

Issue 2 Imbolc 2012

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Imbolc and Ostara

Imbolc celebrates the awakening of the land and the return of the Sun. Though the Earth remains under a blanket of snow, life is stirring. The sap begins to run, the first buds are seen on branches and the days are noticeably longer. If possible, walk outside naked, breathing in the cold air of Winter, then visualize and remember the splendour of sun's warmth.

Brigid is said to walk the earth on Imbolc eve. Before going to bed, each member of the household may leave a piece of clothing or strip of cloth outside for Brigid to bless. These cloths are imbued with Brigid's blessing and may be carried on one's person, or used in ritual magick. On Imbolc eve, place lighted candles in windows to welcome the Goddess. A ritual bonfire is also a wonderful way to honour Brigid. Once the embers have cooled, rake the ashes smooth. In the morning, look for some kind of mark on the ashes, a sign that Brigid has passed through.

This is the time to give your home a good thorough cleaning in preparation for a visit from Brigid. If you have a fireplace, ensure it is cleaned very well. Birch has strong associations with Brigid, and a branch of this tree may be used to symbolically sweep the floors, clearing away old energies. This is a time to ask forgiveness from those people you may have hurt, and to forgive those who may have hurt you. Imbolc eve is one of the best times of the year to perform divinations specifically pertaining to the future welfare and prosperity of your family.

Ostara marks the day of the Vernal Equinox, when the balance of light and dark are equal. It is the first day of Spring and promise of new life at Imbolc is now

fulfilled. Many of the traditions now associated with Easter may be used to honour the Season at this time.

Decorating eggs is a wonderful way to celebrate. Eggs have long been a symbol of rebirth and renewal. Eggs may be coloured in pastel shades to replicate the delicate flowers of early Spring, or in vibrant shades of orange, yellow or gold in honour of the Sun. Eggs may be decorated with assorted symbols, infused with prayers or specific qualities. As the egg is ingested, the eater takes these qualities within herself. The eggshells may be scattered in the garden for compost. In the Ukraine, it was believed the yolk represented the Sun, and the white shell, the Moon. Pysanky are a unique type of decorated egg from Russia. Covered in magical symbols for protection, fertility, wisdom, strength and other qualities, they are often given as gifts, or used as talismans. The decorating of the Pysanky belong solely to the realm of women, and Mothers would pass on the designs to their Daughters.

Another Ostara ritual is that of awakening Mother Earth. Cast your circle, then take a stick or wand, stand in the North and tap on the ground three times and call on Mother Earth to "wake up". Repeat this three times. You may then wish to invite Mother Earth into your circle to honour Her.

Traditional foods include ham, fresh greens such as dandelion, nettles, asparagus and fiddleheads, eggs, cheese, butter, pancakes, hot cross buns. You may, instead, prefer a ritual fasting to cleanse the body of toxins. For three days prior to Ostara, eliminate refined sugars, white flour, processed foods, alcohol, and red meat. Eat fresh fruit and vegetables and drink plenty of water. If you have health issues, be sure to discuss with your doctor before attempting to fast.

There may be a tendency to create drastic new beginnings in our lives as we go through the euphoria of rebirth, but beware Mercury Retrograde. Stick to small personal changes, or simple and attainable goals. By the time mercury goes Direct, you may have enough information to determine whether these new pursuits are appropriate.

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Ajna DreamsAwake is an Adept of [The Sacred Three Goddess School](#). She lives on a mountain in beautiful British Columbia with her husband, cats, ferrets and other varied critters of nature. Ajna works with vibrational medicine and toning to heal the Earth's Children. She is an eclectic Pagan, rediscovering Her Visionary Goddess Gifts.

Amaterasu Sun Goddess Ritual

You will need:

1 red candle to represent the Goddess

1 candle to represent yourself in your preferred color

1 black candle to represent the shadow self

1 white candle

Round mirror or mirrors (makeup compact mirrors are okay)

Crystals, if desired

Cinnamon incense

Oils, such as Jasmine and/or Dragon's Blood

Cast your Circle; call in the Elements, 4 Directions, and the Higher Powers. You may also wish to call upon your ancestors and guides.

