



Autumn Equinox or “Mabon:” A Celtic Festival

September 21, 2022

*“Harvest fires, brightness burns
harvest byres, Autumn turns,
candle flickering soul discerns.”*

– Caitlin Matthews

*Consider creating a quiet, sacred space to celebrate the Celtic Festival of Mabon.
You might include a candle, fallen leaves or one or more of the symbolic
vegetables and fruits of the harvest.*

Squash, eggplant, pumpkin, gourd, apple, grape and other mid-Autumn vegetables and fruit are all colorful symbols of Mabon. This festival gives thanks for and celebrates the completion of harvesting. Mabon was celebrated by the Celts, but also observed around the world by different cultures, including the Greeks, Bavarians, Native Americans, Chinese and others. It is the time of year to celebrate balance, reflection, discernment and grace.

Relative to the Celtic Wheel of the Year, Irish poet John O’Donohue said “Celtic imagination loved the circle. It recognized how the rhythm of experience, nature, and divinity followed a circular pattern.” In the Celtic tradition, the changing seasons were considered “thin places” where the veil between heaven and earth lifted or was nearly transparent. In such thin places, the Celts experienced a deep sense of God’s presence especially through awareness of and alignment with the natural world.

Scripture: Galatians 5:22

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness ...”

Song for Autumn by Mary Oliver

“In the deep fall
don’t you imagine the leaves think how
comfortable it will be to touch
the earth instead of the
nothingness of air and the endless
freshets of wind? And don’t you think

the trees themselves, especially those with mossy,
warm caves, begin to think
of the birds that will come – six, a dozen – to sleep
inside their bodies? And don't you hear
the goldenrod whispering goodbye,
the everlasting being crowned with the first
tuffets of snow? The pond
vanishes, and the white field over which
the fox runs so quickly brings out
its blue shadows. And the wind pumps its
bellows. And at evening especially,
the piled firewood shifts a little,
longing to be on its way."

Reflection Questions:

- ❖ In what ways are you being called to reap an inner harvest of God-given gifts and spiritual growth?
- ❖ How are you being invited to be more spiritually attuned to and aligned with the circular cycle of the seasons?
- ❖ What are the ways in which you are being summoned toward more balance and harmony in your life?
- ❖ Are there fruits of gratitude and grace that you have harvested during this bountiful time?

Blessing: From *Celtic Treasure*, by J. Philip Newell

"The blessings of heaven
the blessing of earth.
the blessings of sea and sky.
On those we love this day
and on every human family
the gifts of heaven,
the gifts of earth
the gifts of sea and sky."

For a more information about the Celtic Wheel of the Year, visit:

<https://www.mercybythesea.org/programs-and-retreats/celtic-prayer-circle>