

Exploring Our Call in Caring for Creation

ADFP Monthly Email

December 21, 2017



Winter Solstice

Prepare a centerpiece of candles of any size and shape

Background: *

We know that the sun's apparently-changed position each day is caused by the rotation of the Earth as it circles the Sun on a tilted axis. At the December Solstice, occurring this year on December 21, the Northern Hemisphere is leaning farther away from the sun than at any other time of the year, accounting for the long, long night.

The occasion of the Solstice invites us to ponder the wonder of creation and the Infinite Presence, whose boundlessness continues to become manifest both in the magnificent recurring cyclical events that mark our years, and in the great evolutionary journey forward through space and time.

Our ancestors lit fires and held vigils during the long winter night of the December Solstice as they waited and watched for the dawn and the return of light. Let us too during these dark nights guard a sacred moment to be present to the cosmological moment we are living. Let us be attuned to the darkness out of which the light arises.

Reading: Let us honor the dark and the light

On this longest night of the year, praise the loving Mystery present in the dark:

- In the rich earth where seeds germinate, in the caves that harbored our ancient ancestors, in the wombs that provide our first nourishment and in all sheltering dark places.
- In the mushrooms that grow in the dark, in the honeysuckle that sends its luscious scents into the night and in our sleep soothed by the dark.

On this longest night of the year, praise the loving Mystery present in the light:

- In the stars that shine in the sky, and in the planets and the moon.
- In the sun and in all that grows in its light, in fusion and in energy.
- In all the enlightened ones who have gone before us.
- And, in the Christ, whose light is always on the horizon.



Reflection questions:

- What is the light that fires your days?
- What creative work is leaning toward the sunlight in you?
- What is the hope for the Universe that comes to you in the night?
- Can you see the light on the horizon? What form is it taking?

Prayer: *As you pray, gradually light the candles you have arranged in thanksgiving for the wonders of the emergent Universe, born in the energy of fire and everlasting light.*

For the original Flaring Forth, for the searing explosion that began all we know of the Universe
Let us give thanks.

For the collapse and explosions of the supernovas that delivered to the Universe new elements that would “One day sparkle as life, as consciousness, as memories of beauty laced into genetic coding.” (*The Universe Story*, p. 61)
Let us give thanks.

For the Sun that dominates our solar system and that makes life on Earth possible
Let us give thanks.

For the distance Earth stays from Sun, for Earth’s axis, for the gravitational spin assisted by our Moon
Let us give thanks.

For the many positive ways humans have harnessed the fire of the Sun to keep warm, to see, to grow food, to cook, and for those working to sustain healthful food and energy systems
Let us give thanks.

For our ancestors who, eons ago, celebrated the longest night of the year and the promise of brighter days
Let us give thanks.

For the birth of Jesus and the enlightenment he brought to the world
Let us give thanks.

For our brothers and sisters of other religious beliefs who also celebrate the light this season
Let us give thanks

For those living and dead who have enlightened the world by their example and teaching
Let us give thanks.

For being alive to celebrate this solstice, and for beloved friends and relatives whose memories warm our hearts
Let us give thanks.

Reflection: Why is Light an appropriate focus of unity for all people everywhere?



Poem: Festival of Light **

Bless the feet that dance
in Guatemala
in El Salvador

in the midst of the night
in Nicaragua
in Argentina

stamping out the message
in South Africa
in Liberia
we will be free.

Bless the hands that clap
in Haiti
in Rwanda

the rhythm of liberation
in Palestine
in Bosnia

that light a match in the dark
in you
in me
and carry the coming dawn.

Music on utube: "Song for the Winter Solstice" (Pauline Le Bel)

Blessing and Final words:

As day begins to take back the night,
May you know you carry the coming dawn.

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

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