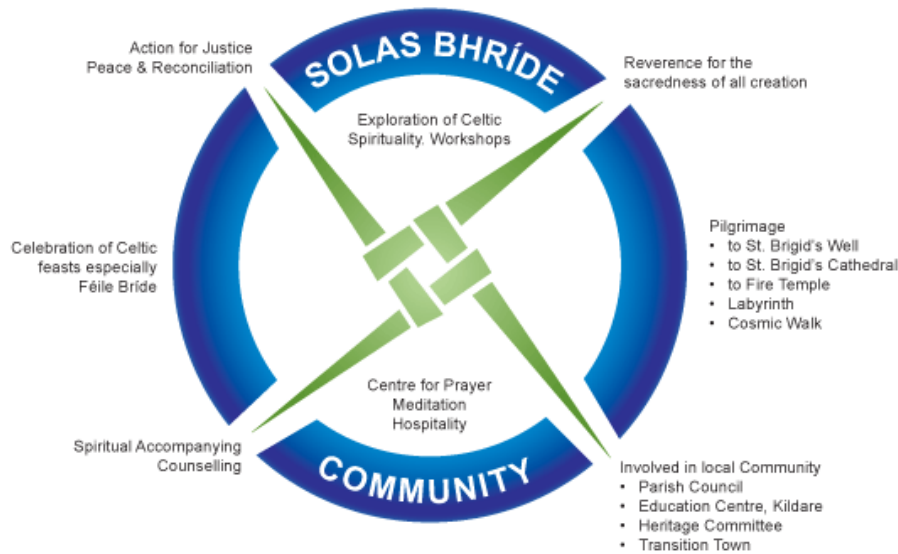


Hooked on Brigid - Brenda Kindregan



I was invited by Sr. Mary Minehan to attend a Cáirde Bhríde meeting over twenty years ago, and I am there ever since!! One of the hallmarks of the Brigidines is hospitality and welcome - everyone was welcomed and treated to the ubiquitous cuppa by Mary and Phil. Their home was and still is a warm, welcoming, nourishing, and fun-filled space. Friendship thrives in such an environment. One thing leads to another and one day you discover you are not only there for the company but also because Brigid, her values, and qualities, have become an important, in fact essential part of your own life. You know there is a legend - The Legend of Brigid and the Whales - in which we are told that Brigid said that once she set her mind on God, she never let God out of her mind and never would. Well I also think Brigid sets her mind on us too, inviting us to engage and put on the mind of God. To use slang, once she 'claps her eyes on you' there is no escape!! I'm hooked and having Brigid in my life as a source of inspiration, earthiness, hope, light, and example, is humbling. However, she is also very challenging and always points to higher values and higher consciousness. In my life I find she lovingly demands more of who I am.

Cáirde Bhríde and the Brigidine Sisters

Cáirde Bhríde is a group of women and men who, in association with the Brigidine Sisters, are inspired by the values and qualities of Brigid. There is probably a core group of about 15 people who meet once a month in Solas Bhríde Centre and Hermitages, Kildare Town. Solas Bhríde Centre is a Christian Spirituality Centre with a focus on the legacy of St. Brigid. Cáirde Bhríde's vision is to share the legacy of Brigid in an inclusive, creative, and nurturing way. Each individual member is encouraged to develop and use his or her gifts and skills by preparing, facilitating, participating in, and managing the various activities that take place in the Centre. These activities include: a sharing and celebration of the story of Brigid, exploring the traditions, values, and customs of Brigid, pilgrimages to Brigid's sites

adjacent to Kildare, celebrating the natural and liturgical seasons of the year, facilitating workshops and reflections on spirituality and ecology, and meditation practices.

Like others, I engage in the unfolding of the legacy of Brigid in many ways: I work with the Solas Bhríde team in the scripting, preparation, and facilitation of rituals, workshops, pilgrimages, and cultural events.

I found as the years rolled on, as a member of Cáirde Bhríde, that I became part of a very large community: the wider Brigidine community of Sisters in Ireland, England, USA, and Australia; the wider circle of associates; the present and past pupils of Brigidine schools; and the pilgrims, of all faiths and none, who visit the Centre from all over the world. I treasure that and feel part of a network that is steeped in the legacy of Brigid which affirms, challenges, stretches, and nurtures me.

Cáirde Bhríde and the Solas Bhríde Centre community -Phil, Mary and Rita- like any other group of people, experience all the joys, achievements, challenges, sufferings, and losses of life. On a personal level when my husband was diagnosed with cancer and all through his illness, treatment, and death, we were accompanied along the way by members of Cáirde Bhríde and Solas Bhríde. These same people are now walking along-side me in my grief and grieving and they encourage and challenge me to channel some of the energy of my grief into sources of enrichment. When I was thinking about doing the MA in Applied Spirituality I was enthusiastically encouraged and supported along the way.

People from all over the world visit Solas Bhríde Centre seeking to learn more about Brigid, to walk in her foot-steps as pilgrims and to root themselves in her values. While on their own personal journeys many people are comforted and delighted by the fact that they are also part of a community of pilgrims. Tradition holds that 'all were welcome at Brigid's door'. From the Lives we learn that Brigid was a woman of legendary hospitality, that she was a woman of the land, a peacemaker, an advocate of the poor, a spiritual leader and an anam chara to many. These values and qualities are relevant for our world today.

MA Research on the legends of Brigid

The legends of Brigid provide a deep source of knowledge, inspiration, and reflection for me. I love them and each time I visit a legend and engage in a reflection practice on the legends, I find new insights and secrets waiting for me. I saw the research module of the MA in Applied Spirituality as an opportunity to explore further the possibility of Brigid as anam chara to people today through the medium of legend. I thoroughly enjoyed the research process.

For the future I see many possibilities with exploring spirituality and the legacy of Brigid, the new Universe Story and the legacy of Brigid particularly from the perspective of care for the earth and care for the poor, the practice of hospitality and the issue of the displaced peoples in our world today, and hospitality and peace-making. I am also very interested in the customs and traditions associated with the cult of Brigid and their relevance for today. So, there is a whole world of possibility around marrying the legacy of Brigid - her values and qualities, the cult of Brigid-customs, practices and traditions, and their relevance for today.

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