

around the year

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE SEASONS AND THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

AUTUMN STUDIES

by Stanton Davis Kirkham

AN EXCERPT FROM *IN THE OPEN* (1908)

Nature works deftly, at first with delicate brush touching a shadbush, a clump of osmunda, or again only a leaf, a spot of color, a patch here and a streak there; but the day of transfiguration approaches. Early October sees the stag-horn sumacs fairly scintillate with color. At last the whole color-box is upset and runs red down a hillside huckleberry patch, meeting a yellow streak in a ravine and spreading out over the swamps, a sea of scarlet and gold.

Every year Nature starts out in this modest fashion and ends in an upset and riot of color. We should know her ways by this time, but though her plan is the same she varies the details infinitely and there are always surprises. These same earth-fires which blazed in the osmunda now glow deep red in the dwarf sumacs—a dull, fierce flame, as if for the nonce Pluto's fires shone through the thin shell of earth. The poison-ivy is in

continued on page 3

From the Editor's Desk

October 1, 2016

Dear Readers:

Autumn is officially upon us here in New England, with its cool nights and misty mornings. I've put most of the garden to bed for the winter, though the marigolds are still blooming marvelously. We've celebrated Michaelmas, and now we must enter the dark days of the year.

Christopher Hill writes in *Holidays and Holy Nights*, "We humans see the spiritual beauty of a thing most clearly when its time is passing or passed. Nothing become legendary or sacred until it dies. In autumn, nature's time is passing. The world is at its most beautiful and poetic because it is passing away."

I find this passage so poignant and true. As a person who cares deeply about both the natural and the spiritual worlds, I find myself feeling a sense of loss at this time of year. Nature is slowly winding down for a long sleep. And, with the upcoming election and crises in every corner of the world, it can feel a bit like we humans are asleep at the spiritual wheel—it feels a bit like nothing is sacred.

But, I know (as **St. Francis** did, see page 6) that the world is a beautiful place, and we humans, by extension, are part of that beauty—we were, after all, made in His image. We were made to love our God with all our hearts, and minds, and souls, and our neighbors, also, as ourselves. As we enter autumn, perhaps we can turn our attention away from the events around us for a few moments and "**watch the leaves turn,**" as Elizabeth Lawrence urges us to do (see page 4). Reveling in the beauty of the world that God created does not preclude us from being active participants in the events of our human lives—it is simply a way of making space for God and the sacred.

Let us enter this season quietly, softly, and with a contemplative spirit. As the showers of reds and oranges and yellows descend from the trees to the ground, let us look to the unseen world for guidance and reassurance that all is still good, just as it was made to be.

Kelli Ann Wilson, Editor
kelli@aroundtheyear.org



Coming to *around the year* in November:
Martinmas, carving pumpkins, & more!



continued from page 1

its glory, and no tupelo, no sugar-maple, can rival its scarlet and vermilion. Earth indeed wears a jewel now. But there is nowhere a warmer, mellower tint than the shadbush has caught and held,—not brilliant nor showy, not a shining mark in the woods, but a cheery sight that warms the cockles of your heart. Little clumps of the maple-leaved viburnum are now of a delicate smoky pink, while the ash turns an indescribable hue—a greenish maroon or purplish green if such there be.

Already the hickory leaves are falling, detaching themselves one by one and floating leisurely to earth. It will now be our gentle pleasure to walk through crisp and rustling leaves. Barberries

are ripe, and old-fashioned folk gather them for jelly or preserve them in molasses, wherein they are as so many shoe-pegs drowned in sweetness. The solitary sandpiper comes again to preside briefly over the ponds—a lone, wild spirit. Little flocks of coots scud low over the water, and in the dark, spongy humus of the hemlock swamp, red squirrels are digging caches and concealing the small cones, a dozen or more in a place. Such are the signs of the times.

