

February 1: Imbolc and Saint Brigid's Feast Day

February 1 is the Feast Day of Saint Brigid of Kildare, the Patroness of Ireland who is associated with healing, peace, and compassion for those who are poor; a foundational concern shared by the Sisters of Mercy. Saint Brigid's Feast Day marks the first day of spring in Ireland and begins the Celtic season of Imbolc welcoming new beginnings, inspiration, hope and growth. Like Earth's potential for new life in the birthing of buds and in Creation's greening, we too can experience inner growth in our spiritual lives: new truth, evolving wisdom, expanding compassion and more.



Artist Margot Slowick
See margotslowick.com to order copies

A Prayer to Saint Brigid

The light of Brigid be about me
On my going out and on my coming in.
May she walk before me on every road.
May she stand behind me at every challenge.
May she hold the map of my journey
And bring me safely home at journey's end.
--Lunaea Weatherstone, *Tending Brigid's Flame*

Poem for Reflection:

"St. Brigid at the Market" by Christine Valters Paintner, *Dreaming of Stones* (Paraclete Press, 2019)

I saw her in the market
backlit in the doorway
from the evening sun,
blue cloak ripples like water
dandelions and primrose in her hand.

Passersby brush past
this moment of light and song
in a rush to get shoes off
and dinner on, just another day
of traffic, bills, and angry bosses.

I stood, mouth open,
holding three lemons,

a pile of sunlight,
a miracle in yellow,
tiny halos

a little girl stops next to me,
giggles, points to the door,
her mother's yank
drags her back to the world of lists.

I fear I will forget
this supermarket vision late tonight,
reaching for the bowl of lemons
and simply seeing fruit.

Reflection Questions:

- What new life, inspiration, or hopes may be budding within or around you?
- How might you nurture healing, peace and compassion for yourself and others?
- What moments of "light and song" have you experienced during your seemingly ordinary routine that resonate with Saint Brigid's love, compassion and healing?

Listen to "Mary of the Gael – Song of Saint Brigid" composed and sung by Carmel Boyle.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlsoft4lfuQ>. This song is inspired by ancient prayers to Saint Brigid.

Closing Prayer to Saint 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

If you would like to join with others on February 1st to celebrate and learn from Brigid, register for [Inspirations and New Beginnings: Lessons from Saint Brigid and the Celtic Season of Imbolc](#) with Sister Peggy Murphy, O.P.

Celtic Wheel of the Year:

[The Celtic Wheel of the Year](#) offers an inspirational model and context in which to place the ebbing of our joys and sorrows within Nature's rhythms.

