

# Let the Seasons Speak, Teach through Story



## **THE WISDOM OF GOD**

The wisdom of God brings joy to our living,  
The wisdom of God brings joy.

Frank Andersen  
– *Rising Moon*



## **AN APACHE STORY**

There was an Indian Chief who had four sons. He wanted his sons to learn not to judge things too quickly. So he sent them each on a quest, in turn, to go and look at a pear tree that was a great distance away.

The first son went in the winter, the second in the spring, the third in summer, and the youngest son in the fall.

When they had all gone and come back, he called them together to describe what they had seen.

The first son said that the tree was ugly, bent, and twisted.

The second son said no, it was covered with green buds and full of promise.

The third son disagreed; he said it was laden with blossoms that smelled so sweet and looked so beautiful, it was the most graceful thing he had ever seen.

The last son disagreed with all of them; he said it was ripe and drooping with fruit, full of life and fulfillment.

The Chief then explained to his sons that they were all right, because they had each seen but only one season in the tree's life.

He told them that you cannot judge a tree or a person, by only one season, and that the essence of who they are and the pleasure, joy, and love that come from that life can only be measured at the end, when all the seasons are up.

If you give up when it's winter, you will miss the promise of your spring, the beauty of your summer, and the fulfillment of your fall.

Author Unknown



## **LISTEN TO THE HEARTBEAT**

Listen to the heartbeat.  
Listen to the heartbeat.  
Listen to the heartbeat of Earth.

Kathy Sherman  
– *Song of the Universe*  
Courtesy of [www.ministryofthearts.org](http://www.ministryofthearts.org)  
Congregation of St. Joseph



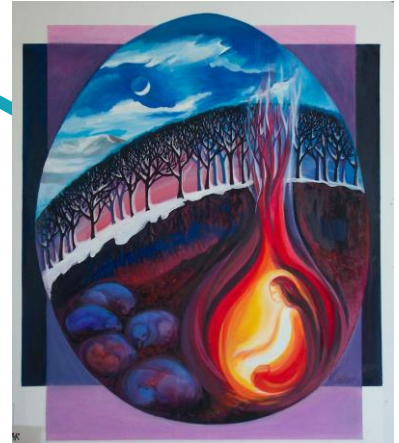
# Let the Season Speak, Teach through Art

**AUTUMN**



**HARVEST**

**WINTER**



**DORMANCY**

**THE SEASONS OF LIFE**



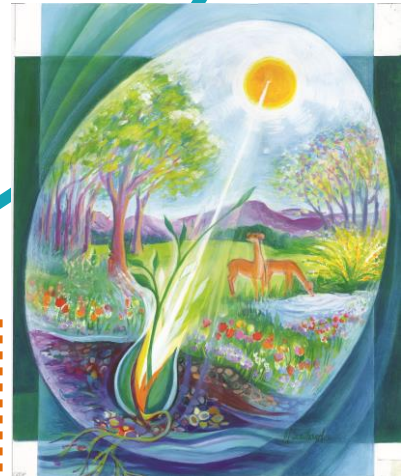
**DANCING LIFE'S SEASONS**

**GROWTH**



**SUMMER**

**GERMINATION**



**SPRING**

Ponder the artist's depiction of each of the seasons.... Is there one which is speaking to you more clearly than the others? What are you hearing?

If one does not immediately capture your attention, choose one and let it speak.... What are you hearing?

Spend some time sharing your reflection with the person next to you...or in groups of 3

Art: *Mary Southard CSJ*  
[www.MarySouthardArt.Org](http://www.MarySouthardArt.Org) ;  
and [www.MinistryOfTheArts.Org](http://www.MinistryOfTheArts.Org)

# Let the Seasons Speak through Prose

## Parker Palmer explores the work of the seasons and how they can assist us to ponder our inner journey

Seasons is a wise metaphor for the movement of life... It suggests that life is neither a battlefield nor a game of chance but something infinitely richer, more promising, more real. The notion that our lives are like the eternal cycle of the seasons does not deny the struggle or the joy, the loss or the gain, the darkness or the light, but encourages us to embrace it all—to find in all of it the opportunities for growth.

We are participants in a vast communion of being, and if we open ourselves to its guidance, we can learn anew how to live in this great and gracious community of truth ....

### The Seed of True Self (Autumn)

Autumn is a season of great beauty, but it is also a season of decline: the days grow shorter, light is suffused, and summer's abundance decays toward winter's death. Yet in the midst of decay, nature scatters her own seed of regeneration. We look more deeply at the autumnal events of our own lives, we may see the myriad possibilities being planted to bear fruit in some season yet to come. The autumn theme, 'Seeds of True Self', provides a way to revisit the passion, experiences, and gifts that drew us into teaching in the first place, and to reflect on how our journey in education has unfolded.

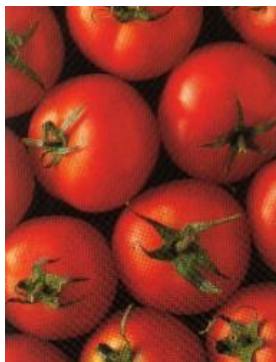


### Dwelling in Darkness (Winter)

Winter is a demanding season. And yet the rigors of winter, like the diminishment of autumn, are accompanied by amazing gifts. One is the beauty of hushed stillness. Another is the reminder that times of dormancy and deep rest are essential to all living things. Our inward winters take many forms – failure, betrayal, depression, and death. Until we enter boldly into the fears we most want to avoid, those fears will dominate our lives. But when we walk into them we can learn from what they have to teach us. The winter retreat themes of darkness, dormancy, and death provide a context to talk about seasons of grief and loss in our lives and in our teaching.

### Embracing the paradoxes (Spring)

Spring is a time of renewal when new life emerges from the death and darkness of winter. It reminds us that death and life, darkness and light are not enemies but go hand in hand in the manner of paradox. Spring offers an opportunity to explore the 'hidden wholeness' of life by understanding how opposites can complement and complete and co-create each other. Spring teaches us to look more carefully for the green stems of possibility. In the spring retreat we explore the paradoxes that have particular relevance to teaching and learning.



### Embodiment in Person and Practice (Summer)

The season of summer invites us to reflect on fruition and abundance. It is a time of embodiment, of fullness of being. Embodiment means understanding that none of the ideas we have explored in the previous seasons can merely be thought – all of them must be lived. In the summer retreats we reflect on the extent to which we have been able to 'live into' our own wholeness, to teach and lead from a place of identity and integrity. By looking back on the school year just completed, and ahead to the year to come, we have an opportunity to explore who we are in person and in practice.

From ideas explored in *Let your Life Speak* pages 96-109  
by Parker Palmer

The seasons reflect the central belief of our faith, the Paschal Mystery. Through embracing death and rising, Jesus shared with us the longing of his Abba that we too are co-missioned to keep God's ministry of love and compassion alive in our times. In the following prayers we will let each season speak....