

December 24-25, 2007  
Christmas Eve and Christmas Day  
Isaiah 9:1-6                      Titus 2:11-14                      Luke 2:1-14

Like a discrete visitor amongst a loud raucous crowd, Christmas patiently bides its time to show its face. Christmas Eve and Day are filled with our ritual events: Mass (of course), last minute shopping for those special friends and guiltily-overlooked family members, packing the car and traveling to family gatherings, setting the table for the annual feast, hurriedly wrapping and putting finishing touches on bows and tinsel; Christmas sweaters, boas, shirts, ties and festive wear need dry-cleaning and fresh pressings. These are all part of the festival WE HAVE CREATED by which to note the arrival of Christmas. Yet, the very gift we celebrate with such exuberance is frequently not to be found beneath the tree or on the platter next to the ham, goose or roast beast. Indeed, our celebratory rituals have taken on a life of their own and God protect the poor souls that attempt to detour people from their annual Christmas marathon. Like all of God's gifts, Christmas is an elusive whisper of tender proportions. When our bellies are full of tasty treats and our minds abuzz with Wii and X-box drama...elusive whispers don't stand a chance. BUT...eventually the strongest among us grow weary, our energy flags and we slump into our sofas and barcoloungers. We glance around at the mess of Christmas debris, we see the carefully bought presents that have been stacked like kindling in the rush to get to the next item....and something in our soul begins to stir. We remember when Christmas seemingly was easier, when the assembly of family and friends were the truest gifts of Christmas, when lovingly-baked cookies competed with caramel apples for supremacy on the treat list. We remember one or two Christmas' from our childhood, youth or distant past when all we received was a baseball mitt, a single doll, a warm jacket....and it was the 'bestest' Christmas

ever! We remember a Christmas dinner hastily wolfed down while on patrol in Vietnam, Korea, Afghanistan or Iraq. We remember humming to ourselves the silly lyrics from a Christmas carol...we recall past holiday delights and sadness'...and as we slow from the Christmas extravaganza that pumps billions into our domestic economy...the discrete whisper of Christmas stirs. With cobweb delicacy the whisper of Christmas gently rests somewhere near our heart but not far from our soul. Unbidden yet irresistible, the whisper of Christmas presents itself: 'When the food is digested, when the clothing has been outgrown, when the presents have been discarded, when the children are grown, when you are alone, when you are old, when you are frail, when you are lonely, when you are afraid, when you are confused, when you are hurting, when you don't know which way to turn, when those you love are beyond your protection....**I am here.**' Being a discrete visitor, Christmas knows it can't compete with the exuberance of our holidazzle. It waits. Patiently. Sometimes Christmas comes on Christmas night, sometimes the next day, sometimes in February, June or July...sometimes Christmas comes when you review the x-rays with your doctor or shakily take the pink slip from your boss' hand. Christmas may finally come when you tearfully look upon your cherished mother or father, son or daughter, husband or wife, giving them back to God as you move on without them. **'I AM HERE.'** **'I AM HERE.'** **'I AM HERE!'** The whisper of Christmas bides its time, returning throughout the year.... the whisper of Christmas awaits our moments of tender vulnerability. It needs no tree or ornaments...for the whisper of Christmas is a presence...not a present. **'I AM HERE ...always and forever, you'll be okay...I AM HERE.'**

The poinsettias are beautiful, the trees and wreaths are spectacular...but they pale in comparison to the beauty of those who have gathered to be part of our Corpus Christi family as we celebrate Christmas! Thank you to all who join with us tonight and today for our festive celebrations. With so many extended families coming together for the holiday, please make sure you introduce yourselves and welcome those you may not recognize. In your kindness don't be shy to personally thank the many ministers of hospitality, Eucharist, lectors and musicians/vocalists who have given of their time and energy to ensure that our worship is a beautiful and worthy response to God's gift to us. May your Christmas be peaceful, may your travels be safe, may your food be tasty and may your hearts be open to the whisper of Christmas...today, tomorrow, June, July or whenever. Remember, you are loved. Fred K.