Diana

(Beltane)

*. In spring She comes to power, when the red of Her moonbloods come . . .*

**This day celebrates the bleeding and flowering of the Maiden, the menarche of the**

**Kore becomes Diana, or comes of age and is now her virgin self.**

**To truly appreciate this holy day, try to go back to the time when women's blood**

**was adored and used for its potent life-sustaining qualities. When a woman began to bleed, she was honored and declared of value and importance to the tribe. Special rituals of initiation were performed—private ones for the women only, and public ones with the entire community. The blood of a woman meant blessings from the goddess and the assurance of life's continuation. It was considered a great gift. Like fruit and flowers of plants, the woman bleeding was the woman flowering. Blood was publicly displayed, used for anointing, and ritually poured into the earth to aid growth of the crops.**

**May Day is the familiar holiday that falls near Beltane, celebrated with the Maypole dance. The phallic emphasis is obvious here. It is another example of the lack of female symbolism in patriarchal rituals. Meanwhile, our once glorified blood and genitals have become a source of secret shame and suffering. This holy day has special significance as a political tool to reclaim and heal our blood powers.**

**Like all the mysteries of the flesh, blood power is psychic as well as biological. It adds intensity and life force to spells, promises, and bonds. Beltane season is a good time**

 **to save our blood and anoint ourselves or one another during the ceremonies. ,**

**The violent sacrifices of people and animals were done for this purpose, for people knew there was power in the blood. But the blood of woman is peaceful, and can be** *171*

**as highly charged by her ecstatic dance as that of an animal who has died violently (See discussion on blood in Luna.)**

**In preparation for Beltane, think about your own experience with moon flow. Has it been painful? What significance can you find in this for yourself, knowing honor our blood was once given? Do some planning with your moon calendar, so you can catch and save your moonblood in time for the ritual. The best method I have found is to wear a diaphragm during moonflow. The bowl shape and rubbery material work well as a receiver of fluid. Put your blood into a special bottle and store in refrigerator. Cold keeps blood from coagulating. (If you are concerned about AIDS and prefer not to use blood, red wine or juice can be substituted. Or if for some reason you don't get a chance to catch your moonflow, use wine or juice.) Place some in closed container upon your altar a week or so ahead of time, to charge it up.**

**This ritual can also be performed outdoors, perhaps in a grove in the w Remember that outdoor ritual spaces need to be private and good for dancing freely. Also be sure about fire safety if you plan to build a fire. If these factors are a problem it would be better to have your ritual where it is safe and you will not be interrupted**

**Adorn the altar in red: red flowers, red draperies, red candles. Make garlands of leaves and red flowers for each woman to wear. Wear red clothing, body paint, jewelry, etc. Prepare red foods: rhubarb, beets, radishes, apples, red beans, can red potatoes, berries, strawberries, red wine, red cabbage, fruit juices, etc. I have great success with a sauté of mixed vegetables that included finely cut beet slices. Color from the beets made everything a deep wine red!**

**Mix everyone's blood in a ritual bowl and place upon the altar.**

**- Begin with a procession into the ritual area, wearing garlands, ringing bells
singing as you come. Two priestesses remain at the site and form a doorway for** iii **to enter through into the circle. Chant:**

**Blessed be the Maiden within me**

**For she bringeth courage and freedom**

**Blessed be the Mother within me**

**For she bringeth love and life**

**Blessed be the Crone within me**

**For she bringeth wisdom and understanding . . .**

**All are blessed at the entrance with a kiss from each priestess and words of**

**welcome. All take their seats in the circle. Close your eyes, breathe, center, raise the cone with the chanting of maiden**

**goddesses' names: Diana, Kore, Artemis, Persephone, Iris, Ngame, and othe Invocation—Priestess lights the candles on the altar, saying:**

**All around us the Good Earth is blooming**

**Diana has adorned her hair with fragrant flowers**

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11)

The Maiden comes into her own Self

True self

Wild self

Free self

Behold the Maiden who has grown to this splendor

Behold the Maiden who brings us the promise

,

Of life and love and laughter ...

*All:* Hail Diana!

Blood ceremony—A priestess takes up the bowl of blood and holds it aloft,

This is the blood that promises life

The essence of She Who Bleeds Yet Does Not Die

Blessed is the blood of woman

*All:* Blessed is the blood of woman

*Priestess:* There's power in the blood of woman
*All:* There's power in the blood of woman
*Priestess:* There's life in the blood of woman
*All:* There's life in the blood of woman
There's love, there's magic, etc.

(Chant can be improvised, added to, and so on.
Other voices can take the lead.)

During the chanting the priestess goes around anointing each woman in the

e by painting a moon or pentacle (be creative) upon their brows.

Chant evolves into affirmations spoken around the circle:

We are women reclaiming that which was taken from us.

We are women reclaiming our blood and its powers.

No more will they have us believe it ugly or shameful,

Or unclean .

Praise the goddess in us that bleeds

Praise the goddess in us that gives life

Praise the goddess in us that loves

(Continue, add more, improvise . ..)

Priestess returns bowl to altar and resumes her seat during the above.

*All chant:* As a babe in blood I am born

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As a maid with blood I flow

As woman in blood I birth

And from blood the milk doth go

With age comes the ending of blood

And the shadow of death I know . . .

Telling of blood stories: The women pass the rattle and share their experience with blood: what their first flow was like, whether it was celebrated or kept hidden; whether it was painful or whether it still is, etc.

*Priestess:* Behold the Maiden now comes into full bloom

She is Virgin, Whole Unto Herself

We are Virgin, Whole Unto Ourselves

The Maiden bleeds but does not die

The Maiden flowers and will bear fruit

Behold the free wild and strong woman

Who belongs to no one

Behold the bright maiden

Warrior Woman, Amazon Woman

Risk-taking woman, Free-spirit woman

Let her strength be our strength

*All:* Let her strength be our strength

(Her power be our power, her beauty be our beauty, etc.)

Amazing feats: The rattle is passed to those who have strengths and successes to share. Some may have had a liberating or joyful experience in life, some may skills to show, or something they have created, some may have accomplished political work, etc. All members support and celebrate with praise and cheers and blessings.

Close with the following chant, rise and sway, holding one another around the circle:

I am whole unto myself
Centered in the Kore of me
I shall give and shall receive
Goddess goddess loves me

Ground and center, open the circle, feast and celebrate!

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