

## THE HOLIDAYS

We will see an abundance of the holidays of the Blessed Virgin in this month under the constellation of Virgo.

### August 1

#### LAMMAS: FESTIVAL OF THE NEW BREAD (CELTIC)

Lammas (Old English "Loaf Mass") is a festival of regeneration dedicated to the inventors of agriculture. Women and men celebrate the Goddess as the source of life and offer her the first ears of corn. In Hungary, public tables, on which are placed lovely new loaves of white bread and glasses of wine, are set up on the crossroads.

The festival is connected with the movement of the soul between the worlds. Our Lady of the Gates is the goddess who guides our souls from one life to the next. This is one of the witches' high holidays, opposite the feast of Brigid on the wheel of life.

August is the month of fulfillment, the first harvest of the year, and the manifestation of abundance. Since anthropologists believe women invented agriculture, this is a very feminine festival. The planting of the seeds and harvesting of the grain is a wondrous achievement. History changed when woman planted the first seedlings.



### August 1

#### GREEN CORN CEREMONY (NATIVE AMERICAN)

Rituals such as the green corn ceremony were characteristic of Native American harvest festivals, during which certain tribes of the South, notably the Creek, gave thanks for their plentiful harvest and beseeched the gods for continued prosperity. This joyful celebration was held each summer when the roasting corn ears were ripe enough to eat.

Among the Hopi, who use corn pollen and corn meal extensively in their rituals, the corn mother is represented by "a perfect ear of corn whose tip ends in four full kernels."\* She is not only present at what are called "maize festivals," but also at childbirth, standing there for the Mother Goddess herself.

### August 2

#### LAMMAS (CELTIC)

The old festival of Lammas has a special meaning for witches. It is the cross-quarter holiday commemorating the miracle of rebirth, the everlasting grace that follows when the Goddess is remembered properly with gifts of the harvest—corn, apples, grapes—and with feasting. The county fairs with their competitions for the largest zucchinis or pumpkins are all remnants of the ancient celebrations of prosperity and the wealth of the earth.

\*Ake Hultkranz, "The Religion of the Goddess in North America," in *The Book of the Goddess*, ed. by Carl Olson (New York: Crossroad, 1985), 212.