

Isian News Samhain October 2014

I sit and write this piece for Samhain's Isian News hearing the traffic outside splash through puddles on dreary wet autumnal roads. The sky has been grey all day and my mood could be sombre were it not for the Skype call I have just had with some FOI colleagues and I rejoice in Olivia's brilliance at creating such a vibrant community of friends.

My motivation since last November, almost a complete year now since Olivia's death, has been to pause, draw breath and give time for sadness but then to look up and see the road ahead. This has been so much easier accompanied by the wise heads of those in the Circle of Brigid and members of the family based in and around the Foundation Centre. There has been the blessing too of new life both at Huntington and close to me here in England; two baby boy cousins born within three months of each other, two reminders of the future and the crucial stewardship of this planet's environment's health to pass on to them. And one very happy and proud grandma!

Some may wonder what position the Circle of Brigid holds now within the FOI? A simple way to put it is it acts as the FOI's "central parliament"; the people who 'parley' face to face, discuss and reflect together to make executive decisions for the good of the organisation. This function was described by Olivia in 2011 when she envisioned a world centre to coordinate otherwise potentially disparate parts at the unifying address of the Foundation Centre at Clonegal. (See page 43 in the Compendium) The FOI is worldwide with thousands of members and has a responsibility to operate through an executive board that is not cumbersome or moribund. The Circle of Brigid has eight members who celebrate the festivals together at Huntington, with Alexander's permission and blessing and through their regular contact and service are in the best position to further serve the FOI in this capacity. I act as advisor to the COB as does my cousin Pamela who will succeed me as steward in due course.

The ethics subcommittee of the COB have recently formulated an excellent and clear Code of Ethics and related grievance procedures which will greatly enhance the FOI's functioning as a caring and open organisation. They have used Olivia's writings predominantly as source material as collected in the Compendium aided also by examples of procedures from similar organisations. These have been published on the FOI's websites and should be available for every member's perusal and use. I encourage everyone to read them; in some ways perhaps not the most thrilling of documents but really important to have to hand when there are disagreements, grievances and problems to resolve (we are all human!)

There is also a subcommittee examining current priesthood training guidelines, expectations and standards which will present it's findings shortly. There were many inconsistencies and some lack of clarity in previous guidelines so this will bring helpful light and direction to these matters.

Where does the Foundation Union Triad stand in relation to the Circle of Brigid's governance? The former includes the Archpriesthood Union (32 positions); the Archdruid Union and Grand Commander Union (64 positions between them) which gives in total ninety six potential opinions to consult which through a consensual system is a night mare and just not doable. Also perhaps I am influenced by the Quakers in my father's family and certainly by my Interfaith and Unitarian training when I say this does not sound non hierarchical to me. We all have the divine spark within and one of our greatest challenges is to move beyond the ego's need for pomp and position. Many of the

members of these unions have passed on, perhaps to other spheres or to other interests if they are still on this earth.

My radical decision is to dissolve, as of now, the Foundation Union Triad's orders as no longer relevant or appropriate for our fellowship. How can some fellow member be a 'grand commander' over and above another? No, they served a purpose when created by Olivia a while back but the need for them has passed. We now stand shoulder to shoulder as companions along this divine Goddess blessed path and are able to celebrate and serve as equals.

With the blessings of Isis and honouring the divine spark within us all

Cressida