

# Advent 2014

***Providence is that name of God, which brings the motions of human existence into meaning.***      *Barbara Doherty, SP*

Growing up in a deeply rooted Catholic family, the name of God that I was most familiar with was "Father." As a child, I could believe that God was loving because my own father modeled this for me and the most common prayer I knew was the "Our Father." It was only later in my teens that I became aware that other Christian traditions emphasized different names for God. One of my Protestant friends always referred to God as "the Lord." It wasn't until I started working for Providence Health System that I began to understand the rich meaning of "Providence" as a name for God.

The early 15th century Latin etymology of the word "providence" is from *pro* (ahead) + *videre* (to see). This illuminates the deep belief in a God that provides (sees ahead). The way that God provides is through human existence.

In First Corinthians 2:9, the scripture tells us: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined the things that God has prepared for those who love him." When I think of Advent as a season of anticipation, the meaning of Providence is a belief that God anticipates even more than we can see, hear, or have knowledge of. It is only through looking backwards in our life we can see the true meaning of Providence.

## *Reflection questions:*

What are the early names of God that you learned in your family?

When did you start learning "Providence" as a name for God?

Can you look back and tell a story of how God was providing for you in ways that you could not see at the time?

*Rene Campagna, SP*



*Advent 2014  
Women of Providence  
in Collaboration*