

Roman Vestalia Ritual

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Raven's Cry Grove prior Roman rites by Michael Talvola

ADF Roman ritual template by Jenni Hunt

Inspiration and texts from many sources at Nova Roma

Additional material from numinism.net

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Rev 1-1 from meeting notes and changed sequence of early parts

Rev 1-2 minor fixes

Rev 1-3 final formatting

The company gathers on the outside of the Nemeton space, to observe its preparation.

A circular area is marked by stones as our temple of Vesta, containing a statue.

*Mark the four corners of the Nemeton, driving in spikes with steel hammer **[JESSICA]**, and make offerings of water **[ADDY]** and grain **[HEATHER]** at each. Start at SouthEast corner, then back of altar SouthWest corner, then NW and finish NE.*

MIKE:

We have marked off this space,
we have made it sacred,
from east to west,
from north to south,
we claim it as ours.
From here to there,
we proclaim it sacred.

The space is now sacred.

Make offerings of water and grain around the Temple of Vesta.

*A young girl **[ADDY]** blesses the Eternal flame:*

"I kindle this flame as a symbol of the eternal flame
which lights the hearts and minds of both men and Gods,
and ask the blessings of Vesta upon this flame
and all upon whom its light may fall."

Invoking the Protector

KEN *Standing North speaks [from scroll]:*

[adoratio]Mars Silvanus Pater, te precor uti sis bonaevolentatis et propitious mihi nemori nostro, ad quod offero hoc sacrificium, uti nos defendas, et tu prohibeas et

avertas, et averrunces omnia adversa, tam visibilia quam invisibilia, quae nos opponere volunt.

[offering is made]

while **MIKE** repeats in English:

Father Mars Silvanus, I pray you be of good will and favorable to me and to our grove, for which purpose I make this offering that you may prohibit, defend and avert things seen and unseen that may oppose us.

Setting Historical Precedence

ARIEL: Salvete Citizens and guests! We gather today to honor the gods of Ancient Rome who live with us and provide for us. Our rite is an ADF Druid rite, for as was the way of Ancient Rome, rites of groups other than those of the city itself are performed observing their own customs.

So we celebrate the Vestalia this evening by honoring Vesta, goddess of the hearth and we do so by rejoicing in good cheer!

We begin as the Romans would, with a procession to our place of celebration.

MIKE: Citizens and guests, you may enter the Nemeton.

Processional gathering:

Druids create a procession:

Several people carry statues, wine, honey, cakes, etc.

Processional song: *"We Approach the Sacred Grove" by StoneCreed Grove, ADF.*

Procession is accompanied by drums, flute, etc., as present

The company continues the procession, entering the prepared space.

Welcome

ARIEL & MIKE: By the light of the fire and the might of the water, make this Grove be whole and holy.

Welcome

MIKE: *ring chime 3x3 times saying:*

Ancestors! *(chime 3x)*

Nature Spirits! *(chime 3x)*

Shining Ones! *(chime 3x)*

We have crossed the threshold into sacred space. Please reconnect with the sacred cosmos as we prepare to open the gates to the Otherworlds, the place where the Kindreds will reveal themselves once more.

Purification of Participants and Celebrants

ARIEL: We presenters will now purify ourselves.

May we be pure that we might cross through the sacred.
May we cross through the sacred that we might attain the holy.
May we attain the holy that we might be blessed in all ways.

[adoratio as altar is approached]

The censer and aspenser [D1 and D2] wash their hands at the altar. Using ladle/spoon and large bowl to pour water from over your hands, holding the ladle first in your power hand and pouring it over your palm, then the back of your hand; then switch to the other hand and repeat.

MIKE says: "Haec aqua a corpore impuritates, modo simile plumbo mutando ad aurum, elluat. Purga mentem. Purga carnem. Purga animum. Ita est!"

ARIEL: Now everyone will be purified.

JESSICA: *assist the folk with washing hands.*
{alternate D1 and D2: [cense and asperse the celebrants]}

May we be pure and fit to approach the Gods.

