

Imbolc Blessings

By Linda Costello

"Lady Brigid, Goddess of Inspiration, Keeper of Hearth and Forge; Lead me in the ways of Truth and Beauty. May my words and thoughts be fit, and so my heart."

As I was saying my daily devotional prayers this morning, I paused as I recited the familiar praise to Brigid, and remembered that it is Imbolc. As a result, I spent extra time contemplating my short prayer and what it means to me, especially today.

In my mind, Imbolc is intertwined with an awareness and celebration of Brigid, and as I sat and watched the flickering flame on my altar, Inspiration was upon me. I knew that I also needed to burn a candle on my hearth in honor of Her.

My Hearth – the center of my home. I sit with my desk facing a large stone fireplace in our family room, just so I am ever inspired by that which truly is the center of our home, even if we aren't as dependent upon it for warmth of food as in days of old. The Hearth still stands for the place where I am safe with family, the center of our stillness, the love that binds.

The Forge to me represents the lessons, the challenges that forge us into being our very best. The impurities are burned away and the metal is made malleable so that it can be formed into the useful tool or trinket that it was meant to be, just as I am molded and formed into the best being that I am meant to be. So, acknowledging the hand of Brigid at the Forge of my life is expressing deep gratitude for the tempering that must happen if I am to grow into a greater being that offers more value and service to the world.

I thought again of the words of my prayer. Brigid, the goddess of Inspiration, is one who inspires my appreciation of Beauty and Truth, and then inspires me with the words to express those two great ideologies.

Beauty is an expression of the feeling I get when I behold a scene in nature, or listen to a sweet refrain, or even notice a deed or a concept or idea, that stirs in me a feeling of deep appreciation for its existence. The cheerful sound of bird song at dawn, the sight of poppies swaying in the breeze by the side of the road, the vast expanse of deep blue sky on a crisp autumn day, the haunting melody of a minuet or the clear trill of a well-played harp... or perhaps even a lofty idea that resonates with me, such as living in a world of harmony and good-will; all of these things make me feel grateful to be alive, even as they inspire me.

Truth is that relentless search for foundational basis of anything. To live in Truth is to be open to discovering another piece of information that needs to find its way into the gestalt of my life, even if it means changing my perception of what is, which often happens. Truth is inspiring because the more we know, the more we grow, and the more we have to share with others, to help them gain a more accurate view of reality.

And so I ask to be led in the ways of Truth and Beauty. I ask to be inspired by the upwelling of gratitude that can so fill me at times, and I ask for the accurate perspectives and foundational principles behind my own worldview.

I ask that my words and thoughts be fit. Formerly, I asked only that my words be fit; to be sure that the words I utter, the words I write, bring well-being to all that hear or read them.... Well-being borne of Truth and Beauty! I have come to realize that unless my very THOUGHTS are as fit, are filled with well-being for both myself and for others, then there is no way that my words would reflect the fitness that I truly wish for others. It starts with my thoughts. And so, I ask for Brigid's blessing upon my thoughts, that they are worthy of being shared, both with myself and with others, and of course, with the gods.

Finally, I ask that my heart also be fit, and I do so literally as well as figuratively. I ask that I do what is needed to keep my body fit, for a healthy body ensures a healthy heart, and it is the heart that is the lifeblood of my existence on this planet in a corporeal body.

However, even beyond my physical health, I pray for the ability to keep my love and compassion foremost in my dealings with others, ever remembering our interconnectedness, and that the best I can do for someone is love them. Love takes many shapes; sometimes hard love, sometimes soft and sweet, but always, foremost is my fervent desire for the well-being of others, as well as myself.

May my heart be strong and fit. May my thoughts and words inspire. May Brigid rest her sweet blessing upon my home and upon the homes of my loved ones.

May the deep beauty of Imbolc and the hand of Brigid be upon you this day and throughout the year ahead.