Yet another sign—the last effort of the dying year—is the witch-hazel, which sheds its leaves and stands arrayed in yellow blossoms. A brave suggestion is this flower of the late autumn, blossoming when all else is in the sear and yellow,

that it may bear seed in another year. When all others have given up and are retreating, this one comes forth as much as to say it is never too late. There is a very witchery in the crinkled yellow flower born of the old year in a frosty world; a borean child brought hither on the wings of the North wind; a sturdy blossom that will not show itself till it hears the music of rustling leaves.

Late in autumn the white pines shed their needles and lay down a new carpet. No turning of the old here, but every year another—fresh, wholesome, fragrant; a plain, well-wearing groundwork that never offends the eye and on which is traced from time to time a rare and original design. It is now a scarlet tupelo or a maple leaf dropped

continued on page 4

continued from page 3

here and there, and again a creeping mitchella with a red berry or two, or a clump of ground-pine and a drift of beech and scarlet oak leaves. On occasion appears a solitary gleaming amanita. Over the rich seal-brown of ancient hemlock stumps is a tracery of the gray-green cladonia with its scarlet fruiting cups. What are Tabriz, Daghestan, Bokhara and the rest to this? These odorous

pine-needles are the magic carpet which gently conveys one into the sylvan world of faun and nymph. Now it is a sunbath we want rather than a cold dip,—to bask in the warmth like any cottontail. To lie in some sheltered spot while the frost is taking off the last leaves, and become saturated with sunlight, is a mellowing process, and ripens one,—as tomatoes are ripened on the window-sill or grapes on the trellis.

As the vivid hues of the red maple fade in the swamp and are replaced by the soft silvery gray and purplish sheen of the bark, the oaks on the hillside become ruddy. The coloring is rich and subdued, rather than brilliant and glowing as at first—mahogany and maroon set off by the purple mists of Indian summer. And now at last branches are bare and leaves rustle underfoot.

—L.H.B.



QUOTE

Even if something is left undone, everyone must take time to sit still and watch the leaves turn.

—Elizabeth Lawrence





October

by Robert Frost

O hushed October morning mild,
Thy leaves have ripened to the fall;
Tomorrow's wind, if it be wild,
Should waste them all.

The crows above the forest call;
Tomorrow they may form and go.
O hushed October morning mild,
Begin the hours of this day slow.
Make the day seem to us less brief.
Hearts not averse to being beguiled,
Beguile us in the way you know.
Release one leaf at break of day;
At noon release another leaf;
One from our trees, one far away.
Retard the sun with gentle mist;
Enchant the land with amethyst.
Slow, slow!

For the grapes' sake, if they were all,
Whose leaves already are burnt with frost,
Whose clustered fruit must else be lost—
For the grapes' sake along the wall.

Some quotes about October:

The scarlet of maples can shake me like a cry
Of bugles going by.
And my lonely spirit thrills
to see the frosty asters like smoke
upon the hills.

—William Bliss Carman

The stillness of October gold
Went out like beauty from a face.

—E. A. Robinson



CELEBRATING THE FEAST OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Saint Francis of Assisi was born Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone, called Francesco (the "Frenchman"), in northern Italy in 1181 AD. The child of wealthy parents, Francis had typical merchant-class upbringing, even serving for a time in the military.

In his early twenties, Francis suffered a health crisis that led to a spiritual awakening. He embarked on a pilgrimage to Rome, and spent time with the beggars at St. Peter's Basilica. His experiences among the poor inspired him to abandon his earthly wealth, and he commenced living a life of poverty.

Upon returning to his hometown, he began preaching in the streets and gained many followers. By the time he was thirty, Francis had founded a religious order based on the rule, "*To follow the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and to walk in his footsteps.*" The Franciscan Order officially came

into being on 16 April 1210 AD, and continues its work today.

Throughout his life, Francis preached that the world was good and beautiful—created by God—but, man's sin caused it to be in a continual state of transgression. Many legends are associated with Francis, perhaps the most well-known being his preaching to animals. He is frequently portrayed in works of art surrounded by animals, especially birds.