Honoring the Earth Mother

ARIEL: We honor the Earth Mother today in her form as the Roman Terra Mater.

SARAH:
[offer grain to the ground in the center of sacred space]
[adoratio]

Oh Earth-Mother
We praise thee
That seed springeth
That flower openeth
That grass groweth.

We praise thee
For winds that whisper
Through the shining Birch
Through the lively Pines
Through the mighty Oak.

We praise thee
For all things
Oh, Earth-Mother, who gives all life.

From you we all proceed
And to you we shall all return.
Dea sancta Terra, we praise you.

All: Dea sancta Terra, we praise you.
(bend and kiss the ground)

Statement of Ritual Purpose

MIKE: We are the Gods' and the Gods are ours, so let us pray with a good fire. Let us offer with a full heart, knowing that when we do, we nurture our connection to them and support the very Gods themselves. In remembrance, we strengthen their powers. In honor, we balance the worlds. In love, we bring peace and keep the Old Ways present and alive.

ARIEL:

Here today we honor the Gods of Ancient Rome with whom we share existence each day. We reassure them that, though millennia have passed, they are not forgotten. We have come together here today to honor Vesta, the Goddess of the Hearth.

At this most auspicious moment, time and place, in this celebration of Vestalia, so that we may realize the fullness of Your grace, to the best of our ability this afternoon, we shall now perform ritus Romanus to properly do honor .

Gently toss flower/petals around the altar.

Invoking Inspiration

MIKE: We now call upon Phoebus Apollo for his gift of inspiration to aid us in our rite.

TESS: Phoebus Apollo, of you even the swan sings with clear voice to the beating of his wings,
as he alights upon the bank by the eddying river Peneios;
and of you the sweet-tongued minstrel, holding his high-pitched lyre,
always sings both first and last.

And so hail to you lord!

[offering of ...bay leaves...]

I make this offering of bay leaves to you, as
We seek your favor; grant to us now

That our voices be pleasing to Gods, Spirits, and Manes;
That the aim of our rite strike its target precisely;
That our blessings and theirs pass freely between
The realms of the Kindreds and the lips of our Seer.

Macte!

All: Macte!

Consecration of the Hallows

PD: Let us now sanctify the Hallows from which we offer.

The Mundus [*The Grove well (or an urn), covered until space preparation time*]

RUSSELL: Here is the mundus, the eye and mouth of the Earth.

Open for this brief time that we may receive all Numinae into our rite.

Beneath us, below us and sprouting through us are the waters of rebirth,

The mundus, gate to all of that which is below, we acknowledge and uphold.

To the mundus, we make this offering of grain

[offering of grain]

MUNDUS PATET!

May the mundus be opened!

All: May the mundus be opened!

The Focus

KAILA: Vesta Mater, Shining Lady, unite us all,

For by worshipping at a common hearth

We are made one family, one people.

Queen of the hearth, Vesta Mater, your household is here.

Let us pray with a good fire.

To Vesta, we make this offering of incense:

[offer incense]

FOCUS ARDET IN NOS!

Sacred Fire, burn within us!

All: Sacred Fire, burn within us!

The Arbor

ANYA: The sacred tree stands here as a doorway,

A pillar between the worlds.

Together, we gather at this sacred portal

In wisdom, love and hope.

To the tree, we make these offerings of water, incense, and oil.

[offer water, incense, and oil]

ARBOR SACER, CRESCET IN NOS!
Sacred Tree, grow within us!

All: Sacred Tree, grow within us!

Opening the Gates

ARIEL: We call now on the Keeper of the Gates, Ianus, to make open the portals for our rite here.

MIKE:

Salve Ianus Pater!!
Ianus Inceptio, God of beginnings;
Ianus Brifons, Two-faced Ianus;
Ianus Patulcius, Opener of doors;
Ianus Domesticus, Protector of homes;
Ianus Quirinus; God of the folk
Lend wings to our prayers and conjure a portal between us and the world of the Gods.
Through your door, let the prayers of your supplicants pass to the Kindreds.

