

## SAINT BRIGID - THE OTHER IRISH SAINT

Although Saint Patrick is known worldwide, Ireland does have a female patron Saint: Saint Brigid. Known as Bridey, Mary of Gaels and even as Biddy, Saint Brigid was born near Dundalk to a pagan Gaelic chieftain named Dubtach (Duffy) and to a Christian slave mother named Brocessa, who was sold soon after Brigid's birth. She was baptized by Saint Patrick with whom she was to become friends.

As a child the young Brigid enjoyed a position of some comfort and privilege, the family being in receipt of financial support because of their position of authority. Upon reaching adulthood however, she assumed a role of servitude and was charged with caring for her father and family.

She never forgot her mother however and, despite being forbidden to do so, she left the family home, located her mother, negotiated her release from slavery and returned home to her fathers house. To her dismay, her father had arranged her marriage to a poet, who were among the most prestigious men of the time. Brigid had already vowed to remain celibate and to do God's work so once more, she left her home, this time forever.

Together with seven other dedicated women she formed the first ever female monastic community in Ireland in the year 468. They helped the poor of the time and were attributed with many miracles. Despite having limited resources they never seemed to be without food or supplies for their good works. She founded a school of Art and a Monastery at Cill Dara, about which the modern town of Kildare now stands.

The most famous miracle associated with Brigid tells of her confrontation with an Irish chieftain. She asked him for a quantity of land so that she could build a monastic community. The chieftain replied that she could have whatever amount of land her cloak could cover. Brigid took the cloak from her shoulders and cast it on the ground where it covered over 12 acres of the chieftains lands. He gave it willingly.

The date of her death is now that of her feastday, February 1st. which is still celebrated with the traditional creation of the Saint Brigid Cross, made from reeds. She is buried next to Saint Patrick in Downpatrick.

Saint Brigid - An article provided by [The Information about Ireland Site](#).