

# Small Groups

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## *Discussion Questions for November 29, 2015 – The First Sunday of Advent*

Happy New Year! We've begun a new church year this Sunday, the first Sunday of Advent. But we don't just jump right in with the new year beginning with the Birth of Jesus or the Birth of the Church at Pentecost; rather, the Church in her wisdom, builds up the beginning of the year for four weeks, letting us prepare ourselves before the Nativity. Just like a good play or song may start off with a soft, lilting rhythm, so do we begin our year with a gentle urging to open our hearts to the coming of the baby Jesus. We're told in the first reading that "in those days (when the Messiah comes) Judah shall be safe and Jerusalem shall dwell secure". Also, Paul writes:

"May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we have for you, so as to strengthen your hearts, to be blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus."

So while we spend some quiet time with the Lord during this culturally frenetic shopping season, we can keep in mind that we are preparing our hearts and minds for the coming of our Lord. And we can do it through doing and being good to one another.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. How do you plan to prepare for the coming of Jesus?
2. The Gospel speaks of signs that will precede the coming of Jesus. But rather than focusing on the signs, we're better off preparing our hearts and being vigilant. What does this mean to you?
3. It is Church teaching that we all have a guardian angel. Do you ask for your guardian angel for help? Perhaps this would be a good time of the year to begin again to pray with them?

### **Closing Prayer**

Lord Jesus, our brother and friend, walk with us as we enter a new Church year. Help us to see the sorrow and need in others, then give us the courage and ability to help them. We ask that you help us make time for those less fortunate than ourselves. We know that this time of year can make many people feel even more lonely than they already do. Lead us to these people and give us the words to comfort them. Put your children in our path so we can invite them to fellowship in our homes and during our celebrations. Give us the strength to heal old wounds and be you to others. Guardian angel, watch over us and be with us this week and all weeks. We ask all of this through our Lord Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, One God for ever and ever, amen.