'Dress' or oil your candles. If you are going to carve anything on them though, do that first. On the red candle, carve an image of the sun. On the black candle, carve 'facing the shadow self' and 'releasing negativity'. You can use two black candles if you wish, it's up to you. You can carve your name on yours, and since the white one will represent Spirit or Enlightenment, you can carve that on it or just leave it blank. (The intent is always the main thing!) Put mirrors around to represent the Sun Goddess, and crystals such as white quartz, citrine or yellow topaz.

Light your candles. Put the white candle next to the black candle to represent illumination. Put your candle next to the Goddess candle. Put mirrors and crystals around the candles.

Center yourself; then say this invocation three times.

Invocation to Amaterasu

Amaterasu, bright Goddess of the Sun!

Shine upon us who call upon you!

Light the path before us,

Keep us safe in your warm comfort.

You who abhor violence and strife,

Please defend us from any evil ones

With your heavenly arrows.

Help us laugh like you did with Uzume,

As she did her funny dance for you!

Shed light on our shadow selves

So we can work through darkness within,

And find the love and joy we need.

When you are through with the invocation, visualize bravely facing the shadows within yourself. Visualize light being shed upon any darkness within, and then coming out of a cave and into the light. You are greeted by your ancestors, guides and guardians, and surrounded with love. Amaterasu gives you a kiss on your forehead and gives you her blessing.

When you are through, go to the door and open it. Visualize yourself as guided, protected, and full of joy, and this going out into the Universe to manifest. Then say, "So Mote it Be!" Clap your hands and visualize any extra energy going into Mother Earth.

Beth Clare Johnson

(Mystic Amazon)

Mystic Amazon has studied Reiki with Diane Stein and has also done Shamanic training. She is a High Priestess of the [Order of the White Moon](#) and an Ordained Minister, currently co-teaching with HP Ka Wahine Ahi at [Sisters of the Rising Moon school](#). Divorced with two children, she now lives in Mississippi. Her hobbies include writing, folk art, folk magick, Reiki, and reading.

Celebrating Imbolc with Celtic Goddess Brighid

Imbolc February 2 marks a midpoint between Winter Solstice and Spring Equinox. The very beginning whispers of Spring begin to show this month and we connect to the hope the season of planting and blooming will be here soon.

The days are starting be a bit longer each day and we have a little more light.

Celtic Goddess Brighid is celebrated during Imbolc. She is a goddess of healing and purification, inspiration, creativity, and poetry. Brighid is also keeper of the sacred flame and connected to fire and guardian of the hearth.

This is a great time to connect to aspects of the Goddess Brighid. Here are some ways to celebrate Imbolc with her.

*You can do purification and healing rituals while asking for Goddess Brighid's help and guidance.

*This is a great time to connect more to your creativity and ask for Brighid's help in seeking inspiration.

*Write a poem in honor of this great Celtic Goddess.

*Read poetry that inspires you.

*Do some cleaning and purifying of your home's hearth.

*Light a candle on Imbolc or each day of February and connect to Goddess Brighid for healing, purification, or creative inspiration you need. You can make this part of your daily ritual of meditation for the month.

*Contemplate on the idea of warmth and fire during this cold time of year and the hope of light and warmth Brighid brings with the whispers of Spring on Imbolc.

Many Bright Blessings!

© HP Maeve Cliodhna MoonBird

HP Maeve Cliodhna MoonBird is a High Priestess and Ordained Minister in the tradition of the [Order of the White Moon](#). She is also a certified Spiritual Counselor. She lives in New York City with her partner. Maeve enjoys an interfaith worship of the Goddess and is especially interested in Wiccan, Celtic, Native American, Shamanism, and Buddhist spiritual practices.

Endings and Beginnings

After all these years, I am finally being given back the garden space behind our apartment, which means the time has also come for me to leave the community garden.

It will be a totally new adventure to create this new sacred space, as my old garden was always in full sun, while the new garden space is in shade for most of the day.

