

OSTARA/SPRING EQUINOX '07

When we seek balance....

DIRECTIONS –

- EAST: From the East come the winds that carry the seed. Spirits of East, be here now!
- SOUTH: From the South comes the Sun, kindling the life of the seed. Spirits of South, be here now!
- WEST: From the West comes the water that swells the sprout. Spirits of West, be here now!
- NORTH: From the North comes the Earth that nourishes the plant. Spirits of North, be here now!
- EAST: Earth Mother, Star Mother—You who are called by a thousand names: May all remember that we are cells in Your body and dance together.
- SOUTH: You are the grain and the loaf that sustains us each day, and—as you are patient with our struggles to learn—so shall we be patient with ourselves and with each other.
- WEST: We are radiant light and sacred dark—the Balance. You are the embrace that heartens and the freedom beyond fear.
- NORTH: Within You we are born, we grow, live and die. You bring us around the circle to rebirth. Within us, You dance forever!
- All:** So mote it be!

CASTING –

We cast this circle as sons and daughters, / Spinners and weavers, / Tool makers, potters; / As dancers and dreamers, / Fixers, changers, / Singers and screamers.

We cast this circle with our ancestors and guardians, / God and Goddess too, / You who teach and who speak true, / Who plant, who reap, / Who soar, who creep, / Who cook, who drum, / Who have been and yet to come, / Unreasonable women, / Unmanageable men.

We cast as pagan, druid and witches, / Loving hearts or furious bitches. / We are sweet water, we are the seed; / We are the storm wind to blow away greed. / Into this circle we bring to birth the love that reclaims our earth.

All: So mote it be!

COVENANT – (All) As we gather here in our sacred space, a circle is formed, and we are connected in spirit.

INVOCATION OF GOD & GODDESS –

God of the growing light, wielder of the flaming arrow—sink deep into the Earth the shaft of fire, warming the world, bringing the spring.

Goddess Ostara, Springtime Queen—work again the ancient magic, and bring new growth to our land.

Goddess, God, guardian spirits, power of the stars above and the Earth below—bless this time, this place, and all who gather here. Blessed be!

WICCANING OF BABY VALERIE –

We welcome the return of a soul to Earth.

THE RETURN OF PERSEPHONE –

Reader: We stand, as ever, at a point on the wheel / remembering that we begin each journey / only when we are brought to our first step.

We wake each morning / because we have slept through the night.

We rejoice in the burgeoning springtime / because we have waited, in the arms of the Mother, / through the season of darkness and cold.

Winter is for bedding down. We watch the days grow shorter / and feel the chill that heralds the first snow.

All: Let there be joy in the cold and the dying. The seeds of new life are borne on the winter wind.

Hades to Persephone: I, the Lord of all below have watched, enraptured, as you go

about the fields; you twirl and shine, Persephone, you will be mine. My chariot awaits, my love, to take us from the world above. Now put an end to childish play, I claim you for my bride today.

Reader: We feel January in every joint. We insulate, and isolate--and strain to believe that the darkest days are behind us.

All: Let there be joy in the cold and the dying. The seeds of new life are borne on the winter wind.

Persephone to Hades: Hades does me great offense to play upon my innocence. Though you may call me Bride-to-be, I'll not go with you willingly. By force you take me to your lair, do not presume to keep me there. My mother, Goddess of the grain, will see me safely home again.

Reader: Almost any effort seems too much, and grief comes easily. How quickly we forget that rest is necessary; that only in stillness is our motion defined.

All: Let there be joy in the cold and the dying. The seeds of new life are borne on the winter wind.

Demeter: From lofty perch on highest peak, to deepest ocean, still I seek, by night, by day, some sign or clue, but nowhere is there news of you. Let this, my cry of woeful loss, be carried forth and so across the world of men, that all may hear and share Demeter's pain and fear.

Reader: Inactivity turns to wrath, as we remember the warmth of sunshine, and hold the Earth responsible for our confinement.

All: Let there be joy in the cold and the dying. The seeds of new life are borne on the winter wind.

Demeter: The Earth has taken you from me, and so my wrath accordingly shall fly. Today, against the land, in anger, I will set my hand. Corn and cattle, all will die. The rivers run with dust, and I shall not relent, until I see Persephone returned to me.

Reader: What bargain may we make with Time? Will the seasons turn more quickly, or stay with us longer to suit our needs?

All: Let there be joy in the cold and the dying. The seeds of new life are borne on the winter wind.

Demeter: The Gods have witnessed this foul deed, and mighty Zeus shall intercede. He will return you to my care, if you have eaten nothing there.

Persephone: But Mother, in my dark ordeal, the pain of hunger I did feel. And I was given, in my need, a taste of pomegranate seed.

Hades to Demeter: For this, my Lady, half the year, your daughter will attend me here. And then once more to you ascend. Now, let this pact our quarrel end.

Reader: Winter is for bedding down, gathering our strength that we may burst forth, with energy and joy, to welcome the season of new beginnings.

All: Let there be joy in the cold and the dying. The seeds of new life are borne on the winter wind.

Demeter: So will it be, within the land...

Hades to Persephone: That when each year you take my hand...

Persephone: The living, breathing world you see shall wither and retire with me. But, when in springtime, I--once more--am to the world above restored...

Demeter: A mother's joy at your rebirth will waken and renew the Earth.

East: With Persephone, we have journeyed to the land of the dead, and returned safely to the light and warmth of Spring.

South: May we grow with the brightness of the young God, and open ourselves to the energy of creation.

West: Goddess of the Seasons, Goddess of Life, keep us close in Your embrace.

North: Accept us as Your children and buoy us upon the tide of time.

Directions: With love, we thank and honor You for the world that blooms within us once more.

All: Blessed be!

FESTIVAL OF THE SEEDS —

(Toss the initial bundle of herbs into the cauldron.)

- Friends, let us all place in this cauldron the tokens which we have brought to this place.

(Clockwise round as each person tosses in his or her leaves, twigs into the cauldron.)

Each: May the strength of the old enter into the new, and life arise once more.
(Drumming and dancing clockwise around the cauldron.)

Directions: O Great Ones of the forest, make this potion strong and giving of new life.

So mote it be!

All: So mote it be!

(Pour potion into cups and pair up to go outside of circle to plant seeds. Go paired if possible; if not, the individual should offer an invocation to the Maiden or the Horned One as the seed is planted and watered. After planting, pairs should offer each other an appropriate gesture of affection then return to the circle.)

FEAST - Eat, drink and be merry! We have survived another winter!

THANKS TO GOD AND GODDESS -

God of the growing light, / wielder of the flaming arrow / for the warmth / for the lengthening day / for the energy that surrounds us / for your presence within our circle-- / we thank you, and ask your blessing, / until we gather here again. Blessed be!

Goddess Ostara, Springtime Queen / for your love / for your power / for the ancient magic / for the fertility of the world we share / for your presence within our circle-- / we thank you, and ask your blessing, / until we gather here again. Blessed be!

THANKS TO DIRECTIONS AND OPENING THE CIRCLE -

East: Winds that carry the seeds, we thank you for witnessing our rite. Go if you must, stay if you will. Blessed be.

South: Warmth of the sun that kindles life, we thank you for witnessing our rite. Go if you must, stay if you will. Blessed be.

West: Water that swells the seeds and sprouts, we thank you for witnessing our rite. Go if you must, stay if you will. Blessed be.

North: Earth that nourishes the plant, we thank you for witnessing our rite. Go if you must, stay if you will. Blessed be.

All: The circle is open, yet unbroken. May the love of the Goddess be ever in your heart. Merry meet and merry part, and merry meet again! Blessed be!