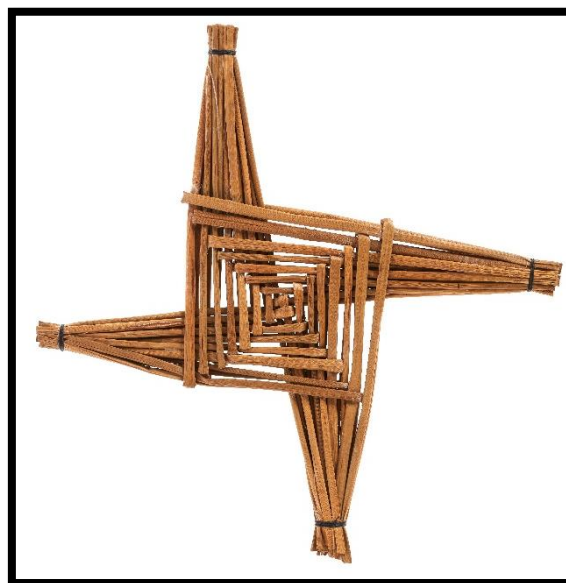


St. Brigid and her Shoe Shrine

St. Brigid is one of the patron saints of Ireland and she is celebrated on the 1st February each year. St. Brigid lived in Ireland over 1500 years ago, during the 5th and 6th centuries. Historians and Archaeologists call this time Early Medieval Ireland. During this time, Christianity as a religion was brought to Ireland, many people became Christians, and a lot of churches were built so that people could go to them for prayer. St. Brigid is famous for building her church and monastery in Kildare. Kildare means 'church of the oak tree'.

We know a little bit about the life and miracles of St. Brigid. However, these were written down over 100 years after her death. One of her miracles tells us about her church. Brigid approached the King of Leinster, asking for a place to build her church, however the King refused. Brigid asked the King if she could place her cloak on the ground and have the land her cloak would cover. The King laughed, thought she was joking, and told her to lay down her cloak. As she placed her cloak on the ground it grew and grew and grew and covered many acres of land. At this point the King realised that she had been blessed by God and gave her the land that she needed.



St. Brigid's Cross



St. Brigid's Shoe Shrine, 16th Century

There are a lot more stories and miracles about St. Brigid. One of these is how she made a cross out of reeds to teach people about God. To this day, people celebrate St. Brigid's Day by making a cross out of reeds or straw. St. Brigid's Day also falls on the first day of spring. At this time of the year, the weather starts to get brighter, the days are longer, and many flowers start to bloom.

At the National Museum of Ireland – Archaeology, there is a Shoe Shrine on display. Although this Shoe Shrine was made many years after St. Brigid was alive, it is believed that it was made to keep safe a shoe or slipper that once belonged to St. Brigid.