Ianus Pater, accept our offering!

[offering of olive oil]

Now, Ianus
Join your magic with ours
And let the focus open as a gate,
Let the mundus open as a gate,
Let the arbor be the crossroads of all Worlds.

Ianus of Openings, admit us into the presence of the shining Ones
IANUS PATULCIUS ADMITTE NOS IN PRAESENTIUM NUMINUM
LUCENTIUM

PORTAE APERIANTUR – Let the gates be open!

All: Let the Gates be open!

FIAT!

Inviting the Three Kindreds

ARIEL: We now offer to the Kindreds and ask them to join us at this rite.

Ancestors:

RUSSELL: The children of the Earth call out to the Mighty Dead.
Salvete, Majores et Di Manes!
Greetings, ancestors and divine dead.

You who were here before, we offer you welcome.
Ancestors of our blood, we offer you welcome.
You who guide us, we offer you welcome.

Come to our hearth, Ancestors
Meet us at the boundary
Guide us and ward us as we walk the elder ways.

[offering of silver]

Majories et Di Manes, mactete hoc sacrificio!
All: Ancestors, accept our sacrifice!

Nature Spirits:

ADDY: The children of the Earth call out to the Spirits of this Land.
Salvete, Numinae et Indigites!

Kindred of earth, we offer you welcome
Kindred of the growing green, we offer you welcome.
Kindred who fly or walk or swim or crawl, we offer you welcome.

Come to our fire, Spirits;
Meet us at the boundary.
Guide us and ward us as we walk the elder ways.

[offering of fruit]

Numinae et Indigites, mactete hoc sacrificio!
All: Nature Spirits, accept our sacrifice!

Deities:

TESS: The children of the Earth call out to the Shining Ones. Salvete, Dei!

To all Gods and Goddesses, we offer you welcome.
To all Gods of this place, we offer you welcome.
To all the deities of this household, we offer you welcome.

Come to our hearth, Shining Ones;
Meet us at the boundary.
Guide us and ward us as we walk the elder ways.

[offering of spelt cake into focus]

Dei, mactete hoc sacrificio!
All: Deities, accept our sacrifice!

Praise Offerings

MIKE: At this time, let any who would offer praise and thanks here to their gods, ancestors, or others, do so. (*ample time given*)

Invocation of the Deities to be Honored

MIKE: Many welcomes dear Kindred, Triple Hosts of Spirits. Join us now as we call to those who have inspired this rite, those whose charge it is to maintain the order of the Universe.

Vesta is the oldest daughter of King Saturn and Queen Ops, who ruled the world during the Golden Age! She is the Sacred Hearth Fire. It is She who taught humanity the skills needed to cook and to maintain a warm and cozy home. It is through Her grace that we are able to worship and honor all of the gods because She provides the Sacred Flame for offering and She teaches us the skills of hospitality required to perform rites. She loves above all, purity, chastity and peace. She is an independent female and has never taken a consort. Her most beloved creature is the braying donkey, who is Pales, who according to the old stories guarded Vesta's chastity against the advances of Priapus.

Almost 2700 years ago, the wise Numa Pompilius, second king of Rome, established the worship of Vesta and initiated the practice of honoring Her with the Vestalia in June. The Vestalia has, since its beginning, been a time of purification and rededication. The exceedingly pure Vestal Virgins offered pure, clean water to Vesta and rekindled the eternal flame of the sacred hearth at this time of year. So, let us likewise rekindle the eternal flame within our hearts and minds and rededicate ourselves to the human community and let the Grove rededicate itself to living out its druid principles and Virtues.

Women who wish to make offerings to Vesta in her temple during the Vestalia usually offered sacrifices of simple food, borne on a platter. When doing so, women went barefoot. Only women (and the Pontifex Maximus) were allowed in the temple of Vesta.

