

Prayer Service to the Healing Gods in the Time of Coronavirus

Written by Jennifer Sanborn for Portland Hellenic Polytheists (www.azothtemple.org/hellenic-polytheism/)

A service of prayer and libation to the Healing Gods. I have alternated ancient quotes, hymns, and prayers with prayers written in my own words; feel free to substitute your own words for mine, or use mine as a starting point.

Don't embark on this ritual if you are sick. It is best if you can bathe and put on clean clothes before you begin. Arrange the altar with libation and libation bowl, a candle for Hestia, frankincense and charcoal, and whatever else you might want to include (statues of the healing gods, offerings, etc.).

Conduct the usual preliminary cleansing of yourself and the space with khernips (lustral water), then proceed to the altar with a small offering of barley. After a moment of silence, begin with an initial libation and prayer to Hestia:

Prayer to Hestia

Homeric Hymn #24 to Hestia

“Hestia, you who tend the sacred dwelling
Of the far-shooting lord, Apollon, at holy Pytho,
From your tresses flowing oil ever drips down.
Come to this house, come in gentle spirit,
With resourceful Zeus and grant grace to our song!”

Pray in your own words, or use mine:

Queen Hestia, daughter of Kronos,
Mistress of ever-burning fire,
You dwell in the center of the house.
May You be with those who pray to You this day,
And bless us during this time of crisis.
Nourish us, comfort us, warm our hearts,
Fill our homes with good food, health, and contentment,
Keep us safe and be our steady support.
In thanks, we offer you libation.

Hail, Hestia!

Pour libation

Invocation of the Healing Gods

Burn frankincense.

Healing Gods, hear!

We cry out to you!

Apollo Physician,

Master of the Healing Hymn.

Asklepios Paean,

Great god of medicine.

Epione,

Soother of Pain,

Iaso and Aceso,

Recuperation and healing,

All-Curing Panacea,

Bearer of the healing balm.

Come, too, Aglaea,

Joyful glow of radiant health,

Much-Desired, Blessed Hygeia,

Our beautiful, prolific Queen.

And you, Euamerion Telesphoros,

Accomplisher of Recuperation.

Accept our prayers and offerings

And be with us in this rite.

Terminate this dread disease,

And grant health to our bodies and minds.

Play a short piece of gentle music, live or recorded (flute often accompanied ancient Greek ritual and would be particularly appropriate¹, or you may wish to chant “Ie Paian”).

Prayers to Apollon

Apollon, hear!

Selection from 34. Orphic Hymn for Apollo²

“Come, blessed Paian, slayer of Tityos;

O Phoibos, Lykoreus, god of Memphis,

¹ For example, see Walter Burkert “Greek Religion” pg. 36.

² Selection from The Orphic Hymns: A New Translation for the Occult Practitioner by Patrick Dunn (trans.), pg. 113-114

bright famed giver of wealth, crying “ie!”
With a golden lyre, herdsman, lord of seeds,
Pythios, Titan, Gryneios, Smintheus,
slayer of Python, and Delphic prophet...
Hear me praying for the people and have
a kindly heart.”

Prayer to Apollon to End the Plague, from Sophocles’ *Oedipus Tyrannus*³

“Stand up, children! He has proclaimed
himself the cure we came to find.
May Apollo come as savior
and end this plague!

“What will you say to [the world],
Voice from Zeus? What sweet sounds
convey your will from golden Delphi
to our bright cit[ies]?
We’re at the breaking point,
our minds are wracked with dread.
Our wild cries reach out to you,
Healing God from Delos—
in holy fear we ask: does your will
bring a new threat, or has an old doom
come round again as the years wheel by?
Say it, Great Voice,
you who answer us always,
speak as Hope’s golden child.

“...Apollo, whose arrows
strike from far off! ...come now!
Once before, when ruin threatened,
you drove the flames of fever from [Thebes].
Come to us now!

“Apollo, lord of the morning light,
draw back your taut, gold-twined
bowstring, fire the sure arrows
that rake our attackers and keep them at bay.”

³ Selected lines from *Oedipus the King: A New Translation*, Robert Bagg, trans. (beginning around line 149, adapted slightly)

Libations to Apollon

Hail, Apollon Akesios
God of healing

Pour libation

Hail, Apollon Agyieus,
Protector of the streets and public places

Pour libation

Hail, Apollon Alexikakos,
Averter of evil⁴

Pour libation

Hail, Apollon Boedromios,
Helper in distress

Pour libation

Hail, Apollon Paean,
Our healing god!