So far, this move has turned out to be easier than I thought it would be. Thanks to the sleep of winter, most of my plants were either dead or dormant. Only the spring bulbs are busy sprouting now, and I am carefully moving them to their new home, along with the other plants I am taking with me in hopes they will survive in such a very different environment. I will also have to study up on herbs and other medicinal plants that grow in shadow rather than in full light, and find ways to incorporate them into my new space. Those plants I have that I know cannot survive in shade are either being given to others or pulled up and turned into compost. I will miss these plant spirits and their beauty, but many of them are old already, and like us, they would eventually have to move on no matter what.

In several ways, this move is like the direction my spiritual journey is taking. From working in full sun, I am moving into the shadows for a while as I begin seriously studying the path of the shamans and spirit workers who help guide departed spirits from this world into the next. There will be new lessons to learn, new plant spirit friends to meet, and new blessings to rejoice in.

I am grateful for what I am leaving, but also grateful for the unknown adventures to come. It says in my Tarot Zodiac reading for this week: "Do not be afraid of transformations; there is security in change." I will trust in Goddess that this is so, both in my garden and in my life.

*"Goddess, thank You for the blessings
of the old paths I have trod,
and thank You also for the approaching
security of the new!"*

© BellaDonna Oya

BellaDonna Oya lives in Hayward, CA, where she runs a small eclectic coven. Her hobbies are gardening, belly dance, crocheting, Renaissance fairs, travel, and cats (she has eleven). She has a Master's Degree in Anthropology, and is fascinated by mummies and ancient Egypt. She has traveled to Ireland, Jamaica, Eleuthera, and Mexico, and hopes someday to visit Crete, Malta, Egypt and Delphi. She is a Level II Adept of [The Sacred Three Goddess School](#).

Papua, New Guinea

Situated in the South Pacific, North of Australia, lay the islands of Papua New Guinea. The word papua is derived from pepuah, a Malay word describing the frizzy Melanesian hair. A Spanish explorer called the island New Guinea as he thought the people here resembled those of the Guinea coast of Africa.

This is not surprising, it is believed that the original inhabitants of New Guinea, along with the Aborigines of Australia, were part of the first wave of African/Asian

migration over 50,000 years ago. One theory suggests that inter-breeding may have occurred with Eurasian hominids at this time, creating a unique feature among the Papuans. They are the only dark-skinned people known to have blond hair.

The isolation of the islands of Oceania has enabled the Papuans to maintain a fairly pure genetic make-up. As well, due to the mountainous geography of the islands, isolation between the villages has created over 850 local languages, roughly 1/4 of the world's indigenous languages. That is astounding considering the population of Papua New Guinea is only about 7 million. Each of the several thousand communities has developed its own language or dialect, myths, deities etc...This diversity is reflected in the folk saying, "For each village, a different culture".

Spiritual beliefs and mythologies are as diverse as the people themselves. Some communities believe the first humans descended from the sky, while others believe they came from the sea or emerged from underground, while others say that they came from clay or sand, blood, or pieces of wood.

Goga is known as the Primordial Goddess from which all things come. She is Life bringer, Death Taker, Goddess of Rains and Floods, as well as Fire. She is a Goddess of Sacred Ceremony, as well as teaching humans the necessities of daily living. She is usually depicted as an aged woman, yet, no matter how old she becomes, she renews Her strength and immortality with the magical fire nurtured within her, the flames hidden in her genitals. Could this be a reference to the monthly renewal women experience through their Moontime, or perhaps an allusion to the Wise Blood nurtured within the bodies of our female elders?

The Massim people of Papua believe that humans stole fire from Goga. When She discovered the theft, She sent rains, flooding the Earth in order to quench the flames. But a young boy hid the fire within a tree, saving it from destruction.

Fortunately for humankind, a snake living in the tree preserved the flame on its tail and brought it to humans when the rains ended. Once Goga realized She had lost the secret of fire, She taught the people how to work, play and do ritual with fire.

Snakes appear in the myths of many Melanesian peoples as a symbol of fertility and power, or as the saviour of humans. In some myths they are said to control rain; in others, animals and humans emerge from their slaughtered bodies. Some snake-beings wander from place to place giving gifts to humans and teaching them how to grow crops or perform magic.

