

Advent 2018



A new liturgical year begins again with the first Sunday of Advent. The Scriptures call us to be ready, to be prepared, to wake from our sleep! Our Provident God is at hand and asks us to ponder what the Word made flesh really means today.

For the Women of Providence in Collaboration, our Sisters and Associates, Advent is a call to listen to the inner rhythm of God, to slow down the pace a bit and take time to notice the providence moments in our everyday lives.

This Advent we are going to continue to provide two prayer/reflection services to use during the Advent season. We have heard from our “followers” that these prayer services were widely used and appreciated. So this year I have provided two new Advent services—one for Weeks one and two, and another for Advent weeks three and four. Both services use the newest publication of the Women of Providence in Collaboration. This book is titled: *Providence and Peace: Connecting and Co-creating for Justice*. I also used selections for the closing prayer from last year’s wonderful publication entitled: *The Art of Providence*.

This Advent season you can choose to use these prayer services in your local convents, with small faith sharing groups, or simply for your own spiritual reflection. Because they are available to you on the web, you can also share them with your friends and neighbors!

The books from which these readings and prayers are taken are also now on the web under the “SHOP” tab for purchase. Our new website makes purchasing the WPC publications much easier for you.

May the joy and grace of this new Advent season be with you so that together we may spread the glad tidings of Christmas—God is here—Come, Emmanuel!

Barbara McMullen, CDP
WPC Executive Director



WPC Advent Prayer and Reflection Weeks One and Two



Leader: God of anticipation and expectation, prepare our hearts to listen to your Inner Voice guiding us at all times. Quiet our soul so that we may know Your inner rhythm in these busy days.

All: Help us to be attentive to how our lives are intersected with others and all of creation. May we live simply, care deeply, speak kindly, and love generously so that our journey will be peace-filled and reflect Your Providence in our world today.

Song: (optional choice)

Reading: Excerpt from WPC book: *Providence and Peace*, “Providence, Peace, and Pot Luck Suppers, a Personal Peace Quest with Women of Peace” –Jamie Swift

In the years I’ve worked with the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation office of the Sisters of Providence, Kingston, ON, the ways of *knowing* embedded in their spirituality have become more apparent to me. *Knowing* peace often suggests holistic understandings that can embrace a sense of inner peace through contemplative prayer. It can also suggest a deep-seated consciousness of the suffering of others...Peace, in this way of *knowing*, is enmeshed in a profound knowledge of the need to go beyond the ego. Its power lies in the ways this consciousness permeates every corner of one’s life. This includes an appreciation of the ways we are connected one to the other. And, crucially at a time when the Earth is under threat from human activity, we are so intimately connected to the biosphere...In *Laudato Si*, his ground-breaking encyclical on our common planet and all living things—particularly the most vulnerable, Pope Francis explains why he was inspired to take the name of Francis of Assisi—his “guide and inspiration.” “He was particularly concerned for God’s creation and for the poor and outcast,” explained Pope Francis. “He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace.” This is what I understand to be a providential understanding of peace—the undeniable link between the environment, society, and the most vulnerable, and a personal sense of peaceful well-being...Barry Commoner’s first law of ecology is simple, yet its implications are complex: “Everything is connected to everything else.”

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Quiet Reflection and Sharing

- ❖ What do you hear God's Inner Voice speaking to you this Advent?
- ❖ More and more we are aware that peace and the environment are forever partnered. How do you experience this partnership in your life?
- ❖ As you begin this year's Advent journey, what does Providence call you to in your participation in the partnership?

Closing Prayer: adapted from *The Art of Providence*, "River of Grace" —Donna Butler, SP

Loving God, help us gather up the tears of all times, all nations, all peoples, all children,
to form a river of grace to moisten, saturate, drench the hardness of hearts of stone,
turning them into hearts of flesh,
into the heart of You, the God of Providence.

Help us to gather up the tears of all times, to honor the grief of all generations,
to honor the grief of the planet over what we have done to Your creation.

May all these tears become living water that nourishes the deep down roots of Love
that births new life into the cosmos.

May this living water pour down the justice, mercy, love, and peace of the
Heart of our Provident God.

Amen



WPC Advent Prayer and Reflection Weeks Three and Four



Leader: O God each year we embark on the journey of Advent and remember your presence in our midst as the source of peace we often speak of at Christmas, and for which we earnestly yearn.

All: We know the world is in dire need of peace and we pray that you will hear our cries for peace and justice today and always. Help each of us to be agents of hope and peace, proclaiming the glad tidings of Christmas, God is here!

Song: (optional choice)

Reading: Excerpt from WPC book: *Providence and Peace*: “Peace is the Divine Will for the Earth” – Alice Gerdeman, CDP

The time is now. The world is at war as military conflicts and terrorism move from nation to nation. Millions of people flee war, violent ideologies, and extreme poverty. Earth itself faces degradation as a result of obsession with financial profit and power. Superiority complexes abound as people think “me first” or “me-only” and some national policies are proposed based on “us first” or “us only.” In this world, [women and men of providence] choose to contemplate the mystery of Providence. We see a “world thirsty for justice, in search of hope, hungry for love.” We grapple with the ways of God and “plunge into the ongoing creative plan of God,” accepting that Providence challenges us to move beyond ourselves. We seek to develop a culture of inclusion, recognizing each individual and culture. We welcome and learn from immigrants, refugees, and people targeted by hate. Always we find security in a loving God and decry the idea that armament and violence can ever lead to peace.

Quiet Reflection and Sharing

- ❖ Locally, what can we do to promote peace in our little corner of the world?
- ❖ How can we build the “peaceable kingdom” and promote kindness and understanding?
- ❖ How have you been the face of providence in meeting the needs of the poor and vulnerable—in welcoming the stranger?

Closing Prayer: adapted from *The Art of Providence*, “Hopeful Providence Light” —Jeannette Filthaut, SP
Provident God, lead us from darkness into light. Let us see Your face in each person we meet this day. May the light of Your life touch the heart of Your people; grant them deep interior peace. Reveal to us this day how we may be your Word alive, a hopeful light in a world in need of Your peace. Walk with us these last days of Advent and guide us on our way. Amen

