

Summer: Pentecost, Saint John's Eve, Mary's Blessing of the Herbs

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PENTECOST

50 days after Easter: The effusion of the Holy Ghost, who is supposed to induct the followers of Christ into the whole truth; beginning of the Christian Church.

Pentecost 50 days after Easter (since the 3rd century independent feast)

Themes: promise – satisfaction – sending = high point and new beginning!

Effusion of the Holy Ghost manifests itself through **bursts of wind** and **tongues of flame**. The disciples **speak in tongues** and excitedly recount God's great deeds (themes of uniting of nations, being able to understand each other; counterpart to the confusion of languages at the tower of babel).

Sermon of Peter: Working of the Ghost in the form of **dreams, visions, predictions**. Jesus is the promised Messiah, who was been resurrected from the dead. **3000 are baptised**. This is the beginning of the mission, a **first Christian community** emerges (birthday of the 'Christian Church'). For that reason Pentecost is also the feast of the following of Christ in community. However, an independent Christian church only came into existence from 70 AD onwards. The first followers of Christ had a Jewish identity and did not intent to build their own religion, but wanted to convince their fellow Jews that Jesus was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. Only after that hope did not come true after a while and synagogues were closed to Jewish-Christians, an independent Christianity was created.

Note: In the gospel of John the effusion of the ghost already takes place at the first appearance of Jesus after his death (when Thomas was absent). John 20,22.

Holy Ghost: Divine force of life, holy ghosts / spirits and angels are transmitters thereof, see: „Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire.[...]. Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?“ Hebrews 1,7 and 14.

Connections to the Spiritual World: The speaking of ghosts / spirits / angels to people was a self-evident truth to early Christians. See Acts 8,26 and 29; 10,1-8 and 22:

„Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip ...“

„Then the Spirit said to Philip ...“

„While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, ...“

„There was a certain man Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always. About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him...”

Workings of the Holy Ghost and Spiritual Gifts (see 1. Corinthians 12, 8-10 and 28!)

In our daily lives we often do not experience the working of the Holy Ghost directly, but again and again through inspiration, encouragement, comfort, realization in meditation, through dreams and vision, a few through clairaudience, clairsentience or clairvoyance or through people, who work as psychic medium / channel for messages from beyond. These speak in trance, through divine inspiration or writing medium. Also in case of healing we experience the working of the Holy Ghost.

According to Paul, we should eagerly strive for good ghosts (see for example 1. Corinthians 14,12), but also examine them (see Thessalonians 5, 19-21 and 1. John 4,1), because not all messages from the other side come from the side of good! The 'dead' should not be questioned; however this does not refer to the deceased in the heavenly realms, but the citizens and demons from the underworld, the realm of death, who are separated from God and therefore biblically dead (see Last Judgement at the end of the section on Easter).

Motive: Courage and enthusiasm (enth- from Greek entheos = spirit), inspiration, connection to the spiritual world, communication across language and other borders, unity through the working of the Holy Ghost / Holy Spirit who speaks all languages.

Disposition / Experience: Being touched and enthused, remain clear of mind, feel joy and positive energies, being able to be brave and free, but also feel accepted and understood, be comforted / accompanied / encouraged / called upon, being lead to the truth, being healed, find inner peace, experience connection to all life – even in nature.

Do: Fill others with an enthusiasm for the good, true and beautiful (hold a fiery speech, feel the sparks), stand up for something, mission, peace, break down border fences, make a common effort for a good and just cause, heal.

Pentecostal Citation for Encouragement:

I will not resign!

Our society can be healed through the connection between theoretical common sense of science and the practical common sense, the political moral and both with the preservation of the beautiful in art as well as the experience of the divine in religion. I will not resign. I strive. Each of us knows that he is only one of five billion people. One alone cannot change the world. However, each of us can at least find one thing in his one life that he can change, and through his example he will move another person to change as well. Calculate with me: I can convince one person per year to change. That person in turn can convince another person, and the two of them each another. After ten years that makes 1024 people, after 20 a million and after 30 a billion. That is enough, and proves that what we do is not in vain.

Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker (Physicist, 20th century, translation Aline Stotzer)

The name Pentecost is derived from the Greek 'pentekoste', the number 50.

Pentecost corresponds to the Jewish festival Shavuot: Memory of the revelation of the basic 10 Commandments as conclusion of the Exodus: Is seen as the hour of birth of Israel, the people of God. It was additionally the celebration of the harvest of barley, for which bread was brought to the temple (= pilgrimage to Jerusalem). Parallels to the Christian feast of Pentecost: Message and further revelations through the Ghost of truth on Pentecost and in the future, as well as the hour of birth of Christianity.