The people of Papua use magic to communicate with spirits. Most sacred rituals involve magic, along with prayer and sacrifice. The islanders believe that ancestral spirits continue to influence the way people act in everyday life. Ancestor worship is a significant part of their religion. The presence and activities of ancestral spirits are revealed in dreams and by divination.

Music also plays a key role in rituals. Drums and reed flutes are thought to be the voices of spirits and other supernatural beings. Today the use of instruments is usually restricted to men, but folklore suggests they were originally the domain of women.

A distinctive feature of many Melanesian cultures is the cargo cult, a religious movement created in response to European influence during colonial times. When Europeans first arrived, the Melanesians were impressed by the huge amounts of material goods, or "cargo," they brought with them. The islanders believed that the Europeans must have acquired such wealth through strong magic, and they gradually developed cargo cults in an effort to gain knowledge of this magic for themselves. Members of the cargo cults believed that one day an ancestral spirit or tribal god would bring cargo to the people, leading to an age of prosperity, justice,

and independence. To prepare for this, the cults built structures representing docks, runways and shelters for storing the cargo when it arrived. Colonial authorities have tried to put an end to the cults, but with little success.

Papua provides women with autonomy and respect, they hold places of power in areas of governing and are treated as equals. Gender roles tend to be specific, with the women usually remaining behind the scenes while men travel to neighbouring islands or villages. It is unfortunate that the more subtle work of women has led anthropologists, steeped in patriarchy, to believe the role of women in Papuan government is non-existent. As well, it is often the women who are the initiators in sexual pursuits. Unfortunately, what is viewed as freedom from sexual oppression in Papuan culture, is often mistaken for hedonism and promiscuity by Westerners. In fact, it is not uncommon for young men (from nearby Australia or New Zealand) to arrange "sex holidays" on the islands. Feminist activists are helping to bring this deplorable situation to light. It is hoped that their ongoing efforts will bring about changes to the perceptions Western cultures have of the strong and beautiful women of Papua New Guinea.

<http://www.mythencyclopedia.com/Le-Me/Melanesian-Mythology.html>

http://www.rahoorkhuit.net/goddess/goddess_quest/goga.html

<http://science.jrank.org/pages/10119/Matriarchy-Alternatives-Matriarchy-Matrism-Gender-Egalitarianism-Diarchy.html>

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/pac/om/om11.htm>

© Ajna DreamsAwake

Ajna DreamsAwake is an Adept of [The Sacred Three Goddess School](#). She lives on a mountain in beautiful British Columbia with her husband, cats, ferrets and other varied critters of nature. Ajna works with vibrational medicine and toning to heal

the Earth's Children. She is an eclectic Pagan, rediscovering Her Visionary Goddess Gifts.

White Moon Happenings

High Priestess Lady Zephyr and High Priestess Moonwater Chalcedony Ashwood, of [Sisters Beneath the Whispering Willows](#), are delighted to congratulate Cathy Elisandra Dharma Aarset for completing Level I of our White Moon teachings and becoming an Initiate and Member of the Order! Please enjoy Cathy's wonderful level I final project, "*Flidais and the great Irish Cailleach of Bear Island*", here: <http://www.orderwhitemoon.org/goddess/flidais/flidais.html> .

High Priestess Mystic Amazon and High Priestess Ka Wahine Ahi, of [Sisters of the Rising Moon](#) , are thrilled to congratulate Literata for completing Level III of our White Moon teachings, and for becoming a Priestess of the Order! Feel free to enjoy Literata's inspiring Level III final project, "*Columbia*", here: <http://www.orderwhitemoon.org/goddess/Columbia%20Level%203%20Project.htm>

High Priestess Kerritwyn Ceannaire, of [The Sacred Three Goddess School](#) , is honored to congratulate Peace Whitehorse for completing Level III of our White Moon teachings, and for becoming a Priestess of the order! Please enjoy her Level III final project, an amazing tribute to a "Goddess Amongst Us", her great grandmother, "*Ethel Mae Jones Detrich*", here: <http://www.orderwhitemoon.org/goddess/EMJDetrich/EMJDetrich.htm> .

