

# Feast of St. Brigid, Abbess & Secondary Patron of Ireland

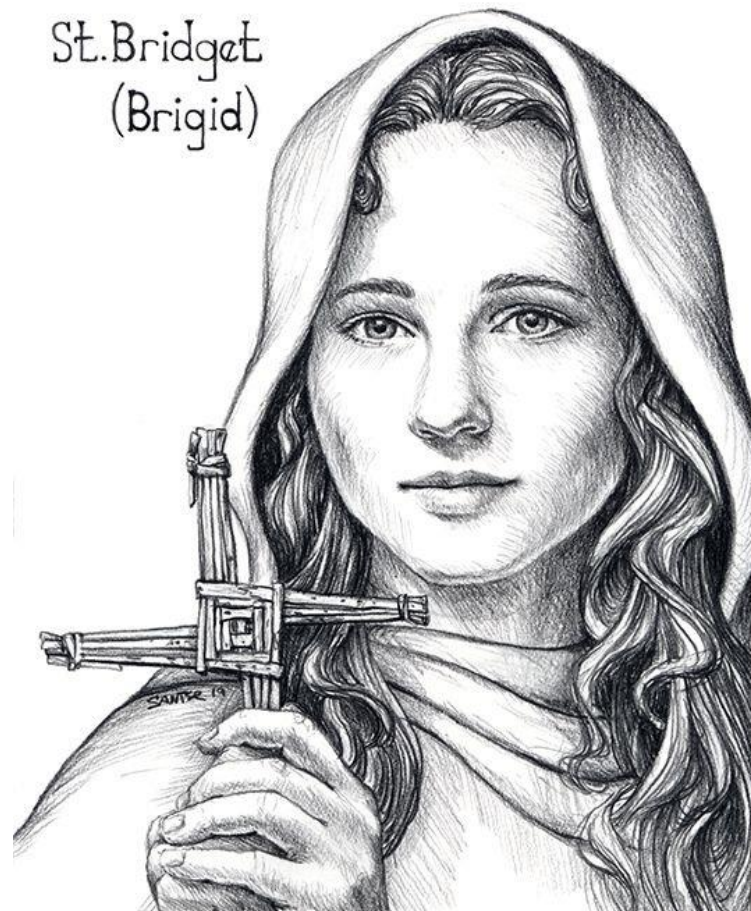
## 1<sup>st</sup> February

### RESOURCES

Monday, 1 February 2021, is the Feast of Saint Brigid, Abbess and Secondary Patron of Ireland. Saint Brigid is renowned for her hospitality, almsgiving and care of the sick.

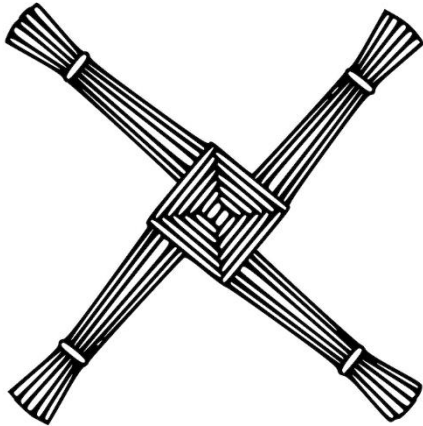
Saint Brigid was born in 454 and she went on to found a double monastery in Kildare with the assistance of Bishop Conleth. The Saint Brigid's Cross, in legend used by Brigid to explain the Christian faith, remains a popular sign of God's protection.

Please see below some resources for the Feast of Saint Brigid.



Source: Portrait by Christopher Santer

## HOW TO MAKE A ST. BRIGID'S CROSS



Making a St Brigid's Cross is a custom in Ireland. The St Brigid's Cross is made from rushes and hung above the entrances to dwellings to invoke the help of St Brigid in warding off disease.

St Brigid's Day is celebrated on the 1st February each year and the crosses are made at that time. Rushes were

traditionally used to make the St Brigid's Cross. These were collected from wetlands and cut into pieces, 8-12 inches long.

### You Will Need

16 Reeds (or Straws)  
4 small rubber bands  
Scissors

### What to Do

Hold one of the reeds vertically. Fold a second reed in half as in the diagram. Place the first vertical reed in the centre of the folded second reed.

Hold the centre overlap tightly between thumb and forefinger.

Turn the two rushes held together 90 degrees anti-clockwise so that the open ends of the second reed are pointing vertically upwards.

Fold a third reed in half and over both parts of the second reed to lie horizontally from left to right against the first straw. Hold tight.

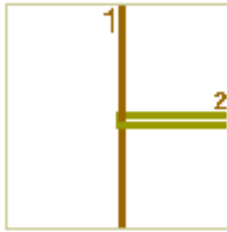
Holding the centre tightly, turn the three reeds 90 degrees anti-clockwise so that the open ends of the third reed are pointing upwards.

Fold a new reed in half over and across all the rushes pointing upwards.

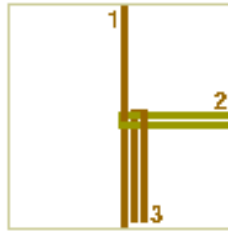
Repeat the process of rotating all the rushes 90 degrees anti-clockwise, adding a new folded reed each time until all rushes have been used up to make the cross.