Symbols → experience, portray, create

Wind / Ghost, Hebrew Ruach, through which we experience the inspiration (Latin inspirare = inspire, kindle, enthuse). We are all connected through breath. Idioms with wind / air: Knock the wind out of somebody, breath of fresh air, floating on air. Idioms with spirit: be spirited, lift somebody's spirits, keep your spirits up. → The wind blows wherever it pleases. John 3,8.

Flame (tongues of flame) Cf. Idioms: Be on fire, get on like a house on fire, fire up somebody, an old flame, be enlightened, fiery passion. God shows himself in the form of flames. Examples: burning bush (2. Moses 3,2), Lord in flames on mount Sinai (2. Moses 19,18), column of fire preceding the people of Israel (2. Moses 13,21)

Angels or good ghosts have been carriers and bringers of divine messages and forces (fire, wind...) from the beginning. See: "Who makes His angels spirits And His minister a flame of fire [...] Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?" (Hebrews 1,7 and 14)

Doves, borrowed from the baptism in the Jordan River, since the council of Nicæa 325 AD symbol for the descent of the Holy Ghost, the voice of God or his messengers / ghosts / spirits / angels, for that reason in art sometimes depicted alongside the archangel Gabriel; cf. carrier pigeon! Symbol for love, peace (Noah story), sweet temper (Jesus: be clever as snakes but sweet as doves.) Appears in fairy tales as wise adviser / leader / helper (e.g. Ashputtel). In other cultures often a symbol of female divinity. Nature: male and female share the raising of the young (→ male and female in harmony and equality).

Water, with which the first 3000 Christians were baptised on Pentecost. See John the Baptist who only baptised with water, but predicted that his successor would baptise with fire and ghost (Pentecost) → baptism in the Jordan River = model for our Christian baptism to receive the Holy ghost according to Peter's sermon. Is a symbol of purification (purification baths were already known in the OT and many other

cultures, for example ritual hand washing before prayer in Islam, bathing in the holy river Ganges). Without water – no life. Christ described himself as the water of life, and transformed it into wine, walks across it, calms the storm. Circle of Water = metaphor for the path of the human soul: It comes from heaven, to heaven it rises, and return to earth it must [...] (Goethe)

Rainbow in all cultures connects heaven and earth and in the OT is a sign of the covenant between God and Earth (Noah story). In the rainbow the divine white light is refracted into many colours / languages / peoples / religions / qualities / strengths / virtues ... while at the same time uniting them as one.

Bridge spans across separation, connects two banks / sides.

The Gate (the open door) is symbolic of the gates of heaven and is an image for the open door of the heart towards all men, animals, plants and good spirits / angels.

Boat, image of the departure to new shores, wind for the sails!

Flowers particularly roses (fragrance of roses = "fragrance of heaven") open towards the heaven's sun and can be fertilized through their openness. They resemble our soul. It too can be bathed in sunshine through the divine and the Holy Ghost (and whoever appears in his name) and inspired / fertilized / receive gifts. Through that spiritual fruit can grow, which in turn bear the seeds to new life.

Nature: processes of fertilization/ growth and maturity are mirrored in the mutual fertilization and enthusiasm of Pentecost as well as the invisible spiritual life of nature (creatures of nature). Often times first roses and peonies are in bloom, which are reported to hold healing properties. Many insects can be observed (fertilization!) and summer thunderstorms with rainbows. Peasant weather lore: The weather on Pentecost decides the weather of the next six weekends.

Historical Information, Popular Belief, Customs and Further Ideas for Implementation:

In the early Christendom, active development of the so called Spiritual Gifts (see 1. Corinthians 12); later on Pentecost became a popular date for baptism, next to Easter; Imagination of the open gates of heaven and closed gates of hell (→ people who died on Pentecost were thought to be good people and could easily enter into heaven, people born on Pentecost were considered lucky); earlier several days off with celebrations and dances, fairs, Pentecost rides, Pentecost oxen (as prizes) until Wednesday of Pentecost! During mass divine doves were lowered from the ceiling, organs and choir boys imitated the sound of wind. Nowadays often Pentecostal excursions, days in the wood, Pentecost camp, hikes under the stars (cf. Jewish Pilgrimage to Jerusalem), dance celebrations, joyful celebration, games (game of tilt, catch-doves, puzzle stories,...), open-air theatre, festive decorations of gates and doors, birch trees in churches, recreated Pentecostal scenes with biblical figures, doves as decoration or bakery (bread, cookies), Pentecostal bouquets with roses or peonies, bread and cakes with rose decorations, evaporate rose fragrance for love / peace / reconciliation (for a cheaper but similar smell use scented-leaved pelargoniums), gifts of rose scented massage oil, exchange of dreams, visions, spiritual experiences.

