

THE 19 DAYS OF BRIGID

I am not sure where this practice originated, only that I first heard of it many years ago. The 19 contiguous days helps me deepen relationship with Brigid. I use this practice as a “road map”, guiding me from Winter Solstice to Imbolc.

In my cosmology, Winter Solstice is about dissolution, about surrender and letting go. I force myself to slow way down...sleep more...dream deeply...do less. It is the time of year when my body naturally wants to “go into the cave”, resting in the quiet and darkness of the long nights. When I can finally let go, I move into “the void”. The time of the dark goddess, the primordial void, the deep silence and absence. Before the germination or first stirrings of Imbolc, I have an opportunity to dissolve and rest in the void.

The 19 Days of Brigid helps me navigate from dissolution -- to void -- to germination of the seed. During this time, I also dream into my self-dedication for the year, which I ritually perform on Imbolc. Some years, I begin the cycle 9 days before Imbolc and continue 9 days after. Some years, it feels right to begin 18 days before Imbolc (January 14). This year, 2026, I am traveling in Guatemala January and February and the logistics worked out best for me to begin on the new moon - January 18th. We can be flexible with these practices!

The nuts and bolts of this practice change from year to year, depending on what I need, what feels most life affirming, what might bring me joy, and of course what She asks of me. This year, I am called to cultivate creativity. I am also called to deepen relationship with my ancestral lineage, exploring the connection and intersection between Brigid and my ancestors. Dreaming into how Brigid brings me to my ancestors, and how my ancestors can introduce me to Brigid in a whole new way – the way they related to her.

In a wonderful show of synchronicity, I began an online course on January 13th. It is called Ancestral Lineage Healing and is taught by Daniel Foor and a whole cadre of supporters. Not surprisingly, at this time of year, my favorite deity has taken a big role in how I am relating to this wisdom teaching. If you have any interest in working with your ancestral lines, remembering how to honor and bring healing to your beloved dead, I highly recommend this work with Daniel Foor. You can check out his website <https://ancestralmedicine.org>, where you will find links to his book, along with a beautiful library of on demand courses as well as upcoming live courses.

Here is a rundown of my practice of the 19 Days of Devotion this year. Of course, your practice might look different, based on what feels alive for you!

Beginning:

I start by lighting my main altar candle and doing a somewhat abbreviated Mandala of Sanctuary to anchor myself in physical space and on the spiral of time. I'm inviting any well ancestors from my lineage to join me in the practice of devotion to Brigid (or

whatever name they called her by, since her energy form has had many names across Celtic cultures and eras of time).

Set up for Devotional practice with Brigid:

- Light Her flame – I use a ritual candle that was consecrated at the Solas Bhride sanctuary in Kildare, Ireland, where it was lit from the tended Flame of Brigid. I say my own personal welcoming prayer to her from the heart.
- Smudge – am choosing either rosemary (for remembrance), mugwort (for protection and connection with deep ancestral wisdom) or the herb bundles we created in our Samhain ritual this year (combination of cedar, mugwort, yarrow and rosemary)
- Offering Plate – making an offering to Brigid which is a combination of flowers I find here in Guatemala and dried plants I brought from home, which were ritually gathered or grown this summer and amplify my own personal spirit connection to Brigid.
- Prepare the Holy Water – I am doing a pouring ritual with Brigid every day, starting with a pitcher of water from the tap here in Guatemala. To that pitcher, I add 19 drops of water which were collected from many of Brigid's holy wells in Ireland. As I add the drops, I am remembering the felt sense of being at her Holy Wells during my ancestral pilgrimage to Ireland.

Cycle of prayer:

This, I have gratefully borrowed from the wonderful book *Tending Brigid's Flame* by Lunaea Weatherstone. The whole of the cycle appears below. I use the 19-bead section of my Brigid's rosary (see Brigid's Rosary under Personal Practices in my website) to keep track of the prayer.

- On day 1, I say the Flame 1 prayer, followed by the interlude. Then I continue using the beads of the rosary to complete a cycle of 19 prayers to Brigid. (You can see an example of what that looks like on my website under Brigid's Rosary in Personal Practices.)
- On Day 2, I say the Flame 1 prayer + interlude, then add in the Flame 2 prayer and the interlude. Then I continue using the beads, adding in 17 additional prayers to Brigid.
- On Day 3, I say Flame 1+interlude, Flame 2+ interlude, then add in Flame 3 and the interlude. Then continue using the beads, adding in 16 additional prayers.
- It repeats for 19 Days, so on Day 19, I am reciting the whole cycle of the Flames.

