

Pastoral Prayer: At the Manger, O God, all things are transformed: the haughty are made humble, the powerful become weak, the weak find strength to endure, the rich learn that they are really poor, the poor discover that they have an advocate from heaven. Our dreams are no longer for self but for others; our desire is no longer for things security but for risk and insecurity; our worship is no longer for things of the world but for you. Almighty Creator, Jesus, Redeemer, Bright and Morning Star, and Hope of all ages. In the light of the Stable, O God, teach us to see the world as you see it, where disabled persons and persons with leprosy and persons with Aids are more important than Kings and Governors and legislators; where it matters more that children go to bed happy than that space ships reach distant planets; that there are men and women who cannot read than that there are men and women too busy to read; more that there elderly people frightened of going to the grocery store than that there beautiful shopping malls all around us.

You have given us so much, O God, and we have given you so little. What can we give you this Christmastime? Help us give you our

hearts, little little children, in joyful loving
trust so that they become filled with radiance
beyond our own making; and then help us to
live our lives for others, bearing their burdens,
being sensitive to their feelings, healing their
wounds, being their friends and advocates,
until they know you are in the world, re-
considering all things unto yourself and making
every day Christmas Day, till Christ himself
shall be Lord of lords and King of kings.

Opening Prayer: Eternal God, you sent your only Son, Jesus
Christ, to be our Saviour. Through him, we have come to know
the joy of salvation. You have promised to be with us, and we
have experienced the strength of your presence through the Holy
Spirit. You have taught us through Christ that you will come
again, and we have very much confidence. Hear us, O Lord,
as we confess our need for you and our unworthiness of you.
Then graciously prepare our lives, within and without, to receive
the blessings of the Saviour's birth. Amen.

