

# St Brigid: Woman of Courage and Deep Faith

Bishop Michael Router is Auxiliary Bishop of Armagh.

St Brigid was motivated at a young age by the radical message of Jesus and the life-giving and progressive power of the Christian faith. From her very earliest days in Faughart, Brigid displayed Christian qualities that were very much at odds with the greed and self-centredness of the society around her. That inner desire to be compassionate and charitable was something Brigid carried with her all her life. Indeed, her father Dubhthach, a pagan, was going to sell her into slavery, because he feared she would make him destitute, so great was her generosity.

Brigid was a woman of strength, courage and deep faith, who was so impressive and strong that she acquired an authority and breadth of influence that was almost unheard of for a woman at that time. She gained that authority and influence because of her fearlessness, and her willingness to champion the cause of those who had no voice and to tackle the injustices that existed in the society in which she lived. The example of Brigid highlights the need for the resurgence today of a spirituality and faith based on love

and compassion in a world that is so self-centred and materialistic.

The qualities that made Brigid great have been found in so many women. Some of these women entered

religious life and were extremely dedicated to their vocation

and mission. The vast majority, however, have been women who in their homes, workplaces and communities helped to nurture and to spread the faith. Without them the Church would have found it hard to survive and flourish. Their contribution then and now is incalculable, and the gratitude owed to them immense.

Time and again in the Gospel, we see that Jesus was supported by women at every moment of his public ministry. They stood by him as he died on the cross, they received his lifeless body into their arms, and they were the first to witness to his resurrection from the dead.

The vibrancy of our faith and Church in the future depends on the continued involvement of women, and, in order for that to happen, we must fully acknowledge the gifts and graces that women bring to the life of the Church.

