

Miranda Owen

Michigan Pagan Scholarship Essay

March 12th, 2014

What it Means to be Pagan

I knew I was a Pagan much earlier than I knew what the term meant. Ever since I was a young girl, I have been completely enchanted by nature's grace. I used to run through my yard, chasing bumble bees from flower to flower and collecting ingredients for makeshift potions. I remember a few times in particular where I mixed up plants and scattered them across the steps of my front porch in the hopes of attracting visitors, and, incidentally, I would always have at least one friend show up that had never been to my house before, saying they were simply drawn there. This is when I first discovered the power of the Earth.

The next note-worthy events of my life as a Pagan would happen around seventh grade, looking through a book of religions. I realized that my personal beliefs fit almost perfectly under the umbrella term of "Paganism". After researching the dozens of paths and my own heritage, I realized that Celtic Paganism was the best spiritual path for me. I spent countless hours occupying myself with books and articles on mythology, witchcraft, and divination, writing down all of the information that was important and relevant to my path. To me, retaining so much archaic information was anything but primitive; it made me feel enlightened, powerful, and completely broadened my outlook on the world. Paganism has pushed me to become a more intelligent and informed person in all sectors of life, not just religion.

One of the most difficult tasks regarding my religion was forming relationships with deities. I could definitely feel the magical presence of the Earth, and I even had several meaningful experiences

with entities such as faeries, but I had never had a deity reach out to me the way they seemed to with others, and, like many Pagans, I found it quite important to interact with gods. This left me questioning whether I could actually be considered a Pagan. After all, Paganism (for the most part) involves polytheism, and I couldn't get one god to work with me, let alone several! However, I regained my hope when, on one chilly February night, I finally took control of the situation and contacted a god myself. Because Imbolc was coming up and, being of Celtic descent, I decided that I should contact the Irish hearth goddess, Brighid. Not only was she quite zealous to work with me, but she even revealed her figure in the flame of the candle I lit. Since then, Brighid and I have formed a strong relationship, and she has helped me regain my ambition and heal emotionally and spiritually. She has introduced me to other deities as well, all of them collaborating so I can flourish.

Being Pagan has allowed me to see the universe as a paradigm composed of interconnected pieces. There is no separation between physical and spiritual existence, because their distinct aspects involve and influence each other. I've learned to care more about the Earth and every creature that depends on it, and I've become more sensitive to life's energies. I've also grown to love myself more and recognize my own potential. To me, being Pagan isn't just about elaborate rituals and spells (although I do enjoy those!). It's about the tingling sensation of awe that I feel when I gaze upon a full moon or discover a plant sprouting out of the fresh spring soil. It's about the comfort I see in someone's face when I help them contact their deceased loved ones. To me, being Pagan is about finding a sense of harmony, balance, and curiosity in a chaotic world.