Rituals: Secretly hang a paper dove with an accordion fold wing above the children's beds → write a surprise on the wing (for example a coupon for...). Folded paper flowers as gifts or table decoration → fill them with flower seeds or a gold thread, a wish or a saying, the meaning of their name, a coupon, an angel card. Exchange about things that inspire us (personal sources of joy) and with which we would like to inspire others → light a candle for it, or hang up a dove or a matching thread on a bow. Write Pentecostal wishes for the world on paper doves, fix them to balloons and let them fly. A circle of people, each holding a ribbon affixed to a ring in the middle dance to music.

Crafting ideas: Doves made of paper, felt*, wool, tin, clay, wax or white clay (which can be baked and used as aroma stone); use felting wool or ribbons to weave a flame into wire netting; felt an orange-red-yellow fire ball; sew patchwork cushions with the colours of flames, let fire coloured ribbons flutter in the wind (from branches, clotheslines, windows); cut a flame shape from paper, put a self-adhesive foil behind it and glue coloured tissue paper to it (window = image); craft place cards with Pentecost motives; carve natural flute from wood or other materials that create breathing or wind noises and tones; craft pin-wheels, use coloured wool to weave a rainbow bracelet (= symbol of strengths and virtues); mix a colour wheel from the basic colours, or use coloured clay to create 6-12 colours.

*Sew a white felt bird with pouches on the sides that can be filled with colourful feathers. They are symbols

of the heavenly luck that is given by the rainbow bird. Every child can pick one of the feathers and keep it.

Characters of the Colours (overview)

Red: will, strength, passion, creation, bravery, blood, embers, fight, anger, deed, power, forbidden, stop,...

Orange: vitality, warmth, pleasure, abundance, boisterousness, erotic, seduction, colour of passage...

Yellow: brightness, lightness, stimulation, nerves, think, speak, knowledge, focus...

Green: nature, recovery, balance, service, humility, patience, harmony, healing, hope...

Blue: calm, vastness, depth, longing, dreams, passivity, devotion, loyalty, trust, protection, support...

Purple: extravagance, mysticism, magic, sanctity, reverence, introspection, ceremony, dignity, earnest, Ti-Do,...

Working with Images of Nature and Art

Compare, discuss and or work with depictions of Pentecost and nature: Colour, paint over, cut off a small part from it, glue it on a white sheet as starting point and create a new image, collage from magazines and catalogues to a Pentecostal topic; place laminated prints of artwork in different places in nature and set the scene with materials from nature and perhaps fine gauze fabric (finally do a tour and admire).

MIDSUMMER – SAINT JOHN’S EVE

21. - 24. June: Summer solstice, Midsummer fire, Midsummer tree, Birthday of Saint John the Baptist, Elementals from myths and fairy tales animate nature

Saint John’s Eve – Midsummer, 24. June

Twofold festivities:

Summer solstice (Celtic-Germanic feast) and **birthday of Saint John the Baptist** (Christian anniversary). In the process of Christianisation both feasts were combined.

In the Middle Ages Saint John’s Eve-Midsummer was an important feast day. The importance shows for example in names of plants such as St John’s Wort and in German Johannisbeeren / currants, animals (firefly / Johanniskäfer) and popular sayings.

Today Saint John’s Eve is going through a renaissance in the church, schools and family. Some farms (particularly biological ones) invite their customers to a Saint John’s feast. In the Nordic and Baltic countries Saint John’s Eve-Midsummer is one of the most important feasts of the year. Even some Greeks celebrate Saint John’s Eve with a large fire. In Brazil, the São João-festival on the 23/24 of June is the largest celebration of the year.

Saint John’s Eve and Christmas are on opposite end of the Annual Cycle. Saint John’s birth on 24. June (when days grow shorter) and the birth of Jesus on 24. December (when days grow longer). Cf. Saint John’s speech befitting of the summer solstice: “He must increase, but I must decrease.” John 3,30. → The old time in the guise of Saint John, or respectively the reborn prophet Elijah (OT), encounter the new time in the guise of Jesus (NT), who will take over the workings of Saint John: Turning point!