The current head of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis, claimed to have chosen his name in honor of Francis of Assisi, saying, "*He brought to Christianity an idea of poverty against the luxury, pride, and vanity of the civil and ecclesiastical powers of the time. He changed history.*"

Let us be like Francis, who reveled in the beauty of God's world and cared for all creatures, great and small.

A Prayer of St. Francis

I beseech you, O Lord, that the fiery and sweet strength of your love may absorb my soul from all things that are under heaven, that I may die for love of your love as you deigned to die for love of my love.

May our knowledge of You become ever clearer that we may know the breath of Your blessings, the length of Your promises, the height of Your majesty, and the depth of Your judgments.

Where there is love and wisdom, there is neither fear nor ignorance. Where there is patience and humility, there is neither anger or annoyance. Where there is poverty and joy, there is neither cupidity nor avarice. Where there is peace and contemplation, there is neither care nor restlessness. Where fear of the Lord guards the house, there no enemy can enter. Where there is mercy and prudence, there is neither excess nor harshness. Amen.

Adapted from www.MyCatholicSource.com

OCTOBER 2016

(A) Anglican/Episcopalian; (R) Roman Catholic; (O) Eastern Orthodox

October 2nd: Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 22) and Feast of the Guardian Angels (R)

October 4th: Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, patron of animals (A)(R)

October 9th: Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 23) and Feast of St. Denis, patron of France (A)(R)

October 11th: Feast of Æthelburh (Ethelburga), abbess of Barking (A)

October 16th: Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 24)

October 17th: Feast of St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, martyr (A)(R)

October 18th: FEAST OF ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST (A)(R)

October 23rd: Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 25)

October 28th: FEAST OF STS. SIMON AND JUDE, APOSTLES (A)(R)

October 30th: Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 26)

Visit AroundTheYear.org for more photos, crafts, recipes, and ideas for celebrating the natural seasons and the Christian year.

Follow *around the year* on Facebook for updates. Be sure to share the website and the Facebook page with your friends!

facebook.com/aroundtheyear.org

twitter.com/aroundtheyear

instagram.com/aroundtheyear

I'm always looking for individuals who might be interested in contributing to *around the year* (both the website and the newsletters). If you would like to contribute, please contact me! kelli@aroundtheyear.org

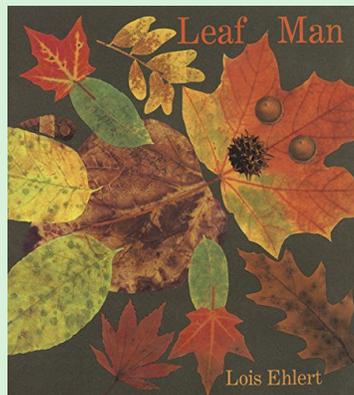


All text and images copyright 2016 Kelli Ann Wilson and AroundTheYear.org, unless otherwise noted.



Recommended Reading

CHILDREN'S BOOKS FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER



Leaf Man, written and illustrated by Lois Ehlert

From the publisher:

Fall has come, the wind is gusting, and Leaf Man is on the move. Is he drifting east, over the marsh and ducks and geese? Or is he heading west, above the orchards, prairie meadows, and spotted cows? No one's quite sure, but this much is certain: A

Leaf Man's got to go where the wind blows.

With illustrations made from actual fall leaves and die-cut pages on every spread that reveal gorgeous landscape vistas, here is a playful, whimsical, and evocative book that celebrates the natural world and the rich imaginative life of children.

Pumpkin Moonshine, written and illustrated by Tasha Tudor

From the publisher:

It's almost Halloween and little Sylvie Ann has found the biggest, fattest pumpkin. But before she can carve it into a giant, crooked-toothed pumpkin moonshine (or jack-o-lantern), she has to get it home.