The High Priestess Council is also delighted to announce that both Literata and Peace, having successfully completed Level III, decided to begin their Level IV

studies, with the goal of becoming High Priestesses of the Order, and legally ordained Ministers!

In addition, many of the Order's branch schools were very happy to welcome newly enrolled students during the past quarter! If you would like to explore our various schools offering White Moon teachings, and eventual possible legal ordination, please visit our [Training Page](#) ! We would love to get to know you better!

HP Kerritwyn Ceannaire is the elected President of the Board of Directors and the Head of the Order. She teaches White Moon lessons to women in [The Sacred Three Goddess School](#), and to male-to-female transgendered seekers in the [Rainbow Moon School](#).

Courage to Heal Invocation

*Fiery Brigid, I call on you now,
Show your child in need how
She can go on!
Flowers of subtle fiery hue
I bring here now to honour you
Asking you to lead the way!
Bright yellow sunflowers*

*For increased health;
Peach roses for healing
And love to one so dear;
Red sweet peas for courage,
Friendship and strength.
Blessed Brigid, Fiery Queen,
I ask that you wrap
Your arms around my friend,
Around your daughter,
Letting your fire burn off
The darkness of despair.
Allow her to heal!
Show her the way!*

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[Moonwater Chalcedony Ashwood](#) is a High Priestess, Ordained Minister and co-founder of the [Sisters Beneath the Whispering Willows school](#). She lives surrounded by the beauty of Central Ontario, Canada with her husband. She has a BA in Honors History. She is a Reiki Master, writer, and family historian. Originally initiated into Celtic Wicca, she now practices Eclectic Wicca, leaning strongly towards the Goddess in Her various aspects.

Gaia Awakes

*Gaia lays dormant, barren, fallow
Under the fallen leaves of brown
Until a gown of glistening white
Covers Her all around.*

*Gaia rests, and we rest, too.
Winter's stillness reigns
Across the land so diamond-like,
As She Herself ordains.*

*Everything is quiet,
Sleeping winter's deepest sleep
And then across the land is heard
Springtime's first "peep, peep"!*

Gaia wakes, and stretches,

And shakes off cobweb jewels.

She yawns and the wind blows,

As She brushes off Her tools.

And we look around we see

The fruits of Her good work,

Peeking up from 'neath the ground

Where springtime blooms do lurk.

Gaia is renewed again

With the promise of the spring.

Just listen on the wind and hear

The little birdies sing!

© Peace Whitehorse, 2/20/11

Peace Whitehorse is a Priestess of the [Order of the White Moon](#) and a student in [The Sacred Three Goddess School](#) She lives in Pennsylvania with her husband and three Shetland sheepdogs.

The Call of the Mists

*I came for you,
from the Land of the Mists...
but you were not waiting.
I searched for you,
Raising my torches high.*

*You must come with me,
Learn our healing,
Learn our ancient magicks.
Many times you came close
Almost at the portal,*

*But would not pass farther
To join us in Avalon.
Sisters and Priestesses
Are there, and waiting for you
But you look away.*

*You cannot see what comes,
Your head is held down
And you pine, for your heart*

*Has become empty and sad.
Look up! We are your teachers.*

*We will send our fairy boat
That needs no boatman
To bring you here to Avalon.
You will eat our juicy apples
And grow strong again;*

*You will swim in our lakes
Talk with the water faeries,
Sing with our birds,
Learn the history of our kind...
It is your story, too.*

*Let our Queen, Morgana
Tell you stories of heroines,
And of how the goddesses
Return once again to the lands.
You were not meant to pine!*

You are close to the Otherworld,

*As all women are.
Be proud, be beautiful and strong,
For you are one of us...
Our Mists are calling you home.*

© September 21, 2008

Beth Clare Johnson

(Mystic Amazon)

Mystic Amazon has studied Reiki with Diane Stein and has also done Shamanic training. She is a High Priestess of the [Order of the White Moon](#) and an Ordained Minister, currently co-teaching with HP Ka Wahine Ahi at [Sisters of the Rising Moon school](#). Divorced with two children, she now lives in Mississippi. Her hobbies include writing, folk art, folk magick, Reiki, and reading.