



St Brigid of Kildare

by

Margaret Kearney, March 30th 2023

Oh mother saint of Ireland, St Brigid of Kildare
Who lived among us long ago to guide, to love to care
Starting life in slavery then as abbess she was veiled
In folklore and tradition St Brigid has prevailed.

Baptized by our St Patrick they had parity of esteem
Great things have happened in her name, miracles it seems
St Conleth left his hermitage when she called him to her side
And became the Bishop of Kildare and in him she did confide.

Establishing her monastery in Kildare, Cill Dara, Church of Oak
Gaining land from the Duke of Leinster with her wonderful expanding cloak
She rescued the weak from conflict and gave comfort to the poor,
Taught people how to cope with life and helped them to endure.

An expert dairy woman, shepherdess and master brewer
She made an imprint on those she met and on everyone who knew her
Depicted in iconography, celebrated in verse and songs
Portrayed in stain glass windows, to all of Ireland she belongs.

Converting Pagans to Christian ways through the weaving of a cross
We pray to her in times of need, in thanksgiving and in our loss
From rushes it is fashioned, on the rafters it was hung
St Brigid's Cross hangs in our homes, a tradition had begun.

On the 31 st of January, on the eve of St Brigid's Day
A piece of cloth is placed outside that she blesses on her way
The healing cloth, Brat Bhríde which also gives protection
Is a reminder of her living spirit and of our long and deep connection.

There are place names near and far and wide where St Brigid has left her mark
In emblems, crests and holy wells, clubs, schools and fields and parks,
Solas Bhríde, the perpetual flame, the light of her unwavering faith
A role model for all women, in a world where men dominate.

She's the patron saint of healers, of blacksmiths and of poets,
Of livestock and of dairy workers and of babies don't you know it?
Of sailors and of printers, of scholars and of midwives
St Brigid is "fite fuaite," intertwined in to our daily lives.

Today she'd be an influencer, she's an icon of our time
A symbol of fertility, of nature's rhythm and rhyme
We see her in the snowdrops and in the lengthening of the day
Reminded of her enduring presence on February 1st, St Brigid's Day.

To Pagans she is a goddess, to Christians she is a saint
To each her image is of strength, a creature without taint
Earthwoman and peacemaker, bridge builder, Muire na nGael
Exalted one and humble servant, in you our faith won't fail.

There's a special feeling in Kildare for the saint we call our own
Deep rooted in our DNA in us her spirit is sown
As we walk in her hallowed footsteps help us keep our Christian ways
Watch over us and keep us safe, for now and all our days.