

Exploring Our Call in Caring for Creation

Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers

Advanced Missionary Discipleship Formation Seminar

Monthly Email

September 22, 2017



The Autumnal Equinox

Background:

Equinox means the point when the dark and light of the day are most at balance. On a global scale, the equinoxes are at the points of the year when the entire world is in balance, with both Southern and Northern hemispheres receiving about the same amount of light. The equinox has another important feature as well: it is the only point during the year that the Sun rises in exact east and sets in exact west.

The Autumnal Equinox marks the point where growth is finishing and readying for winter is beginning. Just as the trees will let go of their leaves and the plants their fruits, it's time for all of us to take stock and see what we need to release. (from - Fall Equinox – Blessings for Balance {Anne Key})

Ritual:

Prepare your mind, body and spirit for the grace of this occasion by gathering things that are of this autumnal moment. They may be fallen leaves or newly harvested fruit or vegetables, etc. With care, arrange these Earth gifts on your table, on top of your counter, at your door, or upon your altar. Be mindful of the fundamentally kenotic nature of the Universe as it pours forth from the Divine womb.

Set aside time to pray as close to sunrise or sunset as possible. Face the East or the West, depending on the time of day. Hold yourself in alignment with the sense of balance the equinox means.

Prayer:

Holy God, source of all being, we ask your blessing on this day and on each of us. We thank you for the exquisite beauty of the Earth, and of the Heavens.

Today we acknowledge the wonder of the Autumnal Equinox and the balance, which in your wisdom, you have placed at the center of all existence.

As in the heavens, light and darkness are restored to harmony;
And on the Earth, fall fruits and vegetables are released from their roots,
may we, your daughters and sons, have the clarity to know what we need to release to
find our truest sense of balance, inner peace and strength to complete life's journey in
joy and serenity.

We ask too for light and grace for our entire human civilization, that, in the spirit of
Laudato Sí', it may strive towards balance in all social, environmental, economic and
political endeavors.

This we ask in Jesus' name, Amen

Input: Beautiful and moving 6-minute film on Laudato Sí': <https://www.laudatosi.org/laudato-si/>

Reflection:

1. What do you need to release to restore your sense of balance?
2. Is there something you can do to help restore environmental balance?
3. How would you explain the link between environmental devastation, the global economy and the plight of poor people?

Final Prayer: (Psalms for Praying: an invitation to wholeness, Nan C. Merrill)

Psalm 15 – A prayer for balance

O Beloved, You invite us to rest
in the abode of your heart,
to forgive our weakness
and renew our love.

Who will respond with hearts
opened wide to Love?

Those who walk with integrity, who
are in harmony with your Word,
and sing the heart's song;

Whose tongues speak truth
judging not others and
seeking only the good;

Whose eyes behold not the outer
garments of the body,
but see within the inner robe
of Love;

whose own weaknesses are acknowledged
and brought to light in prayer;
those who are just in all affairs of life

and take not advantage
of another.

Those who dwell in the Heart of Love,
who act justly, with integrity,
will join the Dance of Life,
will sing the Song of Joy!
Their family, friends and, indeed,
the world
will be blessed by their love.

We praise You, Lord, for Sister Earth,
who sustains us with her fruits, colored flowers, and herbs.

Glory to you, Source of all being,
Eternal Word and Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.