

## Reflection Thursday Week 16 - St Brigid of Sweden – 2020

We all yearn to be free; our difficulty is that we often do not understand what true freedom means. So, when we are asked to take up Jesus' yoke, shoulder our cross, let Christ live within us, we believe we are abdicating from life when it means the exact opposite – embracing the fullness of life. All the great saints came to understand this in their own way and tried to help us to understand too. In fact, we have to make the journey and the discovery ourselves, not on our own, but with others and with God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. St Brigid's journey took her through marriage, having eight children, on to religious life and the foundation of monasteries for both men and women. She worked with the poor and needy and spoke out against the excesses, lavishness and wastefulness of the rich and powerful especially the aristocracy. Yet, Brigid <sup>(1303-1373)</sup> knew more about freedom than the aristocracy and the wealthy. Her freedom opened up her vision into the great beauty and wonder of God. Her freedom led her to see everyone as part of her family, both the rich and the poor, and she spent her life reaching out to and caring for them all as her brothers and sisters. The significant link between her and them was the presence of God which is why the image of the vine is so powerful. The life and spirit of God flows through us all. It unites, strengthens and enriches. It bears fruit aplenty. Freedom allows us to become part of everyone's life and them part of ours. It urges us to be caring, kind and generous to family and to others. **Isn't this why** the whole family rejoices when one member is successful, and sad when one of them suffers? Cut off from the vine, we are cut off from each other as well as the source of life. We become isolated and limited. Today we thank St Brigid for reminding us of the value of true freedom that opens us fully to the world around us, to each other, to creation, and to the life and love of Christ. This is what we accept when we let Christ live within us - like St Brigid.

### **On the subject of freedom . . . . .**

During a speech, Stalin said *"I am prepared to give my blood for the cause of the working class, drop by drop."*

A note is passed up to the podium: *"Dear Comrade Stalin, why drag things out? Give it all now."*