Saint John the Baptist: Next to Jesus he was one of the most important figures in the **NT** and the first popular saint to be revered by Christians. His fiery sermons of conversion have awakened people to live justly, do good and in their ways of life prepare for the coming of the messiah. (cf. Luke 3,4-14). **Saint John baptised Jesus. This act later became the model of Christian baptism!** During his baptism Jesus is identified by the voice of God (in the form of a dove in the sky) as his son (note: You are my 'beloved' son also means that he is his 'only' son). After the baptism Jesus began his public workings, therefore it represented a 'baton exchange' from John to Jesus.

According to the prophesy of the OT (Malachi 3,1 and 22-24), **Saint John** is regarded as the **returned prophet Elijah**. Jesus himself points this out: Matthew 11,10-15.

Stages of the life of Saint John:

Saint John's birth is announced to his father Zachary during temple service by the angel Gabriel. He cannot believe it and loses the ability to speak, Luke 1,5-25. The pregnant Elisabeth (mother of John) is visited by her cousin Mary (mother of Jesus), Luke 1,39-56. Feast day: Visitation of Mary on 2. July and recently in the Catholic Church on 31. May. Saint John receives his name, Luke 1,57-66. As an adult, John retreated to the desert and feeds on wild honey and locusts, dressed in a mantle of camel hair and a leather belt, Mark 1,6. Subsequently he preaches about the coming of the kingdom of God and baptises all willing to convert in the river Jordan, Luke 3, 3-18

There he also baptises Jesus, who is identified by God's voice as his son, Mark 1,9-11.

Saint John chastises Herod Antipas on the ground of the latter having taken the wife of his brother, Mark 6,18-20.

He is arrested by Herod Antipas and is beheaded by the wishes of his stepdaughter Salome and her mother Herodias, Mark, 6,14-19. (The feast day of the beheading of Saint John is on 24. August.)

See also Matthew 3,1-17 and 11,1-18 and 14,1-12; Luke 3,19-22 and 9,7-9; as well as John 1,29-30 and 18.

Symbols (see Pentecost since to a large amount overlapping)

Dove: During the baptism in the river Jordan God's spirit shows itself in the form of a dove. She is a symbol of love, peace (Noah story), sweet temper (Jesus: be clever as snakes but sweet as doves.) since the council of Nicea 325 AD symbol for the descent of the Holy Ghost, the voice of God or his messengers / ghosts / spirits / angels, for that reason in art sometimes depicted alongside the archangel Gabriel; cf. carrier pigeon! Appears in fairy tales as wise adviser / leader / helper (e.g. Asputtel). In other cultures often a symbol of female divinity. Nature: male and female share the raising of the young (→ male and female in harmony and equality).

Fire: (Saint John's fire) is a symbol for Saint John, "the burning and shining lamp" John 5,35. Fire is a symbol for transformation, purgation and changing of ways. Saint John announces, that the Messiah will baptise with the Holy Ghost and fire (→ Pentecost). Fire used to be holy in many cultures (fire cults), for example in Zoroastrianism.

Water: Ritual cleansing and baths are known to all religions. The baptism of Saint John is a symbol for internal cleansing of the soul/ change of heart and prepares for the reception of the new life through Jesus Christ. Jesus described himself as the water of life (transforms it into wine, walks across it, calms the storm). → Without water no life, in a metaphorical sense applied to Christ himself. As we know today, water is the ultimate information carrier. The quality of water is not only influenced by measurable contents, but also through our thoughts, music, forms and flow patterns, which can be shown in the crystal shaped of frozen water. We are only on the cusp of discovering water's secrets.

Sun is representative of light and life. In many cultures it is a visible image or symbol of God; On the northern hemisphere Saint John's Eve-Midsummer takes place on the high point of the length of days and sunlight. Saint John prepares us for the working of the Messiah, who as 'light of the world' will reconnect us to the light and life in God. Through Christ the sun of God can shine within us.

Midsummer trees / Midsummer poles (often in the form of a cross with two flower wreaths on the side arms) is the equivalent of the Christmas tree / tree of life. The two wreaths can remind us of Saint John and Jesus.

