

Brigid

Isaiah 2: 2-4

In days to come the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. Many peoples shall come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.



Brigid's Blessing

Music composed by Sr. Genevieve Sheedy csb,

*St. Brigid Mary of Ireland
ask for us all today,
the courage to do God's bidding
whatever the world may say.
The grace to be strong and valiant
the grace to be firm and true
the grace to be faithful always
to God, God's Mother and you.*

Living Justice: **Brigid**

Brigid of Kildare lived in the twilight period of the Celtic world coming under the influence of Christianity. We see in this liminal space a high degree of crossover between the Celtic goddess Brigit and the Christian St Brigid – it is almost certain that the early Irish converts conflated the saint with the goddess and regarded the saint as retaining and manifesting certain qualities and functions of the goddess such as healing and fertility. What really matters however, is the unique contribution of St Brigid as a powerful force in promoting justice, charity and good-living.

The Early Life of St Brigid (Cogitosus) expresses two fundamental qualities of Brigid: her great faith and her extraordinary charity. The vast majority of this book details her concern for the poor and oppressed and much of her life story is concerned with issues of ordinary domestic life, transformed by her deep faith. Brigid was born into the household of Dubthach, a noble lord with considerable property. Her mother Broicsech was a slave of Dubthach's household, and so Brigid was in a unique position to be able to empathise with the plight of the oppressed while having the resources to respond with charity. She became famous for her generosity towards the poor which was considered excessive by those members of the household whose goods she gave away.

One of the best-known stories associated with Brigid is that of her giving away her father's sword to a poor man so that he could barter it for food to feed his family. The story is that Brigid's father took her to the King of Leinster so that she might work as a servant. He left her outside in his chariot together with his prized possession, a jewelled sword. Whilst she was waiting outside, a beggar suffering from leprosy came by. Brigid, seeing his need, gave away the jewelled sword much to the annoyance of her father. Thus, a sword- a weapon of war, was transformed into a life-giving instrument, turning a 'sword into a ploughshare.'

The well-known icon of Brigid depicts the placing of her foot on the jewelled sword, generally interpreted as indicating her desire to promote peace and non-violence rather than fighting which frequently broke out between warring clans in her time.

It challenges us all today to adopt an active stance of non-violence in the face of conflict.

