

# IMBOLC



**“The St Brigid myths weave together the pre-Christian and Christian. She combines the Druidic love of earth with Christianity’s awareness of heaven. She points to the sacredness that is within as well as beyond us, that is beneath our very feet yet higher than the highest heaven, the two forever one, both expressing the divine essence of life.”**

**- John Philip Newell, *Sacred Earth Sacred Soul*, p51**

**What does it look like for you to embrace the both-and on your spiritual walk? What are the particular thresholds you find yourself spanning?**

Thresholds are a kind of thin place, spaces haunted by the holy. Jan Richardson wonders, "Perhaps the mystery of thin places is that when we find ourselves in them, when we recognise them, we become more present to the God who is always present to us." (*In the Sanctuary of Women*, p85)

**How is the liminality of the space you inhabit helping you to become aware of God with you? How might you awaken to the truth of God's constant presence?**

Brigid was known for her generosity, for giving away what was within her grasp (even if not always hers!) to the poor and in need. Most famously, she gave away the jewelled sword belonging to her father to a beggar. Her father went to the king to complain about her, saying, “She does things without asking permission”.

**Is there something you need to stop asking permission for? Something you want to do, or the person you want to be? Who have you seen as the gatekeepers of your life?**

**What would it be like to listen to the deepest desires and callings of your own heart, and give yourself permission to follow them? Can you trust that they are a way to connect with God?**

**“What are the barren places within us today?... Brigid invites us to remember that there is new life in the belly. We may not know what it will look like, what form and color it might take. We may not know exactly how it is going to come forth or when, but, as surely as we know that new life will emerge from the earth in spring, we can know that new life is gestating in the soul.”**

**- John Philip Newell, *Sacred Earth Sacred Soul*, p62**

Pre-Christian Brigid was a goddess of fertility, and the celebration of Imbolc literally translates as "a stirring in the belly", a reminder that with spring comes the promise of new life, that the pattern of resurrection is woven deeply into the natural cycles of death and life.

**What are the barren places within you today? What are the barren places within your community?**

**What new life is stirring in the belly of your soul?**

Brigid is associated with water, with many wells still dedicated to her across Ireland and Britain. Jesus once said, "whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (John 4).

**How do you relate to the image of water? Is there any particular body of water or spring that is meaningful to you?**

**What does it mean to you to never thirst again? What is the eternal life offered to you?**