



Paula Carbery
Bayside SNS
Verbena Avenue
Dublin 13

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A chairde

A huge thanks to you all for so kindly making Brigid's Day Crosses for me to take with me on my recent visit to Rome. It was an honour to be invited to the Holy See by the Irish Ambassador – Derek Hannon – to give a keynote address as part of the Embassy's St Brigid's Day celebrations.

While I was supposed to meet the Pope directly during the celebrations, there was a change of plan last minute because I was invited to the National Television Awards as the 'Chernobyl' mini-series was nominated for 'Best New Drama'. Subsequently, it won and I got to receive the award on behalf of the producers and writers.

The theme of this year's event was 'Celebrating the Creativity of Women.' This was a powerful idea, and several women and girls were honoured for the remarkable contributions that they have made to society on a global level. Your creativity was celebrated too, as the beautiful crosses that you made were presented to the Pope's Representative, Ambassador and Delegates.

This is something that St Brigid would want you to remember. Each of you holds a creativity and a power within you that can lead to incredible accomplishment and achievement when used correctly. Brigid was a dynamic saint who was ahead of her time in so many ways, but she had a deep belief in equality and justice for all. She sought to empower those around her, especially young women. After refusing an arranged marriage, she went on to found many convents whose schools provided education for thousands of young women who otherwise would have had none. Overall, she helped to create a systematic change in Ireland for the better.

In my own life, I draw on the story of St Brigid in times where I need the courage to continue to advocate for a better and more sustainable world – something that seems almost impossible in modern times. We are all aware of how fragile our earth has become in the hands of man. Many of us who are concerned about our planet draw on Brigid - from her respect and reverence she had for the land and we see how by taking small and steady steps, St Brigid accomplished so much during her time. Remember this when it comes to your own lives – remember that small, consistent changes will all add up to one enormous difference.

The fact that St Brigid's feast day is the 1st of February is no coincidence! It's the day that marks in our calendar the first day of spring! A new beginning. This gives us a sense of renewal and hope for a better future – a future that you all will shape as you are the next generation of leaders and your voices will be heard.

Warmest regards

Adi Roche

Voluntary CEO

Chernobyl Children International

Chernobyl Children International

1A The Stables, Alfred Street,

Cork, Ireland.

Tel: +353 21 455 8774

Fax: +353 21 450 5564

Email: info@chernobyl-ireland.com

Web: www.chernobyl-international.com

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Directors: Adi Roche, William Keary, Ail Hewson, Noel Kelly, Ann O'Neill,
Helen Faughnan, Liz O'Donnell, Peter Lacy, Julie Shynkarenka