So, we honor the ancient way, and only women will offer to cakes to Vesta today.

[A tray of cakes is passed so each woman attendee can take one to offer to Vesta – without touching it with their hands, but using a "platter"]

[cakes are offered in the "Temple of Vesta"]

ARIEL: Vesta Mater, Shining Lady, Unite us all with love and peace. Queen of the hearth, your household is here, help us to remember you in all fires and flame.

Main Offering

MIKE:

We will now purify the hearth and rekindle the fire. As we are performing this act, please, contemplate the deeper meaning of rekindling the fire within yourselves.

KAILA

*Light a candle from the lamp of Vesta. Offer water. Gently smother the lamp.
Using flame from the candle, rekindle the lamp.*

Now, with the hearth fire burning brightly, let us resolve to let its loving light shine out through our lives to every person and to every living creation in the world. Let us rededicate ourselves to our personal core principles...

Let us continue to seek to promote growth, encourage stability, maintain harmony, develop religious tradition, and encourage all to love one another as siblings...

Let us accept as our own the vitality of Pagan Rome...

Let us reaffirm the inherent worth of each member of the human family and welcome into our fellowship all who come willingly and affirm this covenant...

Let us again acknowledge the underlying Unity (of all) which gives birth to diversity and the web of life which connects all things to one another...

Let us again recognize the individual's link to the Whole

Let us again acknowledge an underlying unity of truth and affirm to respect apparent differences in the beliefs of others.

Let us reaffirm the right of conscience in all matters of morality and ethics and hold to the ideal of virtue in our dealings

Let us continue to work together to build communal faith and worship, as we seek to honor the gods and forces of nature together, while allowing each individual to search freely and responsibly for truth...

Let us again acknowledge the need for community in religious life.

May we live up to our lofty goals!
O gods, Guide us along our path!
(all) gods, Guide us along our path!

Homeric Hymn to Vesta

ARIEL

Come, Vesta,
To live in this beautiful home.
Come with warm feelings of friendship.
Bring your intelligence,
Your energy and your passion
To join us with your goodwill.
Burn brightly at my hearth.
Burn always in my soul.
You are welcome here.
I remember you.

Piacular Offering

MIKE:

[adoratio as altar is approached]

Vesta Mater,

Gods and Goddesses,

Holy Ancestors,

Spirits of this place:

If anything that we have done here has offended you,

If anything we have done here has been incomplete,

If anything we have done here has not been in the proper manner,

Accept these final offerings in recompense.

With this *incense* I ask forgiveness and expiate my fault.

Taking of the Omen:

ARIEL: So we have given of our love and our wealth
To the Kindred, that they may know our devotion.

Now let our voices arise on the Focus
Let our voices sound in the Mundus
Let our words pass through the Arbor.

May we open to the Kindreds,
Asking what blessings they offer us in return
And the needs they have of us.

RUSSELL *performs divination*

The Blessings – Return Flow

ARIEL *holds the blessing cup.*

MIKE: Ancient and Mighty Ones, we have honored you

We pray you honor us in turn
For a gift calls for a gift.
Hear your children:
NUMINA LUCENTIA, AQUAE DATIS!

Shining Ones, give us the Waters!
All: Shining Ones, give us the Waters!

Again, your children ask:
NUMINA LUCENTIA, AQUAE DATIS!

Shining Ones, give us the Waters!
All: Shining Ones, give us the Waters!

And thrice, your children ask:
NUMINA LUCENTIA, AQUAE VIVAE DATIS!

All: Shining Ones, give us the Waters of Life!
Shining Ones, give us the Waters of Life!

Hallowing the Blessing

MIKE:

Behold the holy Cup of Magic
The outpouring of Blessing from the Great Ones
When we share the draught of the Gods
We drink in wisdom, love and strength
To do as we will in the worlds
In service to the Shining Ones.

Hear us great ones:
Hallow these waters!

ECCE AQUAE VIVAE!

Behold the Waters of Life!
All: Behold the Waters of Life!

