

A Solitary Valentine's Ritual 2015

While Valentine's Day is still vaguely connected to the various historical Saints named Valentine, the holiday and the associations have morphed over time, shedding the martyr for something more commercialized – perhaps even combined with vague Roman Pagan celebrations. And, while the serious commercialization of the holiday began in England with the advent of mass produced love cards, it is most assuredly the American Dollar who has most influenced the celebration and spread it around the world. As with Santa Claus, Valentine fits into the modern American polytheistic pantheon. And, since the Saint has little to no connection to romantic love, we have little to concern ourselves with the similarity of name.

1. Initiate the Rite

Ring a small hand bell or clap hands 9 times in sets of three, taking a long deep breath after each set.

2. Purification

Wipe hands on wet towel, direct incense smoke over your head and say, "May the Waters purify my body; May the Fire ignite my spirit."

3. Earth Mother

Take a moment to consider Mother Nature. Press your fingers into the soil of Her dish. Say, "First and Foremost, Patron and Host: From your starry womb I have come. And, to Your dark, cold breast I shall someday return. Until then, I am as a seed. May I grow in Your embrace." Place (grain) in offering dish and say, "Mother Nature, with this gift, I honor you."

4. Purpose

Say, "I am here to strengthen my relationships with the Kindreds, and most especially to share in the *Ghosti exchange with the Love Granter, Valentine. May I be blessed in this endeavour."

5. Cosmos

Say, "I call to Columbia, first in this land, founder and mother of America. Come, aide me as I recall and renew the Cosmos!" Place (beads) in offering dish.

Take a meditative couple of moments to envision the beginning of the universe, then begin by saying, "First, there was darkness." Dowse any lit candles on the altar. "And in the dark, the water flowed." Pour water into Well bowl/pot. "Above the water, the first storm formed. And lightening brought the impetus that quickened into life." Dab water onto tree/vertical symbol. "But when the Lightening touched life, it became Fire." Light candle or incense briquette. "As it was in the Beginning, so it is Now: Land, Sea, and Sky. Thus, the Cosmos is renewed!"

6. Open Gates

Place a hand above the Well and, envisioning, say, "Waters of the earth, flow and turn. Form the whirlpool, a watery tunnel reaching down to the Land of the Dead."

Place a hand before the Fire and, envisioning, say, "Fire from the skies above, twist and burn. Form the Fire whirl, a flaming tunnel reaching up to the Land of the Gods." Touch first the base, then the top of the tree and say, "From the roots to the crown, let this grow as the World Tree until it spans the distance between the realms."

Touch each Hallows one more time, saying, "As they have formed, so it is. The Ways are open!"

Light tea lite near world tree and say, "O, Chain-breaking Guardian of Freedom, I call to you: Sword-wielding Heroine, Torch Bearing Guide of Reason, and Fierce Straddler of Boundaries are you. O, Splendid, Bright, Glorious Torch-bearer, come! Accept this gift and be Welcome here." Place (chain links) in offering dish.

Say, "Lady Liberty, the Ways stand open. As first through them, I ask that you stand here at the Crossroads as guardian. Keep watch, Torch-bearer, that the Fire doesn't burn out of control, that the Water does not rise into a flood, that the tree stands firm between the realms, and that nothing passes through these Ways whose intent is one of harm."

7. Invite Kindreds

Address ancestor symbol, saying, "I call to all those who have gone before: Blood Kin, Heart Kin, and Hearth Kin. Ancestors, you are welcome here!" Place (loose tea) in offering dish.

Address Spirits symbol, saying, "I call to all those Spirits who are tied to this land: Clever denizens of the home and habited spaces, secret denizens of the wild lands, crafty denizens of the seas, and swift denizens of the sky. Nature Spirits, you are welcome here!" Place (shiny button and thimble of alcohol) in offering dish.

Address deity symbol, saying, "I call to those Deathless ones who share this Cosmos: All you who Live above me, in the Earth and in the Sea. Known and unknown, Deities All, you are welcome here!" Place (shot of alcohol) in offering bowl.

Take a few moments to bask in the presence of the many Kindreds.

8. Key Offerings

Say, "Mighty Kindreds, thank You for being here with me. Now, there is one among you to whom I wish to give special attention today. Won't you join me in welcoming the Guest of the Occasion?"