Customs: Saint John's fire on 24. June or on the next weekend → dance around it, jump or even walk across it and leave the old behind; dance around the Midsummer tree or pole (mainly in Sweden); a Midsummer tree can also become a climbing tree (remove bark, possibly smear it with soap for difficulty, tie a wreath of presents to the top for the brave children); music for wind instruments, Saint John's Choir → sing together, make music, dance, organise games and competitions; wear Saint John's flower wreaths on the head and pick Saint-John's-wort bouquets*, possibly add fern; sweet grits or rice dishes with berries, berry cake, special Saint John's cheese (Latvia), Wort bread, Elderflower drinks, eat and drink Saint John's wine, make Saint-John's-wort oil*; look for fountains, sources or open waters (in some cases clean or decorate it) and splash each other with water, walk in a creek or take a Saint John's bath; look for / encounter nature spirits; take starlight hikes and dive into the mysterious atmosphere, look for constellations, possibly experience sunrise the next day. Similarly there is a custom of Saint John's water (cf. Easter water): In Lebanon the Christians put a bowl of water on their windowsills in the night of 6. January (original anniversary of the baptism in the Jordan). Saint John is supposed to walk by during the night and bless the water. On the next day it is used to bake for example a bread, which is supposed to strengthen everybody.

* Saint-John's-wort is supposed to be pain-killing, strengthening the nerves, lighten the mood / anti-depressive, energising, anticonvulsant, blood-purifying, and blood-refreshing. It can have such a strong effect, that it can weaken the effect of some medicine (e.g. immunosuppressives, blood thinners, certain HIV-medicine, contraceptive pill). Popular belief: Saint-John's-wort belongs to the magical summer solstice herbs. It was tied above the door to ward off demons and witches. As protection from thunder storms it was put on the roof or burned in the hearth. If put under the pillow it is supposed to bring informative, illuminating dreams. According to legend, the devil was so angered by the magical properties of the plant that he pierced its leaves (in French the plant is called 'millepertuis' = a thousand times pierced). He who rolls in Saint-John's-wort is supposed to 'have the sun in him' throughout the year = retain a sunny outlook.

Saint John's Saying:

Fire, catch all evil,
devour all jealousy and hate.
All falsehood shall you burn,
so we may live in peace.

Rituals: Light Saint John's fire at sundown. With that the force of the sun is supposed to be tied and return to the earth. If lit at this particular time, it is supposed to attract good ghosts and chase away evil ones. Around the Saint John's fire old quarrels should be buried and hands given in reconciliation. In the Christian context, the fire is reminiscent among others of the conversion sermons of Saint John the Baptist, of necessary decisions and purgation. Jumping or walking across Saint John's fire encourages us to let go of resistances to new or prejudices against something / someone. As with the Easter fire, in some regions part of the ashes or a part of the embers is taken home. It carries a piece of the magic of that night. The coal can be buried in garden mould, in the garden or the field.

Tie wishes into the Saint John wreaths or wish upon dishes / drinks; write something you'd like to get rid of on a piece of wood or a stone (throw the stone into the water, burn the wood in the Saint John's fire); take a ritual Saint John's bath → cf. conversion and admonition sermons of Saint John.

From the ashes of the Saint John's fire create kleckography: Mix the ash with water and perhaps some glue (more permanent), add a table spoon of the mixture on one half of the paper, fold / press, open and discover / divine symbols for the second half of the year. What does my path towards Christmas look like? What will I encounter? What should I look out for?

Crafts: Craft decorations for the door (green wreaths with dwarfs of felt flowers, sun from painted wood or other materials). Craft dwarfs from clay, wool, felt, fir cones, acorns, beechnut husks, snail shells or other natural materials. Craft elves from wool or silk, possibly hang on a ring. Create a magical wishing flower from raw wool or other materials and present together with ferns → what are our biggest treasures, and what are our wishes for them (see below in popular beliefs)?

Popular Beliefs:

During the time of Saint John's Eve the curtain to the invisible world of nature beings is parted, and they can be encountered. The first and last sip of Saint John's drink (honey beer, wine or elderflower drink) is supposed to be emptied on the floor behind oneself for the little folk. People can understand the language of animals, wishes and dreams come true. If Saint-John's-wort is put under the pillow, the future can be seen in dreams or possibly the future lover encountered. A mysterious fern flower blooms only during Saint John's Eve, and a treasure is buried under it (generally speaking Saint John's Eve is good for finding treasure). The treasure can only be lifted by one of pure heart. The brown fern seed (in actuality spores) is supposed to work miracles, and help make secret dreams come true. Some scatter it in shoes when they're walking during Saint John's Eve or put fern leaves under the mattress. The motives above are found in many midsummer night's fairy tales.

