

Celtic Prayer Circle Celebration of Yule Winter Solstice

December 21, 2021

The Winter Solstice, also known as Yule, is one of the oldest winter celebrations in the world. It simultaneously celebrates the shortest day of the year, midwinter, the return of the Sun, and a festival of rebirth. Solstice derives from the Latin “sol,” denoting sun and sister, meaning “to stop, or to stand still.” Thus, the Winter Solstice is the day of the “Standing-Still Sun,” for on this day the sun appears to stand still in the sky. Although it is the longest night, it is also the turning point of the year. Following this night, the sun grows stronger in the sky, and the days gradually become longer once more. Winter Solstice is when the new light is born out of the womb of winter. Solstices “are a chance to still ourselves inside, to behold the glory of the cosmos, and to take a breath with the Sacred.”



Our world is one of endless light. We can transcend the darkness with electric light, losing a sense of balance and the gifts that might emerge from the darkness. We have been in the weeks of Advent when our Christian tradition invites us to enter the darkness and ponder the incarnation, the light of the world. We are called to be attentive to the mystery of this God among us.

A Reflection for Yule

Turn off all the lights and spend some quiet time in the darkness, acknowledging its presence – both metaphorically and physically. Be still and consider reflecting on these questions:

How does the darkness speak to you? Where does it lead you? What glory of the cosmos do you behold? How is God among you?

Listen to *Solstice Carole* by the Wyrd Sisters <https://youtu.be/yEGo6pgFPNE?t=1>
Welcome the light within and in those around you. Be the light!



Prayer

I am the one for whom God waits!
I am awaiting the One who is awaiting me!
I embrace the season of winter with hope, as my teacher.
Lead me to my inmost depths where God is contemplating me.

Adapted from *The Circle of Life* by Macrina Wiederkehr

Art by Sister Mary Southard.