Check your offerings and then begin the invitation with:

<p>"No Eros are You, Though archer You be, O, white-winged youth Of cupidity!</p> <p>Your passionate words, A Hallmark of hues, Are rose's deep reds And violet's blues.</p> <p>And romance and lust Are each Your domain Yet both dart-pierced hearts Bleed crimson the same.</p>	<p>So, knowing the score (The promise or pain), I call to You now, Invite You by name:</p> <p>Come dove-girt Love Child, O Diapered Divine! I open my heart To You, Valentine!"</p>
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Hold out offering and say, "Oh, Heart Stirrer, accept this sacrifice and be welcome at my shrine!" Place offering and light candle for deity.

9. Prayer of Sacrifice

Spend time with the BotO: sing a love song, read a poem or story, go on a guided meditation, do a full spread reading in conversation with Valentine. When you have

finished, take up main offering and say, "O Valentine, you are the original Heart Throb. Remember me as you let your darts fly, but be kind. Cradle my heart, sooth it and enflame it, as You do what You do best. For all that You are and all that You share, I give you this offering:" Place main offering and say, "Heart Keeper, accept my sacrifice!"

10. Omen

Pull ritual omen as usual.

11. Calling for Blessings

Take up blessing vessel and say, "Oh, Valentine and all you Kindreds who have joined me today, as I have given You praise and sacrificed to You, now I ask that You would Bless me in return."

12. Hallow Blessings

Touch blessing vessel to water in well and say, "Ancestors, I reach through the whirlpool to You that You may fill this vessel to overflowing with Your Blessings."

Touch blessing vessel to soil or tree and say, "Spirits of Nature, I offer this [cup] out to You that You may fill it to overflowing with Your Blessings."

pass blessing vessel over fire/candle and say, "All you Deities, I reach through the Fire-whirl to You that You may fill this vessel to overflowing with Your Blessings."

Hold blessing vessel out to image/candle of BotO and say, "Valentine, I offer this vessel to You that You may fill it to overflowing with Your Blessings."

13. Affirmation

Hold the blessing vessel up and wait. Let the vessel be filled, until you feel the weight of it. Behold, the Blessed Waters. Bring the vessel to you and then say, "Valentine, mighty Kindreds, I am here before You and accept these Blessings in Honor and Friendship. Thank You!" Partake of the Blessings.

14. Workings

Possible workings include a prognostication for love/a mate, a magical working to improve an existing relationship, etc

15. Thank Beings

Say, "My rite draws to an end and so I must bid You all farewell until next we speak."

"O, Valentine, thank you for being mine, even for a little time. Accept this parting gift, given without expectation." Place offering. "Valentine, I thank you." Douse candle you lit for Valentine.

"Shining Deities, thank you for attending me today. Please, accept this parting gift, given without expectation." Place offering. "Shining Ones, I thank you."

"Noble Spirits of nature, thank you for attending me today. Please, accept this parting gift, given without expectation." Place offering. "Noble Ones, I thank you."

"Ancient Ancestors, thank you for attending me today. Please, accept this parting gift, given without expectation." Place offering. "Ancient Ones, I thank you."

16. Close Gates

Address Liberty's candle, saying, "O Chain Breaker, my rite is come to an end and soon the Ways must close. I would bid you farewell, then, as I have the Others. Before you go, let me Thank You for Keeping the Ways with this gift." Place offering.

"Now, Lady Liberty, this final gift is just for you, a parting gift, given without expectation." Place offering. "Liberty, I thank you."

Address the tree, saying, "Let the reaching subside. Let this be but a plant once more. Yet, let the World Tree grow in my heart always." Touch the leaves gently.

Address the Fire Way, saying, "Let the fire-whirl collapse. Let the flame be no more. Yet let it burn in my heart always." Douse flame.

Address the Well Way, saying, "Let the whirlpool disperse. Let the well be no more. Yet let it flow in my heart always." Pour water back into storage container. Touch each item in turn one last time and affirm, "The Ways are closed. But I am connected to them always."

17. Thank EM

Say, "First and Foremost, Patron and Host: Always honored, First and Last. Mother Nature, I know Your blessings every day. Still, before this rite closes, I would like to say one more time, Thank You!" Pour final offering into dish.

18. Closing

Douse any remaining candles, smother any smoldering charcoal. Ring bell or clap hands 9 times as at the beginning of the rite. Say, "So be it, this rite is ended."