

**\*\*** About the year 470 she founded a double monastery at Cill-Dara (Kildare) and was Abbess of the convent, the first in Ireland. The foundation developed into a center of learning and spirituality, and around it grew up the Cathedral city of Kildare. She founded a school of art at Kildare and its illuminated manuscripts became famous, notably the Book of Kildare, which was praised as one of the finest of all illuminated Irish manuscripts before its disappearance three centuries ago. Brigid was one of the most remarkable women of her times, and despite the numerous legendary, extravagant, and even fantastic miracles attributed to her, there is no doubt that her extraordinary spirituality, boundless charity, and compassion for those in distress were real. She died at Kildare on February 1, The Mary of the Gael, she is buried at Downpatrick with St. Columba and St. Patrick, with whom she is the patron of Ireland. Her name is sometimes **Brigit** and Bride.

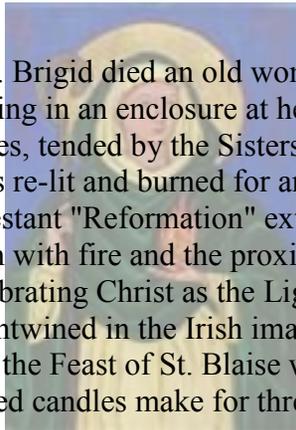
**\*\***(excerpted from: [www.catholic.org](http://www.catholic.org))

**\*\*\*** Relics: Brigid's hand is preserved at Lumiar near Lisbon, Portugal, since 1587, and another relic is at St. Martin's Cologne.

**\*\*\***(excerpted from: [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org))

**\*\*\*\***"When St. Brigid died an old woman in A.D. 523, her sisters kept a fire burning in an enclosure at her Kildare convent. This fire burned for centuries, tended by the Sisters and not burning out until A.D. 1220. It was re-lit and burned for another 400 years, when the effects of the Protestant "Reformation" extinguished it again. St. Brigid's association with fire and the proximity of her Feast to Candlemas, a day celebrating Christ as the Light Unto the Nations, make the two Feasts entwined in the Irish imagination. On the day following Candlemas, the Feast of St. Blaise with its blessing of the throats with two crossed candles make for three days associated with light and fire."

**\*\*\*\***(excerpted from: [acatholiclife.com](http://acatholiclife.com))



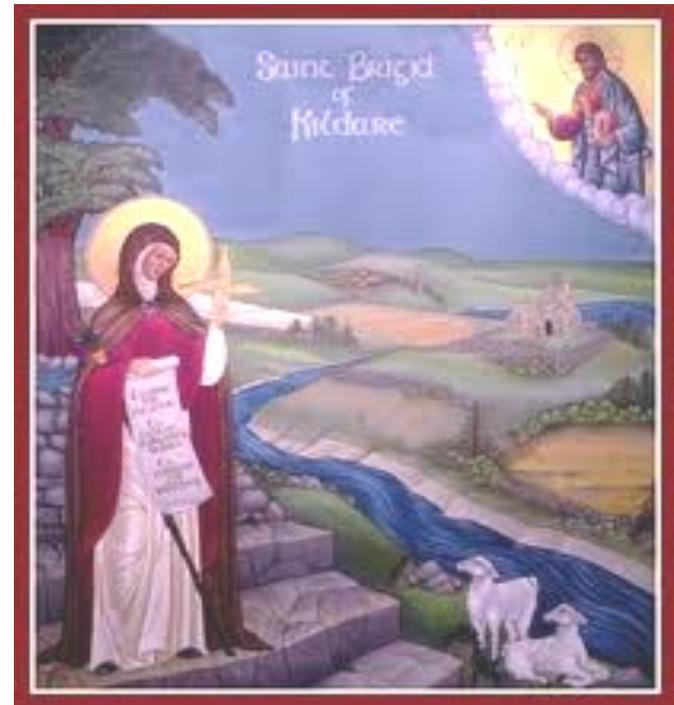
Saint Brigid's Cross  
Or  
*Crosóg Bhríde*