Interlude:

Mar a bha. Mar a tha. Mar a bhitheas gu bráth

(phonetic pronunciation: mar a vah, mar a hah, mar a vee-as gu brah)

As it is, as it was, as it ever shall be

<p>Flame 1: Welcome <i>Brigid of brightness, I bid thee welcome, Brigid of blessing, come thou in. Brigid of strength, I bid thee welcome, this day and every day, this night and every night</i></p>	<p>Flame 2: Hearth & Household <i>Brigid of the threshold, come thou in, Brigid of the hearth fire, take your ease, Brigid of the cookpot, sup with us, Brigid of all comforts, live in our hearts.</i></p>
<p>Flame 3: Ancestors <i>Ancestors all, I embody your legacy, Ancestors all, I ask for your blessing, Ancestors all, I offer Brigid's flame To light the needfires of deep memory.</i></p>	<p>Flame 4: Flamekeepers <i>Brigid of the timeless flame, bless your daughters: Those who keep the circle bright, Those whose faith has never failed, Those who keep your name ablaze.</i></p>
<p>Flame 5: Healing <i>Brigid of the holy waters, Brigid of the soothing hand, Brigid of the miracles, Touch me with healing.</i></p>	<p>Flame 6: Poetry <i>Brigid of lore, deepen my understanding, Brigid of bards, increase my eloquence, Brigid of poetry, lead me to beauty: Beauty of word and beauty of thought.</i></p>
<p>Flame 7: Courage <i>Brigid of the golden shield, Brigid of courage, Brigid of the sunbeam, Increase thou my trust.</i></p>	<p>Flame 8: Righteous Causes <i>Brigid, lend your righteous sword To those who work for justice, To those who speak the truth, To those who seek a better world.</i></p>
<p>Flame 9: The Oppressed <i>In the name of Brigid, who empowers the oppressed, In the name of Brigid, who releases the enslaved, In the name of Brigid, who lifts up the downtrodden, May all her people be honored and free.</i></p>	<p>Flame 10: Children <i>Brigid the midwife, bless every birth, Brigid foster mother, protect every child, Brigid of springtime, bestow on each childhood The innocence of wonder and the magic of joy.</i></p>
<p>Flame 11: Women's Causes <i>Mighty Brigid, your keening women call to you: Strengthen our voice, Strengthen our resolve, Strengthen our sisterhood.</i></p>	<p>Flame 12: The Earth <i>Brigid, preserve this planet, The stones and the seas and the skies. Brigid, spread your green mantle For the greening of the earth.</i></p>

<p>Flame 13: Animals <i>Brigid, protect the earth's animals, The fish and the beasts and the birds. Brigid, shelter your creatures As your sheep shelter lambs from the wind.</i></p>	<p>Flame 14: Water <i>Brigid of the clear dewdrop, Brigid of the pure wellspring, Brigid of the pool of knowledge, Teach us to honor the gift of water.</i></p>
<p>Flame 15: Creativity <i>Bright Brigid, flame of creation, Kindle my enthusiasm, Fire up my passion, Ignite my imagination.</i></p>	<p>Flame 16: Nourishment <i>Brigid of the overflowing milk, Brigid of the good brown loaf, Brigid of the endless butter, May all beings be nourished.</i></p>
<p>Flame 17: Peace <i>Peace of the swan and peace of the kine, Peace of the hearth and peace of the open door, Peace between neighbors and peace between nations, The deep peace of Brigid within.</i></p>	<p>Flame 18: Gratefulness <i>Brigid, I thank thee three-times-three: For my birth, my body, my spirit, For my kin, my clan, my tribe, For my home, my work, my knowledge of thee.</i></p>
<p>Flame 19: The Three Flames of Brigid <i>May the hearth fire of welcome warm me, May the temple fire of faith sustain me, May the forge fire of change strengthen me, And Brigid's love encompass me, now and evermore.</i></p>	

Pouring Ritual:

Since devotion to Brigid is linked to sacred water practices in my heart, I am doing a pouring ritual each day using the Holy Water I created in the opening. This changes every day based on what feels alive and needful. Often, something in the cycle of prayers is wanting to have a deeper exploration, so the pouring ritual is geared to that. Some days, there is personal inner work that wants to have attention brought to it. You can see the section on Water Rituals under Personal Practices in my website for ideas.

The Heart of the Practice:

The last part of the morning ritual is a cycle of moving through the 19 Days following the journey from dissolution to void to germination. I suppose this is a metaphorical condensing (into 19 days) of the energy that began at Samhain, continued through Winter Solstice, and is morphing into Imbolc. I try to continue the work of the morning practice throughout the rest of the day. The actual practice looks different every year, depending on when I begin the 19 Days, and what is most needful for me. For this year, with the practice beginning on the 18th of January, it looks like this:

Days 1-5: Continuing Dissolution work begun around Winter Solstice

We are in the heart of winter, when the mytho-poetic narrative arc speaks of death, decompose, surrender. These first days of the cycle, I feel the pull of the dissolution work that really began at Samhain and became rooted at Winter Solstice. In my body, this part of the narrative arc lives towards the end of my long, slow, exhale. What can I (finally) let go of, (finally) surrender? What happens to the “I” in this equation if I let go of me? Can I find ease and comfort in this little ego death?

