

Honouring Brigid's Day as a National Holiday

This email was circulated to all Irish politicians and stakeholders on the Spring Equinox, 20th March 2021

A chara,

We want to bring to you up to date and seek your support for the campaign to make Brigid's Day a national holiday, which we presented to Leo Varadkar, Tànaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Tourism and Employment on the Spring Equinox.

On behalf of the citizens of Ireland and our diaspora, we present this [petition](#) and call on you to make [Brigid's Day](#) a national holiday, **celebrating Brigid - Ireland's matron Saint and triple Goddess - equally to our world famous St. Patrick.**

Just like St. Patrick's Day was made a global success by our cherished diaspora, the Irish abroad are leading the way with Brigid's celebrations. From Warsaw to Washington, Irish Embassies and Irish cultural centres mark the day with events honouring women around the world (ref: [Irish Times](#)). In 2020, at the request of the Department of Foreign Affairs we moved the annual International [Herstory Light Festival](#) from Nollaig na mBan (Women's Little Christmas) to Brigid's Day to enable Irish Embassies to participate in illuminating iconic landmarks in honour of women. This is a brilliant opportunity for the Irish Government to develop Ireland's reputation on the world stage through culture, under the Global [Ireland](#) 2025 programme.

Long before the Saint, Brigid was a **pan-European Goddess and a unifying force** across the continent from Turkey to Spain. In contrast to most European countries, Ireland is long overdue a new [public holiday](#): Ireland has only 9 public holidays per annum whereas most EU countries enjoy 11 -13 days. Today, when Brexit threatens the stability of the EU, Brigid's Day is an opportunity to reunite with our European neighbours and reaffirm our commitment to the founding values of the European Union, one of the most successful and enduring peace projects in modern history.

The 1st of February marks the **beginning of Spring, the return of the light and the Celtic festival of Imbolc**, once honoured as the feast of the Goddess. Today, Ireland is experiencing a spectacular Spring, emerging as one of the most progressive, egalitarian countries in the world. In one generation our nation has transformed from *No Country for Women* (as outlined in the 2020 [RTÉ documentary](#)) to a leading light for equality.

As a Saint and Goddess, Brigid was renowned for her powers of healing and alchemy. A nation's strength, integrity and longevity is determined by its willingness to face and heal its shadow. Ireland is courageously revisiting and healing the trauma from the legacy of the Magdalene Laundries and Mother & Baby Homes. Only by processing and integrating our dark histories can we transform the trajectory of future generations and realise our potential to co-create an enlightened society. Making Brigid's Day a national holiday will continue our nation's evolution and the legacy of the Marriage Equality and 8th Amendment referendums - both extraordinary victories of compassion.

In line with Ireland's commitment to becoming a truly inclusive, multi-cultural society, we recommend that this day be named Brigid's Day, rather than St. Brigid's Day. Brigid was a Goddess and a Saint, European and Irish. She was not attached to one particular religion, but upheld the attributes of a compassionate society.

In Ancient Ireland, she was an Ulster Goddess and a Leinster Saint. **An All-Ireland icon for a modern, inclusive Ireland** while honouring all beliefs and none.

2022 marks the finale of the Decade of Centenaries, the end of the Civil War, and 100 years since all women in Ireland won the right to vote. The 1st of February 2022, therefore is the opportune and appropriate year to introduce Brigid's Day as a national holiday.

The time has come to write a new story of unity and equality by celebrating Brigid and *all* women, a proclamation of **a true Ireland of Equals and the realisation of the 1916 vision** that made Ireland the first country in the world to promise equal rights and religious freedom to all men, women and children.

Making Brigid's Day a national holiday would be a real reflection of today's progressive, inclusive Ireland, sending a strong egalitarian message to the world.

Let this be our commitment to shaping Ireland's future, a new era guided by Brigid's principles of light, growth, inspiration, imagination, healing, truth, justice and love.

On behalf of the citizens of Ireland and our diaspora,

Sincerely,

Melanie Lynch, Treacy O' Connor, Laura Murphy & Lorna Evers Monaghan

APPENDICES

For your information, I have attached a document with fascinating facts about Brigid and stunning images from past Herstory Light Festivals.

Also attached is the petition from Uplift.ie with 7,402 signatories and counting.

Press articles supporting the campaign:

A recent [poll](#) in [thejournal.ie](#) on whether Brigid's Day should be made a holiday returned a 70.5% affirmative response from over 10,000 citizens.

[Statement](#) on 1st February by Seanad Cathaoirleach, Mark Daly in support of this new holiday

Recent Irish Examiner [article](#) highlighting Junior Minister Martin Heydon's request to support this petition.

The Abbey Theatre's production entitled [Home: Part One](#) features a call for Brigid's day to be made a national holiday on behalf of survivors of the Mother & Baby Homes (1hr59mins)

The International [Herstory Light Festival](#) illuminates iconic landmarks in honour of women on Brigid's Day every year:

- [Sunday World](#)
- [Irish Central](#)
- [Irish Examiner](#)
- [RTÉ Culture](#)
- [BBC Ulster](#)
- [Leinster Leader](#)
- [RTÉ Culture](#)
- [Kildare Nationalist](#)
- [RTÉ News](#)