



Spring Equinox/Ostara Celtic Prayer Circle

March 20, 2021
Mercy by the Sea

Equinox (“equal night”) is when light and dark are balanced. This is the time to honor and implement balance as a practice in life. It is also a festival of promise, which celebrates the returning new life after the death and bondage of winter. This Spring Equinox, *Ostara*, in the Celtic Wheel of the year, is a time to bless spring seeds and place them in your heart and into the ground. Signs of spring announce that the Light will now begin to reign. The sky pours rain to soak the earth, to resurrect nature from the frozen sleep of winter. How very welcome as we mark a year of a global pandemic and anticipate the great feast of Easter.

To begin the Prayer Circle....

Prepare a Prayer Space

For your prayer space, think about some items that might represent new beginnings to you. Place a cloth in a spring color. Light candles to represent the growing light and power and warmth of the sun. Add seed packets or a potted plant, such as new crocuses, daffodils, lilies, that you can plant later. Add any other items that hold a sense of moving from winter to spring. You will also need some paper and pen for part of this ritual.

Listen to Ostara by Lisa Thiel from the Circle of the Seasons.

Click here: https://youtu.be/OK1hNDHVs_c and follow along using the text below.

*Praise to the Spring, Praise to all living things
Praise to the Maiden and the joy that she brings
Praise to the Earth let all her creatures now sing
Hope is renewed with the coming of the Spring.*

*We turn from the darkness and the wise Crone within
We turn to the Maiden and creation begins
It's a time for things growing and time now for flowing
A time now for sowing the seeds of your dreams.*

*The heart fires are stirring with the new life returning
Its time now for learning what rebirth truly means
We honor ourselves and all the faeries and elves
May we dance and ring bells for the coming of the Spring!
So open your heart to nature's wondrous art.*

*Its time now to start the Healing of the Green.
Young rabbits abound and there's flowers all around
The air is filled with the Sound of the Coming of the Spring!*

Opening Prayer

*O God, creator of the sun which makes the seasons
We rejoice in the gifts of the ever-growing light
As earth daily leans closer to our daystar.
With joyfulness we greet this new season of Spring
That rises from the grey death chamber of Winter.*

*As our ancestors of old
Lit feasting fires to banish the darkness
And to call forth the fire of the sun,
May we enkindle in our hearts
The flames of hope in new life.*

—Author unknown

Reflection

The following video reflection is adapted from *The Circle of Life* by Macrina Wiederkehr and Joyce Rupp and is recorded by Karin Nobile of Mercy by the Sea. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74t3k6E0Zd0>
If you wish, follow along using the text below.

*Begin by relaxing, close your eyes...let your spirit rest..... gently
let go of busy things in your mind....allow your body to slow down..
take a deep breath and let it out slowly....
Do this 3 times
Gradually sink into a quiet space of ease and comfort.*

*I invite you to become a flower bulb. This might be a daffodil, an
iris, a tulip, a hyacinth...
Choose one of your favorite spring perennial flowers and prepare
to enter into the life of this flower...
Become the flower bulb.*

*What color are you?
What is your shape?
What size are you?
What is the condition and texture of the interior and exterior?*

*Sit for a moment with the silence of the bulb.
Be with its stillness, its beauty, its potential for growth.....*

*Now become aware of the loving hands of the Divine Gardener holding you, carrying you to a spacious
garden....you feel safe in this hand, at home and peaceful.*



Outside the Divine Gardener kneels down on the ground. Soon you feel yourself placed with tenderness into the ground.

Feel the soft earth welcoming you...breathe in the air that fills the spaces in the soil...sip in the moisture greeting your thirstiness...your eyes adjust to the darkness.

You have been placed in a womb where you need to wait for what is yet to come...

You have been in this womb of darkness...waiting in this place of gestation through the long months of winter as the ground became frozen.

What did you experience?What thoughts go through your mind? ...What longings have been in your heart?....

You are beginning to feel a little movement of the soil around you and a tiny bit of warmth and some moisture... you sense a stirring within you that continues to grow... a burst of energy fills you and you stretch...it's amazing ... you feel new life emerging...

You sense energy within you ... aliveness!....the vitality of the soil energizes you ...the sun's warmth fills you..the more this happens the more energy you have to send to the greening shoots... the vibrancy from your heart is strong, it sends life to the greening shoot...very slight at first, almost undetectable...

Newness is beginning....

Lean back with ease in your bulbness.... be grateful for there is amazing birth happening through you..

Hold the beauty of the potential....hold the wonder in your heart....

Gradually come back to this time and space.

Now, for reflection, we offer you these questions to consider:



Questions for Reflection

What feelings arose in you as the loving hands of the Divine Gardener held you during the reflection?

While you were in the womb of darkness, did you sense something awaiting birth in you? What might it be?

What is coming to life in you or starting to emerge as Spring approaches and the days are filled with more light and warmth?

Goodbye Winter and Welcome Spring!

This winter has been dark and hard for all of us due to the COVID-19 virus and its restrictions on family and communal gatherings, hugging each other and travel. We said goodbye to over 500,00 people in the United States, not to mention the staggering number of deaths worldwide. Let us take a few minutes in silence to acknowledge the pain experienced as we say goodbye to winter 2020-21. Write your heartache on a piece of paper and bury it outside. Give the losses and pain to Earth and let them become new life as the winter ground becomes home to Spring growth.

As you return to the warmth of your home, take a few minutes to acknowledge the blessings of this time: births of little ones, healthcare and essential workers who have endured for us, research scientists who created the vaccines needed to curtail this pandemic are but a few examples. Allow the gratitude and quiet joy to overflow as you welcome Spring and its new life.



Closing Blessing

An Equinox Blessing by Fiona Koefoed-Jespersen

*May you find the balance you desire and need,
light and dark,
spirit and body,
mind and soul.*

*May you recognize the gradual powerful rebirth
happening within you.*

*May you awaken to the potential
and the blossoming
of your own self.*

*And like the wild geese,
May you find your way home.*



Tea Time

As is the tradition at Mercy by the Sea, we invite you to now enjoy a “comfortable cup of tea”, knowing that you welcome the new life of spring, connected in spirit with the community.