

December 8-9, 2007
Second Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 11:1-10 Romans 15:4-9 Matthew 3:1-12

Like the creamy filling within Hostess Cupcakes, God's grace frequently comes hidden within off-putting exteriors. A discerning eye is needed to look beyond the surface, to discover that which is of value and importance despite the immediate impressions that might cause us to dismiss or look away. With the Gospel arrival of John the Baptist we hear that he was dressed in camel's hair clothing (meaning the skins of animals), living off of the land and eating honey and wild LOCUSTS! (Somebody sign this guy up for the Discovery Channel survival episodes!) On quick review, John was not a pleasant visage, quite off-putting in fact. Yet, his voice and spirit are clear and pointed, guiding us in opening our lives to the presence of Jesus. With the approach of Christmas Day our focus may easily be riveted on the exterior events that surround us: school plays, home decorations, shopping mall visitations, marathon card signings, not to mention the ritual party circuit that tempts us with innumerable treats. Rather than shallowly defining the birth of Jesus as merely a time of festive celebration, a wise disciple looks to the unpleasant realities surrounding us, the things from which we would just as soon turn away and ignore. The grace of Christmas is usually not merely found in nicely decorated homes or in abundant gifts beneath the tree on Christmas morning. The fullest grace of Christmas is to be found in looking to those unemployed, those un-insured, those who are homeless, those whose crime is seeking work while being illegally in the country, those who are pregnant and alone, those who challenge us to grow and mature in our embrace of humanity. Within the rough exteriors of those things we would happily avoid awaits the promised grace of God. 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.'

Advent progresses, another candle is now lit and another week passes. Thank you for sharing yourself with our Corpus Christi Community as we journey toward Christmas. The Bulletin has a complete schedule of events for your consideration, especially our upcoming **Penance Services next week**, the **Rectory Open House NEXT Sunday** and of course the full Christmas schedule. **CONCERN Third World Hand Arts** are on site this weekend with an array of gift items for your consideration. Don't forget our **SCRIP** booth as a possible source for convenient and handy gift purchasing...and our Building Fund benefits from each purchase. Also, as is our custom, we are once again inviting YOU to help with our Grand Hall Christmas decorations by **donating poinsettias of any color**...but please, nothing smaller than a minimum six-inch plant please (the smaller ones just die and shrivel within a day or two.) You may conveniently drop them off in the kitchen anytime between now and December 23rd. **Finally, please note that the HANDS ACROSS THE COUNTY-Adopt a Family Donations ABSOLUTELY must be returned NEXT WEEKEND**....and not a day later. Thanks, and as the season intensifies, remember, you are loved. FKB