

Fall Ritual 2007

By David Crawford

Fall Equinox ritual was the first full length High Day liturgy I had written in the standard ADF format for the Grove of the Red Earth. I had requested that I be allowed to write this ritual because it was closely associated with my Patrons: Demeter, Hecate, and Persephone, while also honoring Apollo for the role He played in the myth of Demeter & Persephone.

Also seeing the relationship between the seasonal changes of Ancient Greece's start of the barren time to our own I felt this would be the proper time to honor Demeter in Her aspect of the mourning mother and the Greater Mysteries. So I wrote the main portion of the ritual to center around Demeter's loss and seeking for Her daughter. I also wanted to pay homage to the Spring ritual that was going to be written by our Senior Druid James to honor Persephone as the Queen of the Underworld and Her husband Hades in the aspect of Persephone's return to the world of the living.

With the ritual I wanted to focus on the mythos presented in the Homeric Hymns for Demeter where Her tale of wondering as the crone, Doso, is told and of the blessed gift of immortality that Demeter sought to place upon Demophon, the son of Celeus, the king of Eleusis. The events surrounding this myth are what lead to the building of the Eleusinian Mysteries.

For this ritual I had the idea of making our offering to Demeter be the reenactment of Doso placing the child Demophon into the celestial fires for purification from his mortal trappings. To do this I would need to make an abstract form of a baby to be placed into the fire. I saw this as perfect timing to also give over to the goddess something of ourselves that we wish to be purified of. Thinking that using this form of an infant would cause some issues with some of the members, I turned to the Senior Druid about this. James told me to go on writing the ritual the way I wanted to see it done and he would ask the members of leadership about it. He came to me saying that no one really saw an issue with it.

I constructed the form of the baby from balloons and papier-mâché. I wanted to make the form very abstract so as not to resemble an actual child too closely while still having the meaning come across. I filled the form with herbs I had grown in dedication to Demeter. There was a square portion on the belly that was cut away to place the herbs in as well as hematite stones that were part of the ritual offering and blessing. I had written the ritual so that the participants wrote what they wanted to have purified from their lives on a small piece of paper that was placed inside the form with the herbs and stones. The following is the main portion of the ritual.

The grove will perform the standard ADF format to open and close the ritual using the Grove of the Red Earth liturgy to call upon the Earth Mother, Spirits of Inspiration, make offerings to the Outsiders, and call upon the Kindreds while creating the Hallows and opening the Gates.

Call to Hecate:

Great radiant one, Lady of torches, Guiding light,
Hear our call we pray!

Daughter of Perses and Asteria, though Titan born you were, a goddess you became,
Hear our call we pray!

Chthonic goddess of crossroads, She who is the keeper of keys,
Hear our call we pray!

Mistress of magic, with your ghostly hounds,
We call upon you this day to pay honor to you!

Great goddess Hecate, be in our grove!

Offering to Hecate: Myrrh & libation of Olive Oil

Call to Apollo:

Apollo, Great and shining Lord,
Hear our call we pray!

Brilliant son of Zeus and Leto, Golden youth of song,
Hear our call we pray!

All seeing god, with your swift flying chariot,
Hear our call we pray!

Gracious far shooting god, who answers the call of those whom seek Him,
We call upon you this day to pay honor to you!

Great god Apollo, be in our grove!

Offering to Apollo: Frankincense & libation of Olive Oil

Call to Demeter:

Daughter to the Great Titans Kronos and Rhea,
Earth Goddess par excellence,
She who brings forth the fruits of the earth
And the life sustaining grains of the land,
Hear our call we pray!

Great Beloved Goddess Demeter, Mother of Persephone,
Hear our call we pray!

In Your sadness from the lose of you daughter,
The world suffered bitter winter and death, finding no relief or joy,
Teaching men that all things end.
Hear our call we pray!

Demeter, Goddess of the Eleusinian Mysteries,
We come before You in honor of all Your teachings to man,

We come before You to ask that You burn away our impurities
As You once sought to do with Demophon.

Blessed Mysteries of life, death, and life again are yours,
Great Beloved Demeter.

Offering to Demeter: Sage & Rosemary & libation of Olive Oil

Mythos of reading of the Eleusinian event: to be read of the Homeric Hymns

Main Sacrificial/Purification to Demeter:

Filling of Mache Baby form: hematite stones should be in the form already.
Each person will place within the form that which they want to be purified of.

Offering/Sacrificing of Mache form: the form is placed within the flames and allowed to burn.(Once the ritual is over and the Sacred Fire is put out the stones are removed and given to the ritual goers so that they can carry them as talismans for their desired purification.)

Communion of Gods and people (Pork-flesh, fat, bones):

The plate of precooked meat with the fat and bones is brought from the main altar. The officiator who called to Demeter will place the fat and bones onto the fire saying a small prayer. Once this is done the cooked portion of the meat is then passed around to each member to partake. Those that don't eat meat should place their portion into the fire offering it to the deities of the occasion along with a small personal prayer.