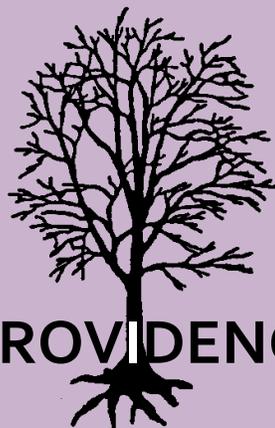




Advent 2016



Women of

PROVIDENCE

in Collaboration

“My experience in El Salvador invited me to wake up to the daily revelations of God in the faces of the poor and needy and to look for ways to act with compassion in assisting such persons to find the help they need.” — Annette Suebert, SP

When I began to reflect on Annette Seubert’s insight about her experience in El Salvador, this paraphrase occurred to me.: “The experience of Advent invites us to wake up to the daily revelations of God. . . .”

How fitting, I thought, to view this time as an invitation to awaken to God’s daily revelations in our lives. And yet . . . and yet . . . finding God revealed in the ever-ancient ever-new Advent liturgies while simultaneously finding God in joyful pre-Christmas events with family and community has long been troublesome to me. And so each year typically finds me striving to integrate my conflicted feelings while participating in Advent and pre-Christmas celebrations, and too often feeling restless and unsatisfied, despite many graced and peaceful moments.

The key here, of course, is the verb striving. Too often I find myself taking charge of the whole holiday operation:: choosing what form my Advent invitation will take, deciding when and where my revelations will occur, determining (for all the right reasons) to make this Advent/pre-Christmas season precisely as it should be.

Perhaps I can best learn to experience the joys of Advent and pre-Christmas by letting go of my own ideas (again) and placing myself gently into the hands of Providence, for although the official Year of Mercy is over, God’s gracious mercy never ceases. And surely the most loving, life-giving response to my self-fashioned dilemma is to have mercy on my own laughable controlling self and to live each day in gratitude and joy, remembering that no matter the time or season, our God is named Emmanuel.

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