving the obeisance of their subjects, themselves came to worship. The object of their worship was a young child, who was also their King and the hope of the world.

By the standards of the world those who are old, respected, and senior, expect to receive honour from the younger generations. Young people are to look up to the wisdom and experience of those who have gone before them. The senior citizens of the world however may tend to forget that they have a responsibility to the young. The responsibility lies in their preparing to pass on to succeeding generations a world which will be worth living in. "And when they had opened their treasures they presented unto him gifts". In this may not one see symbolised the passing on of the gifts of the present world to those who will live in it in coming decades and centuries?

What sort of a world are we preparing for our children and grandchildren? It is alas a world of strife, still. It is a world of pollution as well. Wars still disfigure the face of the earth. Permissiveness and exploitation wreck human relations. Warnings have been given; let them be heeded.

Before it is too late, may all men regain a true respect for God's creation. May they look to the manger of Bethlehem and see the purity and innocence of the infant Redeemer. May they recover the spirit of reverence and worship Him. May they open their gifts to Him and prepare for Him a world in which He may live and reign, and in which children of the present and future may grow up and prosper.

In this spirit of reverence for the Saviour who was born as at this Christmastide, I send my greetings to Your Beatitude and to all the faithful of your holy Church, and pray that He may be born among your again and dwell with you.

With warmest fraternal greetings,

Your Beatitude's beloved Brother in Christ,

† MICHAEL

Archbishop of Canterbury

Primate of All England and Metropolitan.

His Beatitude Yeghishe Derderian  
Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem  
P. O. Box 14001  
Jerusalem