

Advent 2017



The advent season is one filled with hope, waiting, and expectation. Through the readings we are asked to have our eyes and ears attuned to discover all the ways that Emmanuel, God-with-us, is present.

For the Women of Providence in Collaboration, our Sisters and Associates, Advent is a call to discover the Providence moments in our ordinary daily living. It is to witness the compassion of a Provident God in a myriad of ways that surround us each day.

This Advent we are going to do something new. Last year we published two new publications. The first was a book titled: "Providence and Compassion." This book, authored by Sisters and Associates of Providence communities, explored the topic of compassion through the lens of the multiple disciplines of their ministry and community life. The second publication was a beautiful resource book of prayers, poetry, rituals, music, photos, reflections and artwork by various Sisters and Associates in our Providence congregations. It is titled: "The Art of Providence."

This Advent the WPC office is supplying you with two prayer services you can use during the Advent season. There is a service for Advent weeks one and two, and another for Advent weeks three and four. Both services use quotes from the Compassion book and use prayers from the resource book. So this Advent you can choose to use these prayer services in your local convents or with your small faith sharing groups or simply for your own spiritual reflection. The WPC Executive Committee and I thought this might be a way to use these two new publications and provide you with an Advent tool for prayer and reflection.

It is our hope that as you reflect on these quotes and prayers from the two publications that your Advent season will be enriched and you will see Providence surround you in new ways. Here is a quote from Diarmuid O'Murchu: "God acts as a compassionate partner, as lure toward the future and as co-creator. Indeed, God labors on humans' behalf."

Advent Blessings!

Barbara McMullen, CDP

WPC Executive Director

WPC Advent Prayer and Reflection

Weeks One and Two



Leader: O God, you call us this Advent season to enter more deeply into the great Mystery of your Providence as we ponder the the “providence and compassion” themes.

All: Open our hearts to be creative, compassionate bearers of hope and healing in a world so filled with division, unrest, and turmoil. We ask and pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Readings: from *Providence and Compassion: A collection of personal reflections from multiple disciplines*

“The call to compassion, the sympathetic consciousness of others’ suffering, together with a desire to take action to alleviate it, is constitutive of the mission of Jesus. Jesus not only felt concern and empathy for those who were suffering, but also alleviated the pain and suffering of the most vulnerable. Jesus offered new life and freedom to those bound by oppression. He restored to wholeness those whose lives had been broken.”

--J. Hagelskamp, SP

“Providence people acknowledge that we are not “our enough” and are in need of our God and others. Providence people ask how we can be the hands and heart of Providence in a world that is so radically different from that which God intended. Providence people recognize our interconnectedness and interrelatedness and make a deliberate choice to live in community.”

--J. Hagelskamp, SP

“The Hebrew word for compassion, *rachamim*, has its roots in *rechem*, meaning “womb.” Compassion is the act of cradling another in love and tenderness as a mother cradles the infant from her womb. Compassion is at the very heart of God.”

--M. Pastro, SP

“...the healthcare setting reveals compassion as a sacrament of God’s providence. ...we are called, as women and men of Providence, to stand with and be present to those who suffer.”

--M. Pastro, SP

Quiet Reflection and Sharing

- *In my advent journey how will I bring the face of Providence to my corner of the world?*
- *How have you witnessed compassion in another’s life and or actions?*

Closing Prayer: adapted from “The Art of Providence”, Prayer of the Season

--Mary Montgomery, SP

O Emmanuel, God with us, we open ourselves to this Holy Advent Season, a time of waiting, of expectation, of hope and possibility. We desire to recognize your presence all around us, within us, and especially in those who suffer. We desire your light to pierce the shadows and darkness of our world. May our lives be evidence of Your Word made flesh, rooted and dwelling in us. *Amen.*