

CHRISTMAS EVE MASS 2015
SERMON-SAINT JOSEPH PARISH
FATHER JOHN ALTBERG
ISAIAH 9.2-7 TITUS 2.11 LUKE 2. 1



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

Words spoken as we lighted the 4th 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...

This afternoon was the Mass at the Creche for Children. The detailed sequence of events is 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 speaks to us through children in a way that must be experienced to be understood.

Children teaching adults seems, at first, counterintuitive...more fully considered not so surprising...

God incarnate – God as a human being – did walk onto the stage 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...likewise extending that care concern and development those within our sphere and beyond.

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...some form of which inevitably besets a part of every life...

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

What to 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.

How to commence...? Heed the instruction of the Angels to the shepherds...go tell someone...and they did...

Likewise, commence at the Crèche... 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 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 taught us well...

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

