

## **NINE RAVENS: Navajo and Celtic Pagan Wedding**

### **Setting**

A framework has been set up between two large trees over which hang a large Navajo blanket and a Celtic plaid. The Priestess and Navajo elder stand on either side of the hanging next to the trees. The guests are seated on blankets on the ground, except for elderly guests who need chairs. They are seated behind those on the ground. The groom's extended family sits around the north hemi-circle; the bride's extended family sits around the south hemi-circle. The space before the hanging is left open.

### **Welcome**

The Priestess welcomes the guests and explains that in today's ceremony the couple seeks to bring what is good and nourishing from their individual heritages and forge something beautiful and strong in their marriage. She explains that all of the actions serve to bind the two individuals in marriage, creating one family, and that when they leave this space they do so as a legally and spiritually married couple.

The Navajo elder blesses the space with traditional song.

### **Procession**

The Groom, followed by his mother and father, enters the space from the east and circles sunwise around the guests. The groom's mother carries with her a large bowl of homemade corn porridge. The groom's family sits in the north close to the hanging. The groom stands in the west in front of the textile hanging.

The Bride, followed by her mother and father, enters the space from the east and circles sunwise around the guests. The bride's father carries with him a quail filled with homemade mead. The bride's family sits in the south close to the hanging. The bride stands in the west next to the groom.

### **Declaration of Intent**

The Navajo elder and the priestess question the couple as to their intent to marry and they respond.

### **Honoring of the four elements in Navajo/English**

The Navajo elder sings the prayers honoring the elements.

The Priestess repeats the prayers in English.

### **Calling upon goddess of the hearth and the god of abundance in English/Navajo**

The Pagan priestess says a prayer honoring the Dagda, provider for the tribe, and Macha, protectress of children and the family, calling for abundance and protection to come to the couple.

The Navajo elder says a prayer honoring the gods of the Navajo, calling for long life, happiness, and fertility to come to the couple.

### **Washing the hands - Navajo**

The couple sits facing each other. The elder and priestess sit just slightly behind the couple.

## **NINE RAVENS: Navajo and Celtic Pagan Wedding**

The bowl of water and ladle are placed in front of the couple by the father of the groom. The bride takes a ladle-full of water and pours it over the groom's hands while he washes them. The groom then takes a ladle-full of water and pours it over the bride's hands while she washes them.

### **Sharing corn porridge - Navajo**

The mother of the groom places the corn porridge in front of the couple. The groom sprinkles white corn pollen on top of the porridge from east to west, then south to north, and in a circle around the edge of the bowl. The bride does the same with yellow corn pollen and then passes the bowl to the Navajo elder who blends the pollens together with his finger and hands the bowl back to the couple.

The groom takes a pinch of the porridge from the east and eats it. The bride does the same. The bride takes a pinch from the south and eats it. The groom follows suit. The groom takes a pinch from the west (bride follows). The bride takes a pinch from the north (groom follows). They both take a pinch from the center together.

The bowl is given to the Navajo elder and Priestess to take a pinch and eat. The bowl is then passed around the circle for all of the families and guests to eat. The bowl is returned to the mother of the groom.

### **Vows/Handfasting/Ring Exchange – Celtic/Pagan**

The bride and groom hold hands. The priestess takes a strip of fabric that has been created by the couple and gives it to the groom's parents, who say a blessing for the couple over it. They hand the cloth back to the priestess. She hands it to the Navajo elder who hands it over to the bride's parents, who say a blessing for the couple over it. They hand it back to the elder.

The priestess asks the couple if they are ready to unite themselves in marriage by speaking their vows and before their friends, their families, and their gods. The couple assents. The groom takes the bride's left hand in his left hand. The priestess drapes the cloth over the couple's wrists in three loops.

Groom speaks his vows with prompting from the priestess. The father of the groom hands the ring to his son. He slips the ring onto the bride's left ring finger.

The bride speaks her vows with prompting from the priestess. The mother of the bride hands the ring to her daughter. She slips the ring onto the groom's left ring finger.

The priestess ties the cloth and the couple pull their wrists out. The priestess gives the bound cloth to the couple to hold.

### **Sharing the Quaich - Celtic**

The father of the bride offers the quaich to the family of the groom as a sign that their families are joined. The family of the groom drink and pass the quaich back to the father of the bride. The family of the bride drink. Then the bride and groom drink. The couple keeps the emptied quaich as a sign of the union of their families.

## **NINE RAVENS: Navajo and Celtic Pagan Wedding**

**Final blessing in Navajo** – given over the couple by the elder

**Final blessing in English** – given over the couple by the priestess

### **Invitation by couple to share in bounty (ie the reception)**

The couple thanks the guests for attending and invites them to join them and their families in the feast and party to follow.

### **Recessional**

The bride and groom stand up, walk around the circle sunwise three times and then leave from the east. All the guests and family then leave as they will.