

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 7:10-14
Ps 24:(7c,10b)1-6
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-24

Monday December 19

Judges 13:2-7,24-25a
Ps 71:3-6ab,16-17
Luke 1:5-25

Tuesday December 20

Isaiah 7:10-14
Ps 24:1-6
Luke 1:26-38

Wednesday December 21

Song of Songs 2:8-14
or Zephaniah 3:14-18a
Ps 33:2-3,11-12,20-21
Luke 1:39-45

Thursday December 22

1 Samuel 1:24-28
1 Sam 2:1,4-8
Luke 1:46-56

Friday December 23

Malachi 3:1-4,23-24
Ps 25:4-5ab,8-10,14
Luke 1:57-66

Saturday December 24

2 Samuel 7:1-5,
8b-12,14a,16
Ps 89:2-5,27,29
Luke 1:67-79

Love is the theme of the Fourth Sunday of Advent. A good definition of love is in the name that we see in the first reading and again when the prophecy is fulfilled in the Gospel reading: Emmanuel, which means "God is with us." To have love is to have "God with us". To give love is to give God who is with us.

Have you ever felt like you've run out of love to give? Well, that's quite impossible! We might run out of patience; we might get tired of giving more love than we receive from others, but God who is love is always with us.

When we feel empty from loving someone who doesn't equally love us back, or when we reach the point of despising someone who repeatedly hurts us, this is when we need to ask God for a supernatural ability to love with his love. This prayer always works! It's how we become effective evangelizers as dis-

tributors of his love.

When we give God's love to those who are unpleasant to love, we're revealing to them God who is with us.

We all have people in our lives who fail to be Christ to us. They don't love us like God wants them to love us. So we need to remind ourselves that our happiness is not dependent upon how they treat us. God is with us! We need to call upon Emmanuel. God who is with us



loves us fully and unconditionally, whether or not we deserve it.

When we're looking for others to love us more than they do, we feel unloved, but if we

keep our eyes on Jesus, his love fills all the gaps.

Emmanuel. It's a name for Jesus that we should use year-round.

As you finish preparing for the celebration of Christmas, focus on Emmanuel. Sing to Emmanuel. Pray to Emmanuel. This sign, this reminder, this name is God's personal Christmas gift to you.

Reflect & Discuss:

1. Are you loved enough?
2. What will you do this week to become more aware of God's love for you?
3. As a spiritual exercise, go to the nativity display at church. Write on a small piece of paper the names of those who fail to love you sufficiently. Place it in the manger and, if it has straw or hay, take a piece of it (or take a flower petal or leaf from a nearby plant) as a reminder that Emmanuel was born to give you more than enough love.
4. What is the best Christmas gift you've ever received from God? Why did it make you feel loved?