

Celtic Prayer Circle

Samhain, November 1, 2021



October 31-November 1 marks the feast of Samhain in the Celtic wheel of the year and the feast of All Saints in the Christian liturgical cycle (followed by All Souls). This special time celebrates the end of the Celtic year and the start of the “new” year. As we begin this new cycle—and until we can gather again to celebrate in person—we offer this reflection in our e-news. When we are able to resume gathering onsite (hopefully spring, 2022), it will be with a freshness of ideas for rituals, reflections, music, festivities and participant input. We so look forward to that.

As we consider the symbolism of Samhain, it’s important to know that the Celts divided their calendar into two seasons; the season of light and doing, and the season of dark and non-doing when new beginnings gestate. A bulb waits in anticipation for light as it lies dormant beneath frozen soil. A butterfly forms within a cocoon of darkness as it waits to fly with colorful wings. So too, we wait in faith for spiritual greening, reconnection, hope and renewal.

“Holy the darkness,
holy the hours,
holy the hope
turning toward light.” – Excerpt from *Circle of Grace* by Jan Richardson

The seasonal shift of Samhain invites us to turn inward for stillness, reflection, introspection, longing; a quiet fallow time in which fertility will surely yield growth. In the Celtic tradition, this

is a threshold time, when the veil between heaven and earth feels especially thin. In such times, the Celts experienced a deep sense of God's presence especially through awareness of and alignment with the natural world.

Samhain is also a festival of remembrance and a time to honor our ancestors. Since it is thought to be a liminal time—when the veil between the world and otherworld is thinnest—it is regarded as a time when spirits can pass through.

As we approach Samhain in the coming days, consider reflecting on these questions:

- Will you make time for the sacred darkness and how will you honor it?
- Who are the ancestors who have illuminated your path through love, compassion, sacrifice and/or protection?
- What seeds of longing/hope/creativity might be gestating in you that need spaciousness to grow?
- What symbols might you gather around you to celebrate the turning season, its sacred Presence and your beloved ancestors?

Samhain Prayer to Ancestors

This is the night when the gateway between
our world and the spirit world is thinnest.
Tonight is a night to call out those who came before.
Tonight I honor my ancestors.
Spirits of my fathers and mothers, I call to you,
and welcome you to join me for this night.
You watch over me always,
protecting and guiding me,
and tonight I thank you.
Your blood runs in my veins,
your spirit is in my heart,
your memories are in my soul.
With the gift of remembrance.
I remember all of you.
You are dead but never forgotten,
and you live on within me,
and within those who are yet to come.

From Irishcentral.com.

For more information, visit [Mercy's Celtic Prayer Circle webpage](#).