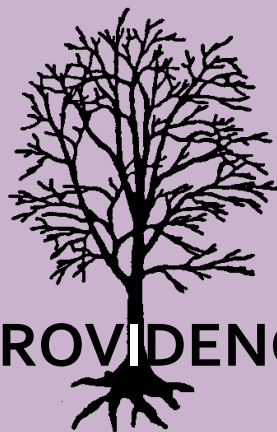




# Advent 2016



Women of

**PROVIDENCE**

*in Collaboration*

***“Providence doesn’t fit perfectly in our individual treasure boxes; amazingly, it’s an explosion or blending of all components in our evolving common universe.” —Anji Fan, SP***

Anji Fan offers three potent images to guide our thinking about Providence: confining, exploding, and blending.

Confining is a negative image, a call to move beyond individualism. True, Providence cares profoundly for each of us, numbering each hair on our heads (if we have any at all!). As God says about every human in William Young’s *The Shack*, “I’m very fond of you.” Yet that fondness is not a prize for us to clutch to ourselves. Instead, the tenderness of God requires us to burst through the walls of isolation.

Exploding can be a destructive or a creative experience. Providence exploded into Mary’s life, catapulting her out of the treasure box of her home in Nazareth, out of her serene preparation for marriage to Joseph. From the Annunciation onward, Jesus has been “a figure we could neither own nor manage,” says Thomas Howard in *Christ the Tiger*. Jesus calls us “to wildness and risk and humility and love.” Even now, Providence explodes into our worlds, sometimes startling us with beauty or joy, sometimes disrupting our comfort through suffering and compassion.

Explosions, in turn, open us to the blending that Providence accomplishes. Just as Mary set forth to visit her cousin Elizabeth, Providence stirs us into the lives of others, mixing their needs with ours and beckoning us to manifest—and receive—God’s mercy.

There is a rhythm, a yin and yang, to the action of Providence. God explodes our isolation, sends us out, then gathers us in. And the cycle goes on.

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