

CCE is on Christmas break from December 19, 2019 through January 4, 2020.



Breaking Open the Word for Families for *The Fourth Sunday of Advent*

By Ginger Herrington

Reading 1: *The Virgin shall bear a Son and call Him Emmanuel.* Isaiah is sent to tell King Ahaz that God will give him a sign of His favor. God did not manifest the sign for another 700 years, but the prophecy bears witness that God’s plan to save us was prepared and promised centuries before it was fulfilled. Thus the Lord instructs us to hope, even if He seems not to hear, even when times are tough and your prayers seem to go unanswered. Hope enables us to trust in God’s promise, to rely upon Him and not upon ourselves. Hope is a steadfast anchor which keeps us firmly grounded in God’s promise: persevere in doing God’s Will in good works, love God and neighbor, and the glory of Heaven can be ours. ***Emmanuel***, “God with us,” walks with us. Be aware of this great grace. Be aware of His Presence at all times, but especially in the Eucharist, when He is Present Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. ***God indeed is with us in an extraordinary way.*** As we complete our preparations to receive Christ at Christmas, let us give thanks that God is with us.

Reading 2: *We are called to be holy and obedient to the Faith.* St. Paul compactly reviews salvation history, showing how Jesus was foretold by the prophets, came among us in power, and reigns now in Heaven after establishing His Church. We are called to be holy and to witness to the Faith we have received. We are responsible for handing on the Gospel. Jesus’ Great Commission was not only to His apostles, but for each one of us: by virtue of our baptism, we are incorporated into the Body of Christ and have therefore received the grace of apostleship. Go out to all the world and tell the Good News! Know your Faith, love it, and live it.

Gospel: *Jesus, Emmanuel: God is with us to save us.* St. Matthew relates the narrative of how the birth of our Savior came about. The prophecy from our First Reading is repeated, that the Virgin shall name her Son Emmanuel: God is with us (“immanu” is the Greek form of Hebrew meaning “with us” and “el” in Hebrew refers to God). We know Him as Jesus, whose Name means: God saves. What we call our Savior in English, Jesus, is derived from the Hebrew Yehoshua – “Yeh” short for Yahweh, the unspeakable Name of God; and “shua” for “deliverance, rescue, salvation.” “What’s in a name?” Shakespeare famously asked in *Romeo and Juliet*, shrugging off the significance of the name to concentrate on the qualities of the person. In the case of Jesus, His Name reveals His mission and His character.

Have a very merry and blessed Christmas!
Celebrate the astounding love of God
in coming to live among us,
to save us from bondage to sin,
and to open the gates of Heaven to those who believe in Him.
O, come, let us adore Him!



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