

**CHRISTMAS EVE • MIDNIGHT MASS 2013**  
**SERMON-CHRIST CHURCH PARISH**  
**FATHER JOHN ALTBERG**  
**ISAIAH 9, 2-7 TITUS 2.11 LUKE 2, 1**

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*God does not speak to us in blazing flashes, but rather with a fragile flame, a baby...*

Words spoken as we lighted the 4<sup>th</sup> candle in the Advent Wreath on Sunday morning, Advent IV...this was the precursor of the moment we celebrate tonight...

In like manner, some years ago Father Rick Hobbs notably taught in his Christmas Day homily...*the birth of Jesus was not a public "big deal" headline-grabbing event...rather an obscure event in a small town...known only to a few shepherds...instructed by Angels...Go tell about this...*

God spoke to us again tonight by bringing us here...not with blazing searchlights and fireworks...but quietly, simply to mark the birth of a baby 2000 years ago...

Late this afternoon at the Mass at the Creche for Children, the detailed sequence of events was carefully explained by children who have, from their earliest days grown up telling this story...year by year adding and relating increasing knowledge and understanding.

God spoke to us through those children in a way that must be experienced to be understood.

Children teaching adults seems, at first, counterintuitive...

When more fully considered we find this not so surprising...

God incarnate – God as a human being – did not arrive as an adult and announce “Here I am”...instead as a baby...one needing to be cared for through infancy,

childhood, into adulthood...just as we ourselves required care to reach that life in which we now find ourselves...

It was indeed a fragile beginning...a small flame that grew ever more sustainable...

As we prepared for this day during the four weeks of Advent, we prepared ourselves for this event...the arrival of Jesus into our midst as a small baby...a new life, a new opportunity a new beginning for each of us to grow and participate more fully in the Culture of Life that emerges from the darkness and lack of comprehension which inevitably besets a part of everyone’s life...

The Prophecy of Isaiah teaches us...*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great Light; those who walked in deep darkness, on them Light has shined.*

What do WE do about this...? Allow Jesus visible influence...raise the shade...be seen in the light of that which God provides for us...a simple, easy to recognize presence of himself as a human being.

Where to commence...? Listen to the instruction of the Angels to the shepherds...go tell someone...and they did...

Likewise, commence at the Creche...tonight...pause...think about how the birth of Jesus became big news because the shepherds followed instruction...they told about the birth of Jesus...the people the told told others...they, in turn began to experience the result...so have we...it is why we are here...the Angels, the shepherds and the Children have taught us well...

Now let us, in the same way, become shepherds...go and tell others and bring them here...

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