

Advent 2018 (Week 2)

“EXPECTATIONS”

Second Sunday of Advent: Scattered or gathered?

In Advent we remember the history of Israel, who longed for a promised messiah to save them. Their expectation was that the messiah would gather the tribes of Israel, who had been scattered throughout the world. Christ fulfills this expectation in unexpected ways, by gathering us into a new community around himself called the church (the *ekklesia*).

Reflection and Discussion Questions:

1. Besides family bonds, who are the people to whom you would say you are most connected, united, and “gathered?” From whom are you most distant or “scattered?”
2. In the post-modern West, people tend to define themselves through their choice of who and what to belong to, but the Christian mindset says we are primarily defined by being chosen by Christ and called out from the world and into the Church. Which mindset do you find in yourself? How does that affect your daily life?
3. Who might you be afraid to be “gathered” with? How does God invite you to look upon them with the eyes of Christ?

Virtue for the week: *Compassion*

This week I will choose to be a “gatherer” by forgiving others who create division or discord in my life, or among those I love.

For personal prayer:

Set up your Christmas crèche or find a sacred image of the Nativity. Contemplate how God brings unity to the whole human family by drawing all peoples around Jesus. Picture yourself there at the crib. What thoughts, feelings, and desires arise?