The practice for these days might involve death dramas, saying goodbye to the old self. Visual artwork or dance that expresses the essence of dissolving. This year, I am super interested in calling on the Dark Goddess, using invocations such as:

Dark Goddess, you who my foremothers called out to as Cailleach, Hecate, Lilith, Nyx, Persephone, and by a thousand other names as well.

You who are the stillness of the primordial void, the root matter of all creation.

Dark Mother, you who are that feeling in my bones that comes when I finally let go of control. For at the core of devotion to the sacred feminine is surrender. In surrender, I decide to trust. In trust, will you guide me mother, into the depths of my soul’s deepest longing? From deep in my bowl, within my womb, I open to you. I swallow my fear and invite you in. You are the chrysalis in which I face that what terrifies me. Will you hold me, Dark Mother, as I dissolve in that space, and steady me as I am reformed? Will you guide me as I blossom forth, vibrant and renewed?

Just as you are the fury that rips the flesh from injustice, so you are the glowing forge that transforms my inner demons into tools of power.

After I strip away all the labels and the layers of separation, there I find the heart of the mystery - I have always been a part of you. I don't need to call you in from outside - because you, now and always, have been right here, within this sweet woman’s body.

Days 6-10: Sitting with the Void

These 5 days of the practice, I am trying my best to sit with Her in the stillness of the primordial void. That place in the narrative arc where there is nothing to do, nowhere to go. For this child of modernity, perhaps this is the hardest part of the whole cycle. Can I crawl into Her lap and be held? Can I allow for my devotion to be reciprocal in this quiet time before the cycle begins again? In my body, this place lives in the long pause after the exhale. I am not waiting, nor planning, nor expecting anything. I just am. Try it – savor it. Exhale...and hold...

The practice for these days is deep meditation of void and stillness. Doing nothing and loving it.

Days 11-14: Dreaming into Self Dedication

In this ritual cycle, day 11 is when I metaphorically turn to the east and begin to see the first glimmerings of sunrise. Coming from the nourishment and comfort of dissolution and the void, there is no rush. But the soil has been prepared, well composted with rest and quiet. In my body, this place lives in the beginning of a lovely, slow inhale. Just as Brigid is preparing to step into her power with the returning light, so I am beginning to prepare for my next turn around the sun. What treasures have I found in the stillness? What might be awaiting me, in the slow germinating of the seed? The idea here is to allow the vision of my self-dedication to unfurl over these 5 days, having a pretty clear picture of it by the morning of Imbolc.

The practice for these days might be divination, asking for guidance in shaping my self-dedication. Or lucid dreaming / active imagination journeys. Journaling about my spiritual path and my soul's deepest longings. Letting my inner wisdom come out through art and creative expression, rather than my left brain.

Day 15 Imbolc: Celebrating Brigid and the ritual of Self Dedication

I see Imbolc as a "private" sabbat – meaning my main ritual is a solo endeavor. I will often take part in a community celebration as well, but my priority is always my private solo ritual. The ritual of Self Dedication is the main component of my sabbat. It looks different every year, because I am little different every year ;-). You can see an example posted on the website under Personal Practices, Imbolc.

Days 16-19: Integration and Gratitude

As a part of self-dedication, a vow has been taken and a promise made. These last days are devoted to making it real. Figuring out some of the ways I will keep that promise. Using my powerful manifesting ego self (the Queen archetype inside me) to make the vow sing in my daily life.

The practices for these days might include making a piece of art that I hang at my altar, to remind me every day of the vow I have taken. Developing some strategies for real life action items and putting them on my calendar. Telling a few select people in my life about my dedication, asking them for accountability in whatever way feels supportive. Offerings to Brigid every day, expressing my gratitude to Her for the many amazing ways She shows up in my life.

One Last Thing, a piece of Brigid inspired spell work:

As I am enjoying the peace and privilege of my safety and spaciousness to do this ritual work, it seems like the world outside (especially in my home country) is spiraling ever deeper into a shit show.

In response, I was inspired to draw an outline of 19 flames. Every day, as part of my ritual practice, I have been coloring in one flame. As I do this, I am creating a spell of sorts. This is a spell of vibrancy and resilience. A spell of promise that we collectively

will act. A spell that screams We Are Not Powerless!! A bit of magic to remind me that we are flames of courage, protection and love. Especially those of us who are dedicated to Brigid, espousing Flames 7,8 and 9 from the 19 Flames referenced above. The flames of Courage, Righteous Causes, and the Oppressed. I will post the completed piece after the 19 days, but here is how it looks on Day 9:



