

Autumn equinox celebration

“Today is a point of balance in the mandala of the year when the hours of light are equal to the hours of darkness. We are called to remember the ever-shifting balance within ourselves, the impermanence of our inner seasons, which like the outer seasons are always and forever changing. We are called to accept both our light and our shadow.”

Joan Borysenko

Leader: We gather today to celebrate the great cosmic liturgy dance of the sun and the earth. Our ancestors have celebrated this relationship for centuries. Today we will pray with three themes for the Autumn Equinox; restoring balance in my life since light and dark are in equal balance on the equinox, being grateful for the abundance of the harvest, letting go as we witness falling leaves and the changing of the season. We will pray with one theme in each segment.

The Theme of Balance

Leader: Gaze with love at the painting at the right of the page, “The Balance Game” by Sister Marion Honors, CSJ. Let your eyes take in the painting. What does it say to you about balance?

Quiet Reflection: Where in your life do you need greater balance? Do you have too much work, not enough play time, not enough prayer time? Where do you need to slow down, to let go, to clear away? Resolve to make one change during this season.





The theme of harvest and abundance.

Leader: This sacred session is a time for harvesting what has been sown. The abundance of summer, the long hours of sun and growth are over. It is a time of thanksgiving and appreciation of bountiful blessings. It is a time of completion, and contentment. It is a time of storing the seeds of next year's planting.

Quiet reflection: What have been the blessings of summer? For what am I especially grateful? What seed am I storing to bring to greater fullness during the year?

Sharing of gratuudes from the summer

Falling leaves—letting go

Reader: "Lines written in the days of growing darkness" by Mary Oliver

Every year we have been
Witness to it: how the
World descends
Into a rich mash, in order that
It may resume.

And therefore
Who would cry out
To the petals on the ground
To stay,
Knowing as we must,

How the vivacity of what was is married

To the vitality of what will be
I won't say it is easy but, but
What else will do
If the love one claims to have for the world
Be true?

So let us go on
Thought the sun be swinging east,
And the ponds be cold and black,
And the sweets of the year be doomed.

Leader: The falling leaves remind us that life is impermanent. We all will die at the end of our life. But we also know that there are a thousand little deaths along the way. How is God calling me to let go? What fears do I have as I let go? Can I trust in Divine Providence and believe that all will be well?

Take a moment to be aware of fear in your life. Is there a particular area in your life that brings you to fear? What is one action you can take to let go of this fear?

Break into pairs and share at least one fear that you have with the other person.

Closing blessing:

From [*The Circle of Life* by Joyce Rupp and Macrina Wiederkehr](#)

Repeat after leader:

I am the sun setting in the west.
I am the tree letting go of the leaves.
I am the harvest taken from the land.
I am the bird winging swiftly southward.
Spirit Keeper of the West,
I will enter the heart of autumn,
I will bravely enter my transitions.
I will adapt to what needs changing.
I will freely let go and not hang on.
Come, Spirit of Autumn, and set me free!

