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Brigit's Cauldron Full of Blessings

I thank you, forever, Holy Brigit. It is by your grace that I stand here in praise. You have poured your cauldron of blessings upon me. Endless praise and thanks to you, Sweet Holy One.

The year that changed my life began at Imbolc 1997 with a women's spiritual gathering in the high Colorado mountains. Despite the early February cold, we were warm and cozy in our cabin, circling together in sacred space, remembering Brigit on Her day. Together, we sang and prayed, danced and drummed, journeyed and dreamed. We celebrated the turning of the Wheel of the Year and the Goddess of this Holy Day.

In one of my vision journeys, I asked Brigit how I could make her more present in my life. She told me to light a candle for her every day for three months. Along with lighting her flame, She asked me to do one act of healing or poetry making with Her in mind each day. I took this instruction to mean that I could sing songs, write poetry or stories, or make healing potions. She said that I was to do this every day for three months in order to call Her more clearly into my life; then at the end of that time, I would understand Her better as "one who transforms, a smith."

If I look back and read my journals of that year, I find stories and poems among all the musings and grumbles of daily life. Among lists and dreams are bits of notes of what I did to tend Brigit's flame every day. There are several entries about being very tired, yet I stayed up even later in order to honor my commitment to her. All through the early spring and into the planting time that year, I lit my candle each night for Her.



By Beltane, my obligation had been met. Although I stopped intentionally lighting Her flame every night, with every candle I lit from then on I invoked her: *Sweet Holy Brigit, I light your sacred flame here and in my heart.* Just as I had been promised, Brigit was now alive to me, present in my daily life.

It was a year of spiritual deepening. Circles and ritual, meditations and journeys balanced my outer life of work and family. My journal entries flow from the mystical to the mundane like an alternating current. One of my recurring fears was for the safety of my then eleven-year-old son. No particular danger loomed, but I worried and fretted nonetheless.

One of my constant questions was how to find all the time I needed for my spiritual journey — time to meditate and do yoga, to read and write, to pray and journey — and still keep up with all the urgent tasks of daily life. Even with the best of intentions there were days or even weeks in my journal when the only entries were “to-do” lists and prayers for more peace and space. At times I yearned for the barren quiet of Brigit’s day, of the still of early February’s cold.

One morning that fall, in the month of garden tomatoes and sweet corn, I stepped right out of bed thinking of all the things I had to do for work that day. I was getting up early to go to yoga class before my workday began. Dream images fled before I could catch them because I had “more important things” to think about. As I fumbled to let the dog out, paying more attention to my worries than to the stairs, I fell. I heard the sickening “thwack” of my leg bone breaking as I hit the bottom. Lying there in a heap at the bottom of the stairs, a surprising thing happened. Alone, in the quiet of that early morning, I woke up. Fully. I was awake and ready to receive this ally or learn this lesson, whatever it was, as quickly and as completely as I could.

I had a lot of time to think about that resolution in the weeks of healing that followed. As I struggled with my crutches, I met a woman who nimbly hopped around on one leg. I had believed I was indispensable at work, but my employer got along fine without me and our family temporarily managed without my wages. I preferred organic wholesome food — but found I could cope when my son lovingly fed me with baloney sandwiches every day. I found out who my good friends were. I realized that I had so much to be thankful for.

By the time my leg came out of the cast, I decided that there had to be a better way to start my day, so I created a new daily ritual, a practice I still engage in each day. I get out of bed — stopping only for the bathroom and to put on the clothes necessary for the season — and go out into my garden to greet the directions and give thanks.

One morning, not long after initiating my morning gratitude and greetings ritual, as I was facing west and thanking Brigit, a great sensation of peace came over me. I suddenly realized that my fear for my son’s safety was almost completely gone. Brigit — She whom I now knew as “the One who transforms” — had transformed

my fear into trust. I wept as this awareness sank deep in my bones. She had given me the greatest gift a mother could ask for. To this day, I thank her for my child, for the ability to care for him, for the fear She has taken away from me, and for Her cauldron of blessings poured down on us.

It has been seven years now that I have been consciously starting my days with thanks and this practice has completely changed my life. Still busy, hard-working and jealous for more time, I have found that beginning each day in gratitude for what I *do* have shifts my perceptions. Some years ago, my morning practice finally became something I looked forward to and I decided that I was ready to put in the other “book-end” to my day. Now, before bed, I light Brigit’s candle, invoke Her, and thank Her for the gifts of the day. Once I get started, I realize that there is no end to the blessings I could thank Her for each night. I don’t list them all, just a handful, and then I blow out my candle, intentionally sending my blessings on to someone else who needs them, too.

Gratitude is a consummation of the longing within each soul. It is a moment of sacred union, a shooting star in the dark night of endless yearning. It is a sensuous savoring of the divine feast offered to us, the still point between in-and-out breaths, a moment of delight.

With my days beginning and ending with rituals of gratitude, the inside of them just seems to be full of thanks as well. Being in gratitude, being really thankful in the moment for something that touches me, is in itself a way of waking up. Or maybe it works the other way around — maybe by awakening to the wonder around me, I have no other choice than to express my delight in it. Things that used to be chores (and still can be) are also cauldron-full blessings. Going to the grocery store, cleaning my house, doing dishes, washing clothes, paying bills, weeding the herb bed, carrying out the recyclables, even wading through emails — all look different through the eyes of gratitude. ☺

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