

Seasons of Our Lives
January 3, 2026
Bibiana Cujec

December 2025

The transition from fall to winter was difficult for me, as it has been every year. I didn't want to the shorter days, the colder weather, the snow and ice which make walking more treacherous.

But now I have embraced this season of stillness and peace. The darkness allows more time to rest. And I have settled into Nature's schedule.

The full moon lights the Bow River as it flows between the snow-covered banks. The aspen tree branches in the valley are barren. The mountains are robed in white. The fir and lodgepole pine trees stand tall on either side of the trail as I walk up the mountain. It is cold and I need to keep moving to stay warm.

The lights of the Christmas season bring me joy and hope for peace and love. We would not see the lights if it were not for the dark nights.

The excitement of young children reminds me to savor the magic of this season.

I had a wonderful escape from winter for one week in Los Cerritos, a surfing beach in Baja California. I loved the freedom of walking barefoot and running in the sand, plunging into the waves and traveling with the breaking waves a boogie board. For a brief time, I re-discovered the child inside of me—playful and joyful. Manta rays were flying out of the water and whales were blowing through their blowholes in the distance. We watched turtle hatchlings on their journey from the beach into the thundering surf. I met a Mexican fisherman who set out from the beach in his weathered boat on most days. He was a retired school principal who was kind to others and happy within himself. I realized how important those qualities are to me.

January 3, 2026

I read in the paper today that January is named after the Roman god, Janus who has two faces looking in opposite directions. January is the time when we look back with gratitude and look forward with hope. Janus is the god of beginnings, endings, doorways, the cycle of time and duality.

Albert Camus' inspirational words of hope resound within me: "In the midst of winter, I found within me an invincible summer." Winter is still a time of growth in the stillness.

I feel some sadness about my family. I dislike strife and conflict. My sister's son who has two young children has cut off contact with her. He told my sister that she is a toxic person for him. I think he resents that she is not more available to help out with her two young children. I, too am finding the grandmother relationship to be difficult at times. I cannot meet all of my

children's expectations. My daughter feels that I am not supportive enough and lack sympathy for her. It is true that because I was able to manage a demanding career and raising two children (with help from many people), I may not empathize with her.

My son and his wife are very different from me. They have a beautiful home but it is always messy and it is difficult to find what one is looking for. They are not careful about maintenance and have many complex electronic systems that are difficult to troubleshoot. Their expensive lifestyle and garbage production also bothers me. However, I know that I need to be careful to not let my disapproval be too obvious so that I can still spend time with their two children.

During this season of winter I have been reflecting on being a light.

The moon reflects the sun's light in a much more subdued, gentler fashion. We can gaze at the moon but not at the sun.

Our parish church has a beautiful stained-glass window of Mary with Jesus that hangs above the altar. The image is only seen when there is light behind it. At night when the church is lit up, the image cannot be seen from inside the church, only from the outside. During the day when the sun is bright, the image is only seen from inside the church. I remember hearing that saints are the people who let the light shine through them. Where is the light behind me? Sometimes I feel it and know others can see it too. Sometimes there is darkness behind me. Perhaps my journey is to grow the light inside of me.



Lake Minnewanka
Jan 2, 2026

