

# ADVENT PRAYER, SCRIPTURE AND REFLECTION THROUGH THE LENS OF *SEEKING GOD TOGETHER*

## *First Sunday and Week Following*

**Advent Word of the Week: WATCH!** Be on the lookout. Do you like 'people watching'? Or watching your children in a rare quiet moment? What are you looking for? What do you see? What do you notice in yourself?

**Seeking God Together, Season 1, Conception to Birth.** An expectant couple are waiting for their baby to be born, getting to know the baby in the womb, watching the baby grow, making preparations for parenthood, and growing in love as a couple. Their love and joy is infectious and draws in people around them. What do they most need at this time?



### **Scripture:**

- Psalm from First Sunday of Advent (Psalm 24)

'Lord make me know your ways, teach me your paths' 'His ways are faithfulness and love'

- 1 Thessalonians 3:12

'May the Lord be generous in increasing your love and make you love one another and the whole human race as much as we love you'

'Make more progress in the kind of life that you are meant to live: the life that God wants'

### **Watch and Pray:**

- For all families with someone expecting a baby, and for parents with new-born babies.
- For those families where a couple have suffered miscarriage or early baby loss

## *Second Sunday and Week Following*

**Advent Word: HOPE.** What are you most hopeful about? What is it like to feel that deep, sometimes surprising sense of hope? Where does it come from? How do you share it?

**Seeking God Together: Season 3: Childhood Years.** Families are juggling demands of work, money, getting food on the table, keeping the home going. Trying to make time each day for a 'sit down' with the children before bed, listening to their day, their ideas, their hopes can be a challenge, but worth it. 'There's lots of laughter and hugs in our house, as well as the occasional melt down – that's normal isn't it?' In the build up to Christmas, this stop and share time can be harder to find and all the more precious. What do families with young children most need at this time in their lives, especially in Advent?



### **Scripture**

- Entrance Antiphon, Isaiah 30:30

'The Lord will make the glory of his voice heard in the joy of your heart'

- Baruch 5:1-9

'God will guide Israel in joy by the light of his glory, with his mercy and integrity for escort'

'Behold the joy which comes to you from g God' (Communion Antiphon)

- Psalm 125

'Then was our mouth filled with laughter, on our lips there were songs. What marvels the Lord worked for us'

- From Philippians 1:4-6, 8-11

'Every time I pray for all of you, I pray with joy' 'The One who began this good work in you will see that it is finished when the Day of Christ Jesus comes'

'My prayer is that your love for each other may increase more and more'

- Gospel Luke 3:1-6

'Winding ways will be straightened and rough roads made smooth

### Watch and Pray

Who has God given YOU to love? Who are the people around you? If you have young children explore ways of spending time together as a family (playing games, cooking and sharing meals, going out to the park)

At odd moments in the day, take a second just to stop and be thankful for the HOPES you have in your heart. Ask God to increase your love for others around you.

At the end of the day, you might like to pray together:

- For all families with young children, preparing for Jesus coming at Christmas – for an increase in hope and love between them
- For all families where life is difficult for any reason – that they will find hope to hold on to

### Third Sunday and Week Following

**Advent Word: REJOICE.** What gives you a deep sense of joy and happiness? Places, people, relationships, special moments? What's it like to feel this joy?

**Seeking God Together, Season 5: The Single Members of Families.** *'Sometimes their presence and contributions are overlooked, causing in them a sense of isolation'* (The Joy of Love #158). Everyone is single at certain points in their lives and, irrespective of their circumstances, is a unique, differentiated person with their own personality, thoughts and feelings. Whatever our status, everyone needs love and is called to love and care, leaving their mark on the lives of others. Single life includes people living alone or with others, sometimes with responsibility for others. Some chose it. Some find themselves single. If you are single, or have a single member in your family, what are the good 'joyful' things about the single life at present? What might you 'rejoice' about?



### Scripture

- Entrance Antiphon – from Philippians 4:4-5

'Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice, the Lord is near'

- Zephaniah 3:14-18

'Rejoice, with all your heart' 'Have no fear ... the Lord God is in your midst ... He will renew you by his love; he will dance with shouts of joy for you'

- Psalm – from Isaiah 12

'I trust, I shall not fear. For the Lord is my strength and my song ... with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.' 'Sing and shout for joy'

- Philippians 4:4-7

'I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord; I repeat, all I want is your happiness'

'There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.'

- Luke 3:10-18

'A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people...' 'Someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I (John the Baptist)'

'He (Christ) will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire'

### Watch and Pray

Create a space for thinking about your love and purpose in life. Asked God for a renewed sense of expectancy about life and all it has to offer.

- Pray for all single people in your family – for renewed sense of joy and purpose, finding ways to share their lives with others
- Look out for and pray for all single-parent families – that they may find love and support from their wider families and communities in the lead up to Christmas

## Fourth Sunday and Week Following

**Advent Word: PEACE.** In the lead up to Christmas we have been jostled this way and that by the pressures of the secular world saying 'It's all about the presents - and this is what you need in order to really enjoy life'. But as human beings we know that it is not 'things' that fulfil us, but a gift of peace that is beyond understanding. We feel this especially when we spend time together as a family. This is the peace that Jesus brings, peace that comes through love poured out in serving others. Families across the generations can know this peace from the inside - to want to belong, love and be loved in a beautiful, unconditional, self-giving way.

**Seeking God Together, Season 9, The Later Years.** It's very often the older generation in families, who tell the stories, helping those younger to connect with their family history and develop a sense of stability and belonging and growing peace about their place. An elderly relative's love and witness is significant. There can be an honesty and freedom in facing the challenges of growing older too. How can we make sure older people are included, and their contributions valued in our Christmas this year? What does their presence bring us as a family, and as a community? Who is a 'peaceful presence' in your family? How can *you* bring peace?



### Scripture

- Micah 5:1-4

'He will stand and feed his flock with the power of the Lord ...He himself will be peace'

- Psalm 79

'Let your face shine on us' 'Visit this vine and protect it, the vine your right hand has planted'

'Give us life that we may call upon your name'

- Luke 1:39-44 (Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth)

