

Parish Confirmation Preparation

February 2024

BRIGID

1st February



Who is St. Brigid?

St. Brigid (also known as Muire na nGael) was born in AD 450 in Faughart, near Dundalk in Co. Louth. Her father, Dubhthach, was a pagan chieftain of Leinster and her mother, Broicsech, was a Christian.

She lived during the time of St. Patrick and was inspired by his preaching and she became a Christian. When Brigid turned eighteen, Brigid decided that she would spend her life working for God by looking after poor, sick and elderly people.

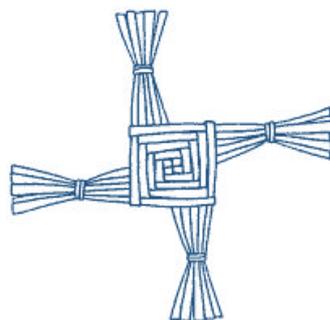
Brigid entered the convent and received her veil from St. Malachy and made her vows to dedicate her life to God. News of Brigid's good works spread and soon many young girls from all over the country joined her in the convent. Brigid founded many convents all over Ireland; the most famous one was in Co. Kildare. It is said that this convent was built beside an oak tree where the town of Kildare now stands.

Around 470 she also founded a double monastery, for nuns and monks, in Kildare. The Abbey of Kildare became one of the most prestigious monasteries in Ireland, and was famous throughout Christian Europe.

Brigid died on 1st February, in AD 523 and was buried in Kildare, but later exhumed and buried in Downpatrick (alongside St Patrick & Colmcille).

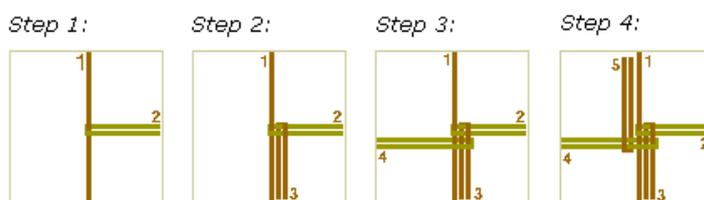
The St. Brigid's Cross

One day Brigid was called to the bed of an old pagan chieftain. He was dying. She smoothed out his bed and gave him sips of water to drink. Soon he fell into a light sleep. Brigid sat by his bedside to keep him company. To while away



the time, she picked up a few rushes from the floor and began to weave them into a cross. The chieftain opened up his eyes and, though he was dying, asked her what she was making. She told him the story of Jesus and his death on the cross. She told him that Jesus loved everybody so much and loved God Our Father so much that he wasn't afraid to die on a cross. She explained that followers of Jesus Christ had a great respect and great love for the cross of Jesus. "As I make this cross out of rushes," she said, "I think of Jesus Christ who died on the cross for me." "Tell me more about Jesus. Tell me more," said the chieftain. Brigid spent many hours with him and, before he died, the old pagan chieftain became a Christian.

St. Brigid's Cross (Cros Bride in Irish) is a cross woven from rushes, with 4 arms tied at the end and meeting in a woven patterned square in the centre. Traditionally they were displayed over the door of a house to ward off evil.



Why not try and make your own St. Brigid's Cross using rushes. Follow the instructions below, or, check out how to make a St. Brigid's Cross on: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yn_MG4HZVOo.

Bring your completed cross to Mass where your priest will bless it before hanging it in your home.

The Season of Lent

Why is Ash Wednesday called Ash Wednesday?

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Season of Lent. Ash Wednesday gets its name from the traditional blessing of the ashes which originate from the burning of Palm branches (or crosses made from Palm leaves) from the previous year's Palm Sunday celebrations.



Once blessed, the ashes are then used to draw a cross on the forehead to mark the beginning of their Lenten fast.

The marking of a cross is often done while repeating the words "Repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mark 1:15) or "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19).



Stations of the Cross?

The Stations are a set of pictures/images portraying events in the Passion of Jesus. Visit your local church, and using the Stations, answer the following questions. Return the answers to your next Confirmation preparation Mass.

1. How many Stations of the Cross are there?

2. Who sentenced Jesus to death?

3. How many times does Jesus fall in the Stations?

4. Who helped Jesus carry his cross?

5. Who came to wipe the face of Jesus?

6. Who did Jesus console on his way to Golgotha?

7. To whom did Jesus say, 'Do not weep for me, but yourselves and your children?'

What is Lent?



Lent is the time of year when Christians prepare for the celebration of Easter. The word Lent comes from an older English word meaning "springtime." Lent begins on Ash Wednesday (the day after Shrove Tuesday, or Mardi Gras), and lasts for 40 days, not counting Sundays, and ends at Easter.

During Lent, many Christians **pray, give alms, and fast**. Some Christians "fast" during Lent by giving up something that they enjoy, such as a favourite food or a fun activity. They do this in memory of Jesus Christ, who is said to have fasted for 40 days in the desert. Roman Catholics are called to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday (the Friday before Easter).

Why 40 days?

40 is a significant number in Jewish-Christian scripture:

- In Genesis (7:4), the flood which destroyed the earth was brought about by 40 days and nights of rain.
- The Hebrews spent 40 years in the wilderness before reaching the land promised to them by God (Num. 32:13).
- Moses fasted for 40 days before receiving the ten commandments on Mount Sinai (Ex. 34:28).
- The Ninevites were given 40 days before God was going to destroy the city, allowing time for repentance (Jon 3:4-5)
- Jesus spent 40 days fasting in the wilderness in preparation for his ministry (Mk. 1:12-15)

What is the significance of the colour purple during Lent?

During Lent, the priest wears purple/violet vestments as a symbol of penance. In the ancient world the colour violet/purple was associated with royalty. The Scriptures tell us that a purple garment was placed on Jesus during his passion. 'Hail! King of the Jews!', the soldiers said. The colour purple and the days of penance themselves will eventually give way to the colour white and celebration of Christ's victory over sin.