Affirmation of the Blessing

ARIEL says:

"Children of the Earth, the Kindreds have given us true and wonderous blessings.
Do you accept the gifts of the Kindreds?"

All: "We accept the gifts of the Kindreds!"

Song: *Pour the Waters* by Ian Corrigan

[Sing through once, then soft drumming so voices can be heard as
The cup is shared by all present as they will]

Thanking the Kindred

PD: The Great Ones have blessed us.
With joy in our hearts,
Let us carry the magic from our sacred Grove
Into our lives and our work.

Each time we offer to the Powers
They become stronger
And more aware of our needs and our worship.

So now as we prepare to depart
Let us give thanks
To all those who have aided us.

[each person thanks as they invoked]

To those gods and allies who those present called upon, we say,
GRATIAS VOBIS AGIMUS!
All: We thank you!

To all those Powers that have aided us,
GRATIAS VOBIS AGIMUS!
All: We thank you!

[Those Druids who invoked the spirits shall thank them]

TESS: O Gods and Goddesses of elder days,
DEI. GRATIAS VOBIS AGIMUS!
All: We thank you!

ADDY: O Spirits of this land
NUMINAE ET INDIGITES, GRATIAS VOBIS AGIMUS!
All: We thank you!

RUSSELL: O Ancestors, our Kindred
MAJORES ET DI MANES, GRATIAS VOBIS AGIMUS!
All: We thank you!

TESS: Phoebus Apollo
For you inspiration *ad lib*
GRATIAS TIBI AGIMUS!
All: We thank you!

KEN: Mars Silvanus
For your protection *ad lib*
GRATIAS TIBI AGIMUS!
All: We thank you!

SARAH: Mother of all
To you we return all we leave unused
Uphold us now in the world as you have in our rite.
Terra Mater, GRATIAS TIBI AGIMUS!

All: We thank you!

Return unused portion of cup to the ground

Final Offering to Vesta

[Make a final offering of incense to the sacrificial fire, which is left to burn out on its own.]

ARIEL: Vesta Mater, Queen of the hearth,
Who by rights receives the last,
Bless and guard all those who worship you
Whether in their home or without
Whether alone or with others
Whether thinking of you or engaged in business.
Lady of Fire, receive this offering.

Closing the Gates

ARIEL: Now by the Keeper of Gates and by our magic We end what we began.

MIKE: Ianus Clusivius, closer of doors,
For your presence and power
Your guiding and guarding we say...
GRATIAS TIBI AGIMUS!

All: We thank you!

Now let the Focus be but a flame;
Let the Mundus be an urn [or whatever you're using];
Let the Arbor be only a tree.

Let all be as it was before...

PORTAE CLAUDANTUR!

All: Let the Gates be closed!

Grounding and Recentering

ARIEL:

Once again, we have continued in our traditions, honoring the Gods, Ancestors and Nature Spirits, just as in times of old. We have made offerings to our Kindreds and received their blessings in return.

But great energy has been raised within us this day! Let us be grounded once more. *lead final grounding.*

Benediction

The Flamen then turns and steps away from the altar, and with his left hand in a gesture of liberalitas, his right hand raised to the sky manus supina, he says:

[Ariel (English) D1 and Mike (Latin) D2]

[D1] Nil amplius vos hodie posco, superi, satis est.

[D2] No more, Gods on High, do I ask of You today; it is enough.

[D1] Ilicet. Di deaeque omnes, superi atque inferi, vos semper ament et felicitam volunt.

[D2] Thus it is done. May all the Gods and Goddesses above and below always love you and wish you happiness in all that is good.

[D1] Vadete in pace Deorum

[D2] Go now in the peace of the Gods.

[D1] Di immortales faciant, tam felix quam pia.

[D2] May the immortal Gods make it so, as fortunate as it is pious.

MIKE: As we started, so let us end.

Sounding the tones ends the rite (3x3)

MIKE: Go now, Quirites
In peace and blessings
The rite is ended!