Creatures of Nature

Earlier: Elementals are stock characters of many traditions, myths and fairy tales around the world. They stem from a time, in which men still had a clairvoyant connection to the spiritual world. Fairy tale researcher Wilhelm Grimm: "Gemeinsam allen Märchen sind die Überreste eines, in die älteste Zeit hinauf

reichenden Glaubens, der sich in der bildlichen Auffassung übersinnlicher Dinge ausspricht". (All fairy tales share the remnants of a belief, reaching up from the oldest time, which communicates in the pictorial understanding of supernatural things.)

Just how natural the belief in the existence and working of creature of nature was, is evident in etymology. For example the German Quarz / quartz (probably derived from medieval Querch = dwarf), Kobalt / cobalt (from Kobold = goblin, who was made responsible for the destruction of valuable ore through non-usable ore or minerals), Nickel / nickle, or Kupfernickel / coppernickle (actually means copper-goblin → since miners failed to gain copper from the similarly coloured ore they blamed a goblin).

In the Germanic Edda-tradition the world of elementals is called Jotunheimen, where dwarves, elves, Jotes and Thurses live, invisible to the human eye; the middle earth of humans is called Midgard and the upper world, where the gods live is called Asgard. A shining bridge, 'Bifröst' (shaking trail) connects the middle and the upper world. It is the rainbow on which the gods and angels ascend and descend.

Nowadays:

People from all across the world speak of experiences with elementals. In particular in the Nordic countries the connection to creatures of nature is still strong (e.g. the Swedish author and Nobel prize winner Selma Lagerlöf, who was convinced of the existence of the little folk). Other poets (Goethe, Schiller, Morgenstern ect.), artists (Wülfig, Pogacnik, Leidendecker ect.), mystics (Böhme, Paracelsus, Morgenstern ect.) described and created the working of creatures of nature as well described and created the working of creatures of nature as a spiritual reality. Children and people in touch with nature have a special connection to that world.

Species:

Earth: dwarves, gnomes, ghosts of homes and mountains, goblin, brownies, satyrs and fauns

Water: nixies, nymphs, undines

Air: elves, pixies, fairies, sylvans, light spirits, small angels,

Fire: salamanders, storm spirits, spirit of fire

Workings and Appearances: Creatures of nature are representative of an animated nature filled with spirits (the spirit of God animates and penetrates everything). Under the guidance of angels, elementals are active in all natural phenomenon. Some of them are in direct contact to humans.

According to popular beliefs, they are supposed to be particularly active during Saint John's Eve, but are particularly likely to appear during the night. Similarly, during the twelve holy nights the multitude of the little folk accompanied by Mother Holle / Perchta can be seen. Similarly to how demons and ill-fated spirits are making trouble, so are evil minded elementals (for example trolls in the Nordic countries). They try to harm nature in its growth, as well as hurt man and animal. However they are mostly kept in check by guardians of nature.

Implementation proposals:

There are hardly any limits to the crafting of nature spirits (materials see chapter Saint John's Eve, section crafts). In crafts books or on the internet there is a wealth of inspiration to be found.

A simple dwarf is created in the following: Saw off a branch at an angle, paint a face on the cut off edge, paint a cap on top or sew one from felt, create a beard from raw wool or cotton and glue it underneath the face, create a matching environment with moss, stones and other natural materials. Roots and bark are suitable materials to create dwarf houses, which can even be furnished cosily. Dwarf boat: a wooden stick through a leaf (mast and sail) and put on a piece of bark; sit the dwarf on it and the boat on a creek, river, pond or lake.

Bind bewitching elves out of raw wool. Most simple clothes hanger marionette: Paint a square of silk (or take a finished piece of fabric), tie off a head in the middle, put a knot in the two opposing sides as hands: Tie the hand-knots to the ends of the clothes hanger with a long, thick thread, fix a long thread to the head and tie a bow to the top of the thread so it can be controlled by one hand. The other hand holds the clothes hanger and that way can control the hands.

The people who create hand-puppets themselves surely also think on dwarfs and elves during the process, the mischievous and clever advisers and helpers in many fairy tales!

Dwarfs can be seen by looking reversely through one's own legs into a 'reverse world', or if you find a stone or a piece of wood with a natural hole in it – this is one of the rare dwarf spyglasses!

