

"NO PRECEDENTS

December 16, 1968

"By the event of this birth the true significance of all other events is defined, for of every other occasion it can be said that it could have been different, but of this birth, it is the

case that it could in no way be other than it is. And by the existence of this Child, the proper value of all other existence is given, for of every other creature it can be said that it has extrinsic importance but of this Child it is the case that He is in no sense a symbol."

W. H. Auden, For the Time Being

Christmas is unlike all other occasions of the human story; it is without precedent or equivalent. The birth of Jesus Christ is the really new thing that has happened in history. The first Christmas brought to man new life, new motive, new meaning in the face of old problems and old ways of living. After almost 2000 years we know that the old patterns are as tenacious as ever but the newness of Christ is stronger still, and because of this truth we celebrate Christmas in 1968 with joy and expectation.

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