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## *Saint Brigid of Ireland*

**Patron of babies, chicken farmers, dairy workers, nuns, the poor and also poultry farmers.**

**Feast Day February 1st**



### **Prayer to St. Brigid**

*You were a woman of peace.*

*You brought harmony where there was conflict.*

*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.*

Prayer from St. Agnes Cathedral

## Saint Brigid

\*There are many stories about St. Brigid's life. When the Celts ruled, the people believed in gods and goddesses. The most powerful of the goddesses was Brigid, and she was a true champion of the people. She was the mother goddess of the Tuatha De Dannan and the sun. She was the daughter of the "Good God," Daghdha, the patroness of poets, and her feast day was the first of February. This day was one of the most important feasts in the Celtic year. It was the first day of spring, and Brigid was the goddess who breathed life back into the world after the death of winter.

When St. Patrick arrived in Ireland in the 5th century, the Celts turned to one God, but Brigid was much loved. To keep her in the "family," she was named one of the three patron saints of Ireland. There are many stories about Brigid the goddess, but Brigid, the saint, soon had even a better set of legends. One belief was that as an infant, her mother left her alone and the neighbors saw flames rising from the house. They rushed in to save the babe, and found it was just the sun, shining so brightly that it looked as if the house was ablaze.

Another story tells that St. Brigid and St. Brendan were talking, she took off her cloak and hung it on a sunbeam. When St. Brendan tried the same, his cloak fell to the ground.

The goddess Brigid was known for her generosity and her ability to coax milk from any cow, even one just milked and dry. St. Brigid was very concerned with the poor and hungry, and could call upon her cows to supply milk and her hens to lay eggs three times a day to provide for the hungry.

St. Brigid is the patron saint of young farm animals and there are many customs associated with devotion to her. The St. Brigid's cross, woven from blessed palm (from Palm Sunday), rushes, or even paper, is hung with pride in nearly every Irish home and placed in dairies to protect the young calves. Another custom is that a piece of cloth was left outside on her feast day with the belief that she would touch it. This cloth is called St. Brigid's mantle and is kept in the

house for the following year. People believe that it will protect their livestock.

There's another legend about St. Brigid that explains the love of the St. Brigid's Cross. She was visiting a dying chieftain and the floor of the room was covered in rushes. She picked up a handful of these and began to weave a cross. When the chieftain asked what she was up to, she replied, "I am making a cross, for it was on a cross of wood that the Son of God died to save his people."

In the countryside, there is a custom that on the eve of St. Brigid's feast (February 1), the young girls dress up and go from house to house singing and dancing. They're given eggs and money. The girl leading the group dresses as the saint and carries a wooden doll, a "brideog" or "little Brigid." This doll is called a "biddy" and that night there is a dance called a "Biddy Ball."

History tells that St. Brigid was born in Co. Louth in 451 A.D. (Did you think this was *all* just legend? Nay, there was a real woman, Brigid, and she is the saint.) Her father, Dufach, was a pagan chief and her mother, Brocessa, a Christian. This was not a love match. Her mother was his slave, and not his wife. Young Brigid was property.

St. Brigid's love of the poor was often a source of trouble for her. She gave away milk and eggs and once, even her father's sword! She had many offers of marriage, but refused them all. When once she was convinced to marry, her beauty failed her before the wedding, and the day was called off! She returned to her normal handsome self only after her father allowed her to become a nun. The Bishop Mel of Ardagh gave her and seven of her friends the vows and veils of her order. She was made a bishop (unheard of today) and founded many convents.

St. Brigid was a strong, smart woman and is honored even today, as was the goddess Brigid before her. The St. Brigid's Cross is a symbol of peace today, as St. Brigid was a peace monger in her day and completely against war and strife, working to feed the poor and spread the Gospels.

\*(excerpted from: [www.bellaonline.com](http://www.bellaonline.com))