

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S 2008 CHRISTMAS ADDRESS

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The Governor-General
His Excellency, Mr. Carlyle Glean

Christmas Address 2008

Fellow Grenadians and friends — Greetings!

This is my first Christmas message to you, and I begin by thanking those who sent cards or called to express congratulations and best wishes. Also the management, staffs, residents and patients of the institutions we visited, for their greetings and warm welcome. To all of you, Her Excellency and I express our sincere thanks and appreciate. Now to my Christmas message.

Most people are familiar with the stories of the visits of the shepherds and the wise men to Bethlehem. I will briefly tell the story and invite us to reflect on the meaning and significance.

The Shepherds received the news of the birth of Jesus at night, while they were camping in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, with the Glory of the Lord shining brightly around them. They were terrified, and the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, I am here to give you good news, great joy for all the people. Today a Saviour has been born to you in Bethlehem. He is the Messiah and the Lord. Let this be a sign to you. You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." Suddenly, the angel was surrounded by many more angels, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth, for God is blessing human kind."

When the angel had left them, the shepherds said one to another. "Let us go as far as Bethlehem and see what the Lord has made known to us." So they came hurriedly and found Mary and Joseph with the baby, lying in the manger. On seeing this, they related what they had been told about the child and all was astonished on hearing the shepherds.

The shepherds made the birth of Jesus known to the people in Bethlehem.

The second group, the wise men from the East, arrived in Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the new born king of the Jews? We saw the rising of the star, and have come to honour Him." When King Herod heard this, he was disturbed and so were the people in Jerusalem. He hurriedly called a meeting of the high-ranking priests and experts of the law and asked them where the Messiah was to be born. When they told him Bethlehem, he called in the wise men. He said to them, "Go and find precise information about the child, and as soon as you have found him, report to me so that I too, may go and honour him."

After meeting with the king, the wise men continued and the star which they have seen in the East went ahead and stopped over the place where the child was. The wise men were overjoyed on seeing the star again. They went into the house and when they saw the Child, with Mary his mother, they knelt down and worship Him. They opened their bags and offered Him their gifts of gold, incense and Mir.

In the world today, we are all shepherd watching our flocks. Some of us are watching our flocks of shops and business; others are watching their lands. Some, their money in the banks or their fishing boats. Other the success on the jobs or the children with no fathers. Some, the years of unemployment and poverty; other the years of sexual promiscuity. Some the years of drug abuse and violence or their losses in recent years, and still others; the wrongs done to them.

Both the shepherds and the wise men were given signs to find the Saviour. In His time on earth, Jesus indicated several ways by which we may find Him. Here are three ways:

1. The Golden Rule: Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, with all thy strength and thy neighbour as thy self.
2. I was thirsty and you gave me to drink, I was hungry and you gave me to eat, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and imprisoned and you visited me, and you will ask, Lord when did we see you thirsty and gave you drink? Or hungry and gave you food? He will answer, "In as much as you did it to one of the least of these little ones, you did it to me."
3. I am the way, the truth and the life, he who believes in me shall not die, but have everlasting life.

Like the shepherds and the wise men, we have to act. We have to love God and neighbour. We have to believe in God and follow the teaching and examples of Jesus, His Apostles and His church. It is Christmas. Let us leave our flocks. Let us worship Jesus and Honour Him. Let us see Jesus in others and tell them about Him, and help them in words and deeds and be witnesses for Him.

The question of the wise men, "Where is the new born king of the Jews?," and the statement, "We saw the rising of the star and have come to honour Him." - announced the birth of the Saviour to Herod, the high-ranking priests and the people of Jerusalem.

There are different kinds of wise people and different kinds of wisdom. We find that in the world, most people, as Jesus said, are wise in the ways of the world. Truly wise people lead other to Jesus; to acknowledge Him in their lives and be His witnesses by the way they live their lives of love, kindness and forgiveness.

For such people, this prayer is very appropriate: "Father we praise you for the presence of the Spirit in our lives, making men and women, bearers of your message

and your purpose." Be truly wise this Christmas. Love, worship and honour Jesus our Saviour in the love you show your neighbour.

On behalf of Her Excellency and My self, I wish you all a very joyful and holy and peaceful Christmas and a bright and prosperous new year. May the good Lord bless us all.