



# The First Day of Southern Spring

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This image was taken on the first day of spring in the Southern hemisphere. Like the Earth, Mars is tilted on its axis, and the sun crosses the equator twice each year. On Earth we call this the equinox. In the winter a seasonal polar cap composed of dry ice covers the polar regions. Although this is just the first day of spring and the sun is very low in the sky, activity associated with the sublimation (going directly from solid to gas) of the polar cap is already underway. A layer of ice coats this entire scene, and fans of dark material are deposited on top of the ice.

*The HIRISE camera onboard the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter is the most powerful one of its kind ever sent to another planet. Its high resolution allows us to see Mars like never before, and helps other missions choose a safe spot to land for future exploration. Thousands of images are available online at: [uahirise.org](http://uahirise.org).*