Secure the arms of the cross with elastic bands. Trim the ends to make them all the same length. The St Brigid's Cross is now ready to hang.

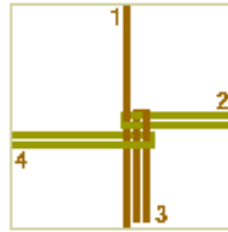
Step 1:



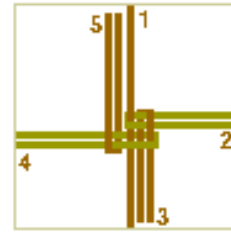
Step 2:



Step 3:



Step 4:



## **BLESSING OF SAINT BRIGID'S CROSSES**

Father of all creation and Lord of Light,  
you have given us life and entrusted your creation to us to use it and to care  
for it. We ask you to bless these crosses made of green rushes in memory of  
holy Brigid, who used the cross to recall and to teach your Son's life, death  
and resurrection.

May these crosses be a sign of our sharing in the Paschal Mystery of your Son  
and a sign of your protection of our lives, our land and its creatures through  
Brigid's intercession during the coming year and always. We ask this through  
Christ our Lord.

*The crosses are sprinkled with holy water:*

May the blessing of God, Father, ✠ Son and Holy Spirit be on these crosses  
and on the places where they hang and on everyone who looks at them.

**Amen.**

## Intercessions

*(taken from Morning Prayer for the Feast of St Brigid)*

We praise the Lord Jesus Christ who led St. Brigid along the paths of Justice and holiness; and pray that we may follow his way.

**Response; Lord, be our light and salvation.**

Through your resurrection, Lord Jesus, new light came into our darkness – let your Church be a light to the world.

**Response; Lord, be our light and salvation.**

At the springtime of the year we renew our hope – give us the grace to encourage all whom we meet today.

**Response; Lord, be our light and salvation.**

Brigid dedicated her life to prayer and service – bring many more women to give their lives to the dedicated service and holiness of religious life.

**Response; Lord, be our light and salvation.**

Lord Jesus, you gave Brigid the desire to serve and not be served – may we spend our lives in the service of others.

**Response; Lord, be our light and salvation.**

You made the word of St. Brigid fruitful; – give success to the work of our hands.

**Response; Lord, be our light and salvation.**

## **ST. BRIGID'S PRAYER**

St. Brigid,

You were a woman of peace.

You brought harmony where there was conflict.

You brought light to the darkness. You brought hope to the downcast.

May the mantle of your peace cover those who are troubled and anxious,  
and may peace be firmly rooted in our hearts and in our world.

Inspire us to act justly and to reverence all God has made.

Brigid you were a voice for the wounded and the weary.

Strengthen what is weak within us. Calm us into a quietness that heals and  
listens.

May we grow each day into greater wholeness in mind, body and spirit.

Amen.

(author unknown)

## **ST. BRIGID'S BLESSING**

May Brigid bless the house wherein we dwell.

Bless every fireside, every wall and door.

Bless every heart that beats beneath its roof.

Bless every hand that toils to bring its joy.

Bless every foot that walks portals through.

May Brigid bless the house that shelters us.

## READINGS

First: Job 13: 16-20, 24-25, 31-32 - The prophet examines his conscience, asking if there are times he has been insensitive to the needs of the poor.

OR

Ephesians 3:14-21 - Paul prays "may he give you the power through his infinite Spirit for your hidden self to grow strong" ... " know the fullness of God."

Psalm 106 35-28, 41-42- Give thanks to the Lord for he is good / He changes deserts into streams / Now they sow fields and plant vines / He raises the needy from distress

Gospel: Luke 6:32-38 - Jesus teaches "Love your enemies and do good. Lend without any hope of return ... Be compassionate as your Father in heaven is compassionate."

# Hymns to St. Brigid

## Faith's Light of Freedom

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(Can be sung to the tune of the first four lines of "Hail Glorious St. Patrick")

When faith's light of freedom to Ireland first came,  
You, Lord, raised up Brigid to make known your name.  
Her proud chieftain father's wild rage she defied,  
And followed your way, with the gospel for guide.

In silence of fields, while she tended her fold,  
You spoke to her heart words more precious than gold.  
White figure of peace, through our country she went,  
In your loving service her whole life was spent.

With keen fiery arrow she set hearts aflame;  
To live 'neath her rule many monks and nuns came.  
The poor and the hungry were fed from her store,  
For open to all were her heart, hand and door.

For Brigid we praise you, our Father and God,  
We praise Christ your Son in whose footsteps she trod,  
We praise your kind Spirit who guided her ways,  
We praise you, blest Trinity, all of our days.

(Source: Unknown)

## **Hymn to St. Brigid**

Far above enthroned in glory  
Sweetest Saint of Erin's Isle  
See thy children kneel before thee  
Turn on us a Mother's smile.

Sancta Maria, hear our pleading  
Faith and hope and holy love  
Sweet St Brigid, Spouse of Jesus,  
Sent to us from Heaven above.

Sweet St Brigid, Erin's children,  
Far and near o'er land and sea  
In the world and in the cloister  
Fondly turn with love to thee.

Sancta Maria, sooth the mourner  
Shield the weary tempted soul  
Sweet St Brigid, guide thy children  
To thy bright and happy home.

(Source: Mother Cecilia Sinnott)