For dwarf-feasts, games of dances out in the open, dwarven hats can be sown with an elastic in the seams. That way they fit on various children's heads. Elven dresses can be made from light and soft chiffon, gauze or silk, or alternatively from crepe paper if time is of the essence. Crown from corrugated cardboard can be decorated with flowers, grass, feathers ect. Dwarfs look for or protect treasures of gems and metals, rule over stone and the earth, take care of roots, heal animals, help and cheer up people, ... Elves accompany the growth of plants, trees, flowers and their fragrances, dance in the sun and in the moon light besides sources and on other bodies of water, comfort, cheer up and sometimes protect humans.

Anniversaries in Summer

Visitation of Mary 2. July (in the catholic church also on the 21. May)

Mary visits her cousin Elisabeth

During Mary's visit, John jumps in Elisabeth's belly. Mary sings the Manificat. Mary stays with Elisabeth for three months.

Symbol: Path→ you have to walk the path in order to encounter one another and get close, share joy and need

The short description in the bible raises the following women's issues:

Unmarried, pregnant Mary

Infertility – late pregnancy

Expecting

Both women receive prophecies about their children.

Mary Magdalene, 22. July

Mary the sister of Lazarus and Martha (= Mary of Bethany)

Mary Magdalene (Mary of Madgala), the formerly possessed (sinner?), friend of Jesus and disciple at the grave

→ Is it the same person? In early Christianity this seems to have been the case. This was confirmed in the visions of the stigmatic seer Anna Katharina Emmerich. However, it is possibly a combination of fragments of two different persons.

Unction: Mary of Bethany anointed Jesus' feet (John 12, 1-8); a woman without a name anointed his head (Mark 14,3-9); a well known sinner anointed his feet (Luke 7,36-50). All three women were identified as Mary Magdalene.

At present there are many speculations around Mary Magdalene, including her being Jesus' wife.

As a witness of the resurrection on Easter Sunday, Mary Magdalene is an important female figure of the New Testament in any case.

Christopher 24. July

There isn't much known about Christopher except for the fact that he probably died as a martyr. The catholic church no longer recognised him as a saint, since his existence is not historically proven. His name was cut from the list of canonical saints, but he survived in the German regional calendar.

Legend

Christopher wants to serve the most powerful Lord. First of all he works for the king, then the devil and finally for Jesus. Popular image: Christopher carries the child Jesus (the whole world) on his shoulders across a roaring river.

Afterwards Christopher supposedly planted his staff on the edge of the river, which consequently sprouted
→ Those who serve Jesus are like a tree that bears fruit.

Function: Helper in need, patron saint of travellers, safety in traffic (see pictures of saints in cars, on top of bike bells, key ring charms)

Motive: use one's strengths for the right cause

Laurentius, 10. August

Martyr (3rd century) who stayed true to God until death

Important Stages of his Life:

Laurentius travels from Spain to Rome – he wants to serve pope Sixtus and care for Christians. When Rome is threatened, the Emperor orders another persecution of the Christians in order to appease his Gods. Sixtus is killed, and according to legend the Emperor asks for the treasure of the church to be handed over. Laurentius distributes them to the congregation and presents the poor as the true treasures of the church. As a punishment he is tortured gruesomely and finally roasted to death on a grill (that is why he is often depicted on a roast in art, which might appear as a ladder to the uninitiated).

Patron saint of various jobs, in particular cooks.

According to legend, the ones he left behind said 'our star has been extinguished'.

Earlier shooting stars were called Laurentius' tears.

Assumption of Mary / Blessing of the Herbs

15. August: summery blessing of the herbs and Assumption of Mary

Assumption of Mary / Blessing of the Herbs, 15. August

1500 year old double festivities:

Assumption of Mary (also the Falling Asleep of the Blessed Virgin Mary)

Blessing of the Herbs

The origins of this feast come from the Orthodox church, where it was already celebrated shortly before the council of Ephesus in the year 431 as the Assumption of Mary. It exists in the Roman church roughly since the seventh century, where it was Christianised on the orders of Pope Gregory as an initially Roman-heathen Summer and Harvest festival (it was devoted to a mother-goddess). The Church attempted to get rid of heathen-pre-Christian aspects of the festival.

Themes: Healing and gratefulness for the divine healing powers of nature. During creation wonderful healing powers were embedded into nature and natural phenomenon: into the air, the earth, the fire, the plants, stones, animals; and every human carries differently functioning healing properties within him or herself!

Assumption of Mary (apocryphal transmission and legends)

After her burial, Mary's grave was found empty, sweet-smelling and full of flowers.

