

## LAMBETH PALACE, LONDON, S.E.1

CHRISTMAS 1972

Your Beatitude,

Beloved Brother in Christ,

*"Be not afraid: for behold I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people: for to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord."*

*(St. Luke, 2: 10-11)*

With the humble shepherds of Bethlehem we hear again at Christmastide these words of comfort and of joy. The light of God's glory shines around us. We bow our heads in fear, in guilt, in shame, in awe. He reassures us. "Be not afraid", he cries. God calls us out of our darkness into the light of his presence. Here is good news, not for us only, but for all people. He bids us celebrate with joy the birth of the Saviour, who will bring healing and wholeness to all mankind.

God knows our need to be delivered from the darkness of our fear and guilt and shame and sin. He brings us with the shepherds to the city of David to "see this thing that has happened, that the Lord has made known to us". We gaze on our new-born Saviour. We bow our heads in worship. In Him we find peace and joy and hope. He brings healing and forgiveness to our souls. We are judged, forgiven and made whole. He saves us and sets us free. He is Christ our Lord, our Saviour, the Prince of Peace.

As we ponder on the mystery of our salvation, we join with the shepherds in "glorifying and praising God for all we have heard and seen". As shepherds of God's people we return to share with them our joy at the birth of our Saviour, who has brought his peace to us and to all men. May His blessing be with Your Beatitude, and with your faithful people as with gratitude and praise we celebrate this Holy Christmastide.

With warmest fraternal greetings,

Your Beatitude's beloved brother in Christ,

† MICHAEL

Archbishop of Canterbury

Primate of All England and Metropolitan.

His Beatitude Yegishe Derderian  
Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem  
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Jerusalem