

**Ms. Linda Doherty**

## **Religious Perspectives - Wicca**

### **Does it offend you when someone wishes you a “Merry Christmas”?**

“As for Christmas. If you notice the date of Christmas is December 25<sup>th</sup>, the date of the winter solstice is the 21<sup>st</sup> of December. If someone says ‘Merry Christmas’ to me I will say, ‘happy Yule.’ And I still celebrate Christmas but not in the same way that a Christian does because for us the Christmas is all about giving. And so we give to our children and one another. And not always monetarily in Christmas gifts, but they do get Christmas gifts; more, in one year we just did baked goods and things like that.

The difference between Yule, or the winter solstice, we call it Yule and Christmas is very small. In that Yule typically means that the sun, the literal sun, is returning to the earth, it’s going to start getting brighter. And in the Christian path it is the birth of the Son of God. In ancient Rome you had the god Mithras who was a sun god and his birthday happened to be on December 23<sup>rd</sup>. So you can almost see where there is a connection along the way. I think most people around the world celebrate some form of the being coming back or coming about to celebrate the seasons and that being the return of the sun. The s-u-n as opposed to the s-o-n. But none of us get offended.

I did a ritual several years ago, a Sabbath ritual, which by-the-way is open to non-Wiccans if you can be sponsored by a Wiccan, where we had a tree that was decorated. And my daughter created a pentacle of lights for the tree topper. We had carols that we sang but they were Deck the Halls, which is a pagan song. It has nothing to do with Jesus Christ or the birth of Jesus Christ. Now there were some Wiccans who were a little bit wary, ‘you there’s a little touch of Christmas in there.’ Well, not really. We have a Yule log. We have a Yule tree. We have carols that we sing with pagan, the same music, but mostly pagan words to replace it like Oh Holy Night, or Silent Night. And we had a wonderful time. And there were gifts under the tree for children and we strung popcorn and cranberries. You know these are typical Christian, Christmas things that are done at Christmas time. Sort of the same way for Wiccans in that we celebrate it a little bit differently and we celebrate it as the return of the sun, s-u-n at Yule. Thank You.”

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