For the Day I Begin My Christmas Shopping

O God, I do like real things like money and houses, fast automobiles and diamond rings.
Forgive me that when I think of Christmas, I often think of real things like that.
I teach my children to think of bicycles and dolls, of toy trains and airplanes, of sugar and spice and everything nice. Forgive me for my foolishness.
These things I spend so much time playing around with are not bad, I can even use them creatively.
They make up much of my world and occupy a great deal of my time. But you know what my problem is?
I get so involved in accumulating them that I forget who I am.
I get so surrounded by them that I end up tangle footed, stumbling along from thing to thing, falling down at times, bruising my shins upon them.
Can you clear away some of the clutter of my life this year, O Lord?
Can you help me pick my way through the crowded stores?
Can you make me quiet long enough to hear angels?
Can your Word about life break through the blare of tawdry commercials,
The commercials that insist life can be bought if I will only go deeply into debt?
Lord, do you understand me? Can you help me understand myself?
Do I really substitute gifts for self-giving too often? Would I do better to say "I love you" as I pass out the presents?
Would I come closer to someone by spending as much time listening as I do shopping? These thoughts bother me at times. It may be that in my busyness I am losing touch with the things that are most real.
It may be I am losing touch with you and with the Child whom you sent to grow up to be a Man, whose word was your Word and whose love was your Love.
I like real things, and I know if I will listen, I may hear of the most real things of all, things like hope and love and faith, which can change lives, even mine, and renew them in the image of Christ my Lord. *Amen.*