



Colors of Autumn

Leader: Autumn enhances spirituality with changing leaves and a chill wind, reminding us to stay vigilant and prepared. Autumn is God's way of calling us to attention: Wake up! Stay awake! Be prepared!

The colors of autumn can offer a rich source of spiritual inspiration, reminding each member of the Council of Catholic Women, of the beauty, mystery, and

transformative power of God's love. These colors can be seen as a reflection of life, death, and rebirth, as well as the spiritual journey of faith.

Red represents passion, love, and the transformative power of Christ's sacrifice. Orange symbolizes balance, warmth, and freedom from inner prisons, as well as the joy of harvest. Yellow symbolizes joy, happiness, and the hope of a new life, as seen in the golden hues of the autumn foliage of transformation.

God has even gifted us the trees to remind us to stand tall and reach for God, not only in our personal lives, but in our ministry as well. They remind us to stay awake by being mindful of what is right in front of us. We may also practice this through stillness, silence and gratitude to stay spiritually awake and aware.

— Excerpts from ignatianspirituality.com

Reader 1: "You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand.

Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand – shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous father in heaven." – Matthew 5:14-16

All: Thanks be to God.

Reader 2: "Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!" – Ps 95:2

As the colorful leaves fall and the air grows crisp, Autumn is more than just a season, it's a reminder to each of us. It's a call to reflect on life's blessings, to be patient in our spiritual journey, and to appreciate the beauty in change in our personal lives and within our CCW ministry.

Our Change in Autumn

Autumn Prayer –

All: God of the seasons, there is a time for dying and a time for rising. We need courage to enter into the transformation process.

God of autumn, the trees are saying goodbye to their green, letting go of what has been. We too, have our moments of surrender, with all their insecurity and risk. Help us to let go when we need to.

God of fallen leaves lying in colored patterns on the ground—our lives have their own patterns. As we see the patterns of our own growth, may we learn from them.

God of misty days and harvest moon nights, there is always the dimension of mystery and wonder in our lives. We always need to recognize your power-filled presence. May we gain strength from this.

God of harvest and ripened grain, many gifts of growth lie within the season of our surrender. May we wait for harvest in faith and hope. Grant us patience when we do not see and hope in the fallowness.

God of love, you enter our autumn seasons, into our deepest places of inner dwelling, into the heart of our transformation. You give us glimpses of truth. May we allow our experience of autumn to speak to us of necessary change and growth. Grant us an openness to the continuous process of letting go and moving on that is part of the human condition. We are grateful that you are our faithful companion on this journey. Amen. — By: An Everyday Pilgrim

Meditate, Journal and Share:

Meditate on each question, use the lined paper at the end of the retreat and journal your thoughts. Then share your thoughts.

- What blessings am I often too busy or distracted to notice?
- How can the shedding of leaves, like the shedding of old habits or attachments, help me to become more open to new spiritual growth and transformation?
- What aspects of my faith or personal life need a "rebirth" or renewal, and how can I actively seek God's grace to make it happen and how will it enhance my ministry life as well?

Reader 3: " Yes, the Lord will grant his bounty; our land will yield its produce." — Psalm 85:13

Autumn is a time to be grateful even in the midst of difficulties. It is during this time that we are thankful for the harvest. The word Eucharist means 'thanksgiving.' At every Eucharist, we give the supreme thanks, because we can participate in Christ's life, death, resurrection, and descent of the Holy Spirit.

Autumn Gratitude

A Gratitude of Autumn Prayer —

All: God of all seasons, we thank you for Autumn.

We thank you

for the touch of coolness in the air that gives us a new burst of energy,
for the coloring of trees that shows the creativity of the Divine Artist,
for the falling leaves that reveal the strength of the branches,
for the hues of fields that bring peace to our souls,
for the smiles on pumpkins that bring joy to children,
for the fall harvest which brings us gratitude for the bounty of our land,
for this change of seasons that reveals the circle of life.

God of all seasons, as you transform the earth, transform us by your Spirit. Amen

— Rev. Doug Leonhardt, S.J.

Reader 4: "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit." — John 12:24

For something to produce fruit and have a greater impact, it must undergo transformation, similar to Jesus' sacrifice for our salvation. We are called to let go of our old lives and embrace a new life in Christ, surrendering to God's will, accepting His love, and following His example of self-sacrifice. We must let go of how we were and what we want to become. By letting go of selfish desires and following Jesus, we can experience a more fulfilling well-rounded life, find true happiness within our CCW group, and live in alignment with God's will.

Meditate, Journal and Share:

Meditate on each question, use the lined paper at the end of the retreat and journal your thoughts. Then share your thoughts.

- How can I surrender to God's will and what is blocking that?
- In what ways does the harvest reflect God's abundant generosity, and how can I share it?