→ Mary was associated with flowers (lilies – purity, roses – love, ect.) She was called 'rose without thorns', 'lilly of the fields', 'Madonna of grapes', 'mother of corn', 'queen of flowers', 'protector of crops'. Mary takes on the role of pre-Christian goddesses such as Demeter, Ostara, Freya, Holle...

Blessing of the Herbs (herbs are blessed in church)

Medicinal herbs played an important role in all peoples of the Antiquity, for few other remedies were known. The bible tells of medicinal herbs and oils as well (e.g. nard oil), smelling resin (gifts of the wise

men). Sirach 38,4: „The Lord created medicines from the earth, and a sensible person will not hesitate to use them."

Since old times, healing was a domain of women. Unfortunately this led among other things to the gruesome witch-hunts, since women versed in herbal lore were often demonised.

Hildegard von Bingen, the famous seer versed in herbal lore from the Middle Ages however, was accepted by the church. She considered Mary to be the 'Mother of Remedies' and 'Christ as the great Physician'. She saw in Viriditas / Greenpower the healing power of God. „Die Kräuter bieten einander den Duft ihrer Blüten - ein Stein strahlt seinen Glanz auf die anderen, - und jede Kreatur hat einen Urtrieb nach liebender Umarmung.“ (The herbs offer each other the fragrance of their blossoms – a stone shines its lustre on the others, - and every creature has an inherent impulse to loving embrace."

Customs and Organisation Proposals:

The bundle of herbs is traditionally made up from 99 plants, always three of each (i.e. 33 different species). In other regions it is supposed to be at least 9 medicinal herbs that are precisely set down: horehound, mugwort, carline thistle, hart's-tongue, Our Lady's bedstraw, agrimony, parsley fern, spike lavender and wormwood. These herbs can then be complimented with other medicinal herbs. In some regions even ears of corn belong to the blessed herbs. According to the old tradition the herbs are supposed to be picked by hand and not touched by iron, since otherwise their powers would be diminished. During the collection the Lord's Prayer is supposed to be spoken. The bouquet is tied with a blue ribbon of Mary, long enough to reach around the belly of a cow. In some regions a mullein, rose, lilly or ears of corn are bound into the middle.

Earlier the **bundle of herbs** was kept in a corner of a room with a crucifix (nowadays the seasonal corner). It was said to have great healing and magical powers. It was supposed to protect devout people from dangers of fire, lightning and evil people. Furthermore it was fed to animals for protection and blessing.

In certain regions a bowl of salt decorated with flowers is blessed.

Apart from a bouquet of herbs, they can be processed in various ways:

design decorations with herbs, plant herbs, create a spiral of herbs in the garden, dry herbs, herbal teas (for example for colds made from lime-tree blossoms, ribwort and thyme), herbal bread, herbal syrup, dream cushion (filled with borage, mugwort and bloodwort), sachets of herbs for the wardrobe (filled with lavender and a little cedar needles and patchouli), home made salves, creams, oils, bath salts; vaporize pleasant plant fragrances, perform a smoke ritual with herbs.

Alongside this legends about plants, fairy tales of herbs and matching poems can be researched / read / listened to.

Aside from plants, the healing energy is found in all elements, which can be studied as well: Water (mineral water, healing baths, ocean,...), Air (fresh air, wind, health resort,...), Earth (sand baths, mud packs, healing stones,...), Fire (Sauna, sweat lodge, walking on fire,...).

Simple Recipes with Essential Oils / Plant Essences

Salve: Melt 15g of beeswax with 100ml of oil in a water bath, add disinfectant essences (.e.g. 10 drops lavender, 3 drops thyme, 3 drops tea tree).

Face Cream: Melt 100ml Jojoba oil with 10g beeswax and 10g coconut fat in a water bath (60°); then gradually mix in 100ml hot (60°) distilled water with an electric hand held whisk until it is room temperature; subsequently add essences at will (e.g. 10 drops rose geranium, 4 drops rose, 4 drops neroli) mix well and fill cream into a container.

Body Oil or Massage Oil: Mix 10-20 drops of essences with almond oil or another oil (e.g. 5 drops neroli, 5 drops rose, 5 drops rosemary).

Fragrant Bath: Mix 4-15 drops of essence with an emulsifying agent (cream, honey, sea salt, vinegar, neutral soap) and add to bath water (e.g. 5 drops each of orange, ylang-ylang and sandalwood for a sensual pampering bath).

Application and Production of Remedies from fresh herbs such as plant extracts from oil, alcohol, packs, baths ect. see specialized literature or the internet.