

February 2nd Brigid's Day/Imbolc/Candlemas
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Brigid is a Celtic name for the Great Goddess who appears in the Triple Goddess form (Maiden, Mother and Crone). On this particular day, she appears in white as the bride enticing the youthful Sun God to her. Her color is white; her symbols are fire, cornhusks and deep wells. Her name means “the bright one” and in the Breton culture she is called Blaise from which we get the term “blaze” for fire. In the Roman pantheon, this month is dedicated to Februa, the goddess of fresh starts. Brigid is associated with fertility, creativity (especially home crafts), metallurgy, healing and the protection of children. She is above all, the Goddess of transformation, as the world is transforming itself into spring. Three transformations are especially associated with Brigid, 1) ideas into art, 2) metal into something useful and 3) the power of healing energy to transform the body.

The seasons reflect the laws of the universe in action. As we join in the ancient practice of aligning ourselves with the energy of the seasons, we tap into the wisdom of our Ancestors. The ancient Goddess cultures understood that our sexuality (which is called Kundalini in Sanskrit) is an important expression of the life force energy. The life force survives because of its ability to transform and in its highest expression, our sexuality is a powerful force for healing and transformation. Therefore, it is appropriate to celebrate the awakening of our sexuality on the eve of spring's awakening.

Imbolc means womb or ewe's milk (for the time when pregnant ewe's would begin to lactate), the promise of new life forming. It is a time when the seasons change—the Goddess is slowly turning the wheel of the year from winter back to spring. The life force is not yet apparent, but is beneath the soil, gestating. Yet we feel the yearning for the warmth of spring. Therefore this time is associated with things unseen, a time to focus on the unseen potentialities in a situation.

Candlemas is a thinly disguised version named by the Catholic Church for this ancient quarter day celebration. Many cultures all over the world recognize this day and light candles to lure back the Sun—in the north it is still cold but the sun begins to warm the earth in preparation for the seeds to germinate. Our groundhog day is a secular weather divination ritual, yet newscasters report the phenomenon every year. It is a remnant of the ancient celebration and testimony to the significance of this time.

It is especially important to focus on the healing of the spirit that may have been wounded in our past. With the help of the Great Goddess, we can tap into the healing force within and banish our inner shadows. We can symbolically purge the heart of its troubles. It is good to write down that which we choose to purge and burn the paper in order to let it go. As the cauldron is another ancient symbol of Brigid, we can use it as the “burning bowl” to banish our shadows. In addition, placing a bowl filled with water next to candles so that we see the light reflected in the water is a powerful way to honor her. Visualizing our dreams and goals using these symbols on our altars can lead to a fresh start for this time of the turning of the seasons.

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