Pour libation

Prayers to Asklepios

Asklepios, hear!

“Asklepios, the most famous god – ie Paian! By him were fathered...children of Epione, along with Hygeia, all-glorious, undefiled...Greetings I give you: graciously visit [us] – ie Paian! – and grant that we look on the sun’s light in joy, approved with the help of Hygeia, all-glorious, undefiled: ie Paian!”⁵

67. Orphic Hymn to Asklepios⁶

⁴ “given to Apollon by the Athenians because he was believed to have stopped the plague in Athens” (this quote and all epithets are from theoi.com/Cult/ApollonTitles.html accessed 3/23/20)

⁵ Greek Lyric V Anonymous, Fragment 939 (inscription from Erythrai)

⁶ Athanassakis, Apostolos and Benjamin Wolkow (trans.), The Orphic Hymns. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013, pg. 54

“Asklepios, lord Paian,
healer of all,
you charm away the pains
of men who suffer.
Come, mighty and soothing,
bring health,
put an end to sickness,
[and] to the harsh fate of death.”

Pray in your own words, or use mine:

Mighty Asklepios, God of Medicine,
Grant healing to all those affected by the virus,
Be with those working in hospitals
Doing your work to heal the sick.
Guide them and protect them,
And drive dread disease away.

Hail, Asklepios!

Pour libation

Prayers to Hygeia

Hygeia, hear!

“Bright-eyed mother, highest queen of Apollon’s golden throne, desirable, gently-laughing Hygeia.”⁷

68. Orphic Hymn to Hygeia⁸

“Charming queen of all,
lovely and blooming,
blessed Hygeia, mother of all,
bringer of bliss, hear me.
Through you vanish
the illnesses that afflict man,
through you every house
blossoms to the fullness of joy...

⁷ Licymnius, Fragment 769 (from Sextus Empiricus, “Against the Ethicists”)

⁸ Athanassakis, pg. 54-55

Goddess, come, ever-helpful...
keep away the evil distress
of unbearable diseases.”

Pray in your own words, or use mine:

Bright-eyed Mother, gentle Queen of All,
Hygeia, Goddess of Health,
Hear our prayer and bless us with your presence.
Fill us with strength and wisdom
To act in ways that protect ourselves and those around us,
Guide and lead us and fill us with glowing good health
In our bodies, minds, and spirits.

Hail, Hygeia!

Pour libation

Prayers to Telesphoros

Telesphoros, hear!

Hymn to Telesphoros⁹

Telesphoros, we praise your virtues,
imperishable young shoot of Asklepios,
all-wise son of the god who heals all pain,
illustrious Daimon,
Lift the generations of mortals from their weariness,
repelling painful disease.
The long-haired Paian
is overjoyed to have you, young shoot, O' Telesphoros,
Many times, you lead mortals into the beautiful light
after baneful illness.
Khaire, Telesphoros, precious healer
bring laughter, befitting the sacred joy
to our faces.

⁹ Labrys, Hellenic Polytheism – Household Worship, pg. 130: “This is a surviving devotional hymn to Telesphoros, a god who appears mainly in later antiquity as a companion to Asklepios. It is he who brings an end to the illness thus completing the process of recuperation which begins and is facilitated by Asklepios and his attendants.”

Pray in your own words, or use mine:

Telesphoros, God of recuperation,
Be with those who struggle with this disease.
Speed their healing and strengthen them,
Grant strength to their bodies
And comfort their spirits.

Hail, Telesphoros!

Pour libation

Offerings

If you have any additional offerings to give, place them on the altar.

Silent Meditation or Personal Prayer

Spend some time in silent meditation or personal prayer, speaking or bringing to mind the names of individuals you wish to pray for, or sending healing prayers out to the entire world.

End the meditation by playing another short piece of gentle music, live or recorded.

Closing Prayer

Bright-shining Apollon
And all the healing Gods,
Hear us praying for the people
and grant victory.
Banish the virus that threatens us
And give healing
To our bodies, hearts, and minds.
In thanks I vow to [continue honoring you
With praise and offerings of burning incense and libation] *(or replace with your own vow)*

Conclude with the usual final libation to Hestia. You may wish to consume any remaining, unpoured libation with a prayer that it be a blessing to you from the healing gods.