

The story of St. Brigid's Cloak

BRIGID  1500

Soon after her ordination by St. Patrick, Brigid wanted to found her own monastery. She decided that the edge of the Curragh in Kildare was the ideal place - it had ample Oak forests for firewood and building, freshwater in a nearby lake and a large, fertile open plain for growing food.

She approached her old acquaintance the King of Leinster. She asked for land in Kildare on which to build her monastery. The king refused as he was not one to part with hard-won land. She was not to be deterred and Brigid and her followers prayed that the King would change his mind and that 'his heart would soften'.

The second time she asked him, she asked for 'as much land as her cloak would cover'. Bemused by this request, the King agreed and met her on the Plains of Kildare.

When the King saw Brigid's small cloak, he laughed out loud, but was soon to be sorry for doing so. Brigid took off her cloak and told four of her followers to take hold of a corner each and walk in four different directions, north, east, south and west. As they walked away from Brigid, the cloak grew and grew and grew until it covered many hundreds of acres.

The King was true to his word and granted her the lands for her Monastery. On this land Brigid founded one of Ireland's most sacred Early Christian monasteries about the year 470 - often referred to as The Church of the Oak.

The King of Leinster was so taken by this miracle that he became a patron of Brigid's - funding building, food and other necessities as the monastery grew in size and fame, and later becoming a Christian himself.

A Cathedral dedicated to St. Brigid still stands on the site to this day, adjacent to a wonderful Round Tower from the top of which you can look over the land that was covered by St. Brigid's Cloak!