

Daily Devotional Practice

By Linda Costello

As members of a neo-pagan fellowship, we don't have weekly services to attend, as a rule. Therefore it is incumbent upon each of us to maintain our own sense of piety in between rituals. In my own practice, I like to spend time in a daily devotional.

Each of us can do so, and I contend that this act keeps us in touch with our deities, ancestors, and allies of this world. In addition, there are benefits that we don't realize. Just the act of entering into a devotional state of mind does much to reduce stress. For me, that point of reconnection results in an outflow of love and appreciation for those powers that bless my life. Being in such a state is a positive experience that reverberates throughout my day.

Each morning, I begin my practice with the lighting of the candle – my hearth candle. As I do so, I say the FoDLA prayer:

I kindle this flame for the hearth, for the home, for the whole of the people. One flame for light, one flame for warmth, one flame to encircle us all. Earth under heaven, heaven down to earth, This day and every day, May it be so.

May I pray with a good fire.

As the Ancestors have done in times before, I honor the Gods in the old ways, That my hearth and my heart may give cheer.

To the light, to the warmth, to the circle of my flame, be welcome all true powers, and hear my prayer:

May I be strengthened in the way of study

May I be strengthened in the way of piety

May I be strengthened in the way of hospitality.

This my will, these my words, so my works, and by this offering,

May it be so.

I light a stick of incense off of the flame, and I use that to light a candle in an oil burner. To the oil burner, I offer various scented oils to the powers as I continue with my daily devotional.

Each of us must find the way to make offerings, as this is very much an offertory practice. For me, the oil burner works. Others may prefer offering libations into a pot of earth, or even setting aside an offering bowl to be burned or offered to the earth later.

Once I have my oil burner lit, I make offering to the Source of All, and I offer a drop of water to a vessel that I keep for that purpose. After that, I offer to the Goddess of Inspiration, so that my words carry weight and effectiveness. Then I offer to the Lady of

the Land, followed by a call to peace in each of the directions. After a bit of sage and juniper smudge to purify myself, I make offerings to the Sidhe King who stands between the worlds. After that, I make offerings to the allies of this world, the beloved ancestors, and the sacred shining ones. And then I pray.

I have a small container on my altar that contains silver and a few other sacred objects. This container represents to me a connection to all of those who I hold near and dear to my heart. I hold it in my hand as I name each person to whom I am sending blessings.

After this, I do some affirmations, and then sit in the silence for awhile, contemplating the flame. When it feels right, I snuff the flame in the oil burner as well as the candle on my altar.

When one is doing a daily practice, it need not be as elaborate as that. Often just the lighting of the candle and the reciting of the prayer is quite enough. What's most important is connecting with the powers every day, in whatever way works for you.

Be creative. Enjoy the time you get to spend with the powers. It is a real gift to have that presence in your life.