



Bridgette was born at Faughart near Dundalk, Louth, Ireland. Her parents were baptized by St. Patrick, with whom she developed a close friendship. Even as a young girl, she showed an interest in religious life and took the veil in her youth from St. Macaille at Croghan and probably was professed by St. Mel of Armagh, who is believed to have conferred abbatial authority on her.

About the year 470, she founded a 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 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.

Just as the shamrock is associated with St. Patrick, so is the tiny cross made of rushes linked to Brigid. While explaining the Passion to a dying pagan, she wove a cross from the rushes strewn about the floor. They are still made in Ireland today and placed in the rafters of cottages on St. Brigid's Day (February 1st) to ward off harm.

Bridget 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.

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