



FIRST-SUNDAY CONTEMPLATIVE SITTING

SEPTEMBER 2021

AUTUMN LIGHT

May Sarton, the poet, writes of Autumn as the season "when clarity comes back to the air and all is a radiant suspense before the first leaf falls."¹

As we approach the threshold of Autumn, we delight and continue to enjoy the abundance from summer fruit trees, berry bushes, corn stalks, and from a plethora of plants offering up the likes of beans, tomatoes, peppers, squash, and melons. Such plantings have been silently and fruitfully fulfilling their cycle of abundant growth.

Ripened by the energy of sun, rain, and wind, these wondrous fruits and vegetables, at the appointed time, made their way into the hands of the harvesters, the cooks and to our table. Pause ...

*Radiate your joy and gratitude from
your center of Autumn Light.*

Soon the land, harvested of its fruits, will be turned over. Folded seeds will fall onto the fields. Other plants simply die away. We are entering a letting be time, a resting in stillness time.

At this Autumn threshold we witness the life process of seeding, growing, flourishing, and dying. Nature teaches us a way of saying yes to life as it unfolds, just as it is!



In a song by Carrie Newcomer, she sings of nature's way –

*Leaves don't drop they just let go,
And make a place for seeds to grow.
Every season brings a change,
A seed is what a tree contains,
To die and live is life's refrain.*

Reading the Book of Nature, we learn of dying and death as a portal, a gateway into the fullness of Love's Embrace.

*Death is never the enemy,
nor something to be overcome.*

While death may not yet be our friend, forever it has been intended so. *To die and live is part of life's refrain.*

As you pray, imagine Jesus present there in the Autumn Light speaking to you ...

*Be not anxious for your life...
remember the lilies of the field.
– Matthew 6:25-34*

¹From May Sarton's *Well: Writings of May Sarton, Selections by Edith Royce Schade*,
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CONTEMPLATIVE SITTING

*Mindfulness frees us of forgetfulness
and makes it possible to live fully each minute of life.*
– Thich Nhat Hanh

Contemplative sitting is an invitation to

- attend to your thoughts, feelings, and emotions with an open heart.
- offer/dedicate your everyday experiences, be they joys or sorrows, comforts or discomforts to the care and safety of others.
- gently shift patterns of behavior that do not serve you or others well.
- become more and more a presence, a being of loving kindness and compassion.
- dwell in Holy Mystery.

Mindfulness Practice

Set a time of 10, 15, 20 minutes, or more. It is helpful to have a set time for meditation. Sitting in your chair or resting in bed, come gently come into the present moment. Begin noticing any sounds around you like voices in the hall, a bell ringing. Gently hear the sounds and let them pass on by. This is Mindfulness of Sound.

Then gently focus and concentrate on your breath.

- Begin with taking three breaths, just normal breaths, breathing each one in and out. Gently keeping focus on your breath; you may feel it at the tip of your nostrils or sense the movement in your chest or abdomen. If you can't feel it, place your hand on your chest or abdomen and breathe in and out.
- Each time the mind wanders, take note of where it went, and gently return to the breath. If you do this 100 times, it is just fine!

Simple Practice

- Breathing in, I calm my body, breathing out I smile,
Breathing in present moment, breathing out precious moment.
- Breathing in Holy Spirit, breathing out aah.
- Breathing in the universe, breathing out amazement.

Awareness of your mindfulness experience is key. Awareness of being distracted, or anxious, or crabby, or peaceful, or happy is key with no self-blame or judgment about your experience. Awareness is key!

My responses to this First Sunday reflection:

