

Sunday evening
almost the end
of the year 1963

Dear Understanding Nen —

What loving gifts to open with
such a full heart on Christmas !
I am wrapped in the beautiful
soft shawl and feel already
the mother of an infant again,
it is so warm. And the little
exquisite bestiary ! I cannot take
my eyes from it ! It is perfect
for me and for Anne who loves
to have it (taken from its special
place near The Christmas
Creche) to read.

Too late for Christmas comes
a little package of pictures, sent
so rapidly that I did not have
time to enclose my letter. Such
has been the nature of the
late autumn. Too crowded. I
had not wanted it so, one never
does, and with the best of

intentions I made pictures for people to give to their families for Christmas only to find my own gifts slighted - and late.

It was an Autumn of really productive work and in those many hours in the darkroom I found myself again, after being so "exiled" in Mexico City. I was with you so in each portrait I made and they all speak with the voice you gave me. But I did too much and now I must rest and quiet my life for this new life that comes so soon. I have a month more of my waiting and with so little, really, I shall have a special joy doing all the little things I have put off. I must prepare the basket and the little clothes and blankets - such a renewed joy.

Somehow the peace of this Christmas has been a balm for us after the

3. tragedy of November 22nd which left us so dreadfully empty as did it everyone. In the early part of December we wanted solitude but instead were swept by a series of visitors, relatives and friends. Because that left me so exhausted, our peace-quietly together at Christmas, has been all the more meaningful. Never before, except at Villa Serena, have we been so content within ourselves; we are each at work, at peace, by the fire, and near the window the little Christmas tree flickers its lights as the hour becomes late. There is no other world for us - only that other hearth with you, and our thoughts and words so intermingled.

How much you would relish the sight of Anne these days! She is a delightful companion and very helpful with all the

tasks of the house. She especially enjoys the ritual of making bread, especially the reward of eating it, with butter and honey, for tea. One of her favourite pastimes is drawing which she is patient with - another is the building of tiny villages with little people and cows and fences and houses. Actually I enjoy this as much as she and together we sit, on tiny, flowered Mexican chairs covering her table with a "map" of villages.

We all send so much love and all wish ourselves nearer you. We shall wish and wish and maybe our wish will come true.

For the new Year,
Love in great measure,
and a little kiss and
hug from Anne.

Qreta

With extra love sent by Frederick.