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Saint Brigid

The 1st of February is officially the first day of spring and it is also the feast day of St Brigid.

This iconic woman is one of the most amazing role models in Irish history and yet many people have forgotten her story. The following are some facts about this unsung Irish hero.

Who is St Brigid?

Born in Dundalk in 450 AD St Brigid was the founder of the first monastery in County Kildare, Ireland. Her father was a pagan chieftain of Leinster and her mother was a Christian. St. Patrick inspired her to deepen her faith and spread the word of God.

Patron Saint of Ireland

St. Brigid is also known as Mary of the Gael or Muire and nGael aka Our Lady of the Irish. She is one of the Patron Saints of Ireland, along with St. Patrick and St. Columcille

Taking a stand

When she was young St. Brigid wanted to join a convent however her father took a firm stand and insisted that she marry the wealthy man he had promised her to. The story goes that she asked for Gods help to take away her beauty so that the man wouldn't want to marry her. Her wish was granted, her father caved and she joined the convent. Not only did her beauty return but apparently she was even more beautiful than ever.

She called on Gods help again to convince her father to give her land in Kildare to set up a convent. Her father said that he would only give her as much land as her cloak could cover. Silly man. With Gods help the cloak grew to cover acres of land.

The story of The Cross

St Brigid was by the sick bed of a dying pagan chieftain, possibly her father, soothing him with stories about her faith and her unwavering trust in God. She began telling the story of Christ on the Cross, picking up rushes from the ground to make a cross.

Before his death the chieftain asked to be baptised. Initially, legend has it, people used to make similar crosses to hang over the door of their homes to ward off evil, fire and hunger. Over time word spread about St Brigid, her kindness, faith and the making of the cross became synonymous with her and the tradition now bears her name.

Where she is buried

St. Brigid died at the age of 75 in AD 525 and was buried in the church she created. Her remains were exhumed years later and brought to Downpatrick to be buried alongside Saints Patrick and Columcille.



Shared by B. Lowe