

Ireland's New Holiday Places Goddess on Pedestal

While the whole world recently celebrated St. Patrick's Day, Ireland kicked off their new holiday in honor of Brigid, who they consider to be a saint and a goddess.

Little was actually known or recorded about Brigid during her lifetime. What was known was mostly reported by a clergyman a couple hundred years after her death. She was purported to have been involved in the supernatural, including anything from healing the blind to aborting an unborn baby to changing a geographic landscape—signs of which seem to point more toward witchcraft than Christianity. The festival in honor of the goddess is usually known as Imbolc in Gaelic, but will be nationally recognized as St. Brigid's Day.

It is now this mysterious entity that the Irish people are gearing up to celebrate as a new, "modern" kind of saint who is typically represented with fire. In fact, The Irish Post reported that Brigid is historically known for having powers revolving around healing, fire and poetry.

For many Irish people of the day, the person of Brigid is not only about the spiritual side of things, but about her strong female characteristics.

Reverend Philip McKinley spoke with the Associated Press, stating, "St. Brigid offers this whole new dynamic. She's a very, very modern saint that speaks to the really cutting-edge issues of our day—gender equality, environmental issues, social care, poverty, peacemaking."

Melanie Lynch of Herstory told AP: "I think Ireland is ready to celebrate our women and our goddess and our saint...You're talking about a great role model for young girls."

Unfortunately, Ireland is not the only Western nation that has bowed to worshipping gods and goddesses. Here in America, a golden statue was recently erected as a memorial to Ruth Bader Ginsberg for her work in support of abortion, as reported by Charisma News.

Nancy Pelosi even gave a nod to Brigid on Twitter writing: "Today, we celebrate the feast of St. Brigid: Ireland's Patroness Saint and a great leader. Born in the fifth century, St. Brigid was a woman ahead of her time: establishing schools and churches—and encouraging women to lead."

Having good role models is part of life, but when those role models become idols, gods and goddesses, they no longer serve their purpose. Exodus 20:3 (MEV) is clear when it says "You shall have no other gods before Me." The Lord was not giving a suggestion; He was giving a commandment. In fact, when we bow down to other idols there are consequences. Exodus 20:5-6 (MEV) reads: "You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of them who hate Me, and showing lovingkindness to thousands of them who love Me and keep My commandments."

When we choose to worship other things—or people—we are living outside of God's will for Him to commune and have an intimate relationship with us. But when we choose to follow Him, to make Him our one and only God, we can experience His grace, mercy and favor upon our lives.

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Candace Cameron Bure Inspires Fans to Read the Bible in 2023

Great American Family Channel actress Candace Cameron Bure is inspiring her fans to read through the Bible in 2023 as she posted her own Scripture-reading progress on social media.

"I'm checking in to see who is reading and listening to the Bible recap along with me," Bure said. "I started January 1st. It is reading the Bible in a year chronologically with Tara-Leigh Cobble."

The Bible Recap, which is a year-long guide through the Scriptures, pairs reading and audio material together to keep readers on track as they dive through the Bible. The plan is set up so that readers can understand and appreciate what they are learning. However, Bure wants fans to know that this program doesn't have to start right at the beginning of the year to be effective.

"If you haven't started you can start today. You didn't miss anything, you just start on day one, even if it's not January 1st," Bure said. "You're never behind as Tara-Leigh says: 'you're right where God wants you to be.'"

The Bible Recap author Tara-Leigh Cobble has been co-hosting with Bure on the new The Candace Cameron Bure Podcast. In a recent episode, the two shared how viewers can see the Holy Spirit at work through the fruit of the Spirit and engage in a deep and meaningful relationship with Christ.

"I put on my clothes every morning. I put on my makeup, I put

on my lipstick, I put on my shoes to walk out my door. But the first thing I need to put on: put on kindness. Put on compassion. Put on humility and gentleness and patience. And those are things I need to be aware of. It's not easy. It's a choice that you make, and it's a choice that you practice," Bure said.

"If we are just not making that active choice to lean in, and just doing our own thing, we miss the beauty of that," Cobble said. "If we just get the instructions, just wanna know what to do, just tell me where to go: we miss the joy and the intimacy of the relationship."

Bure, who first became a household name during her time playing D.J. Tanner on Full House, has been outspoken about her faith in recent years. After leaving Hallmark for the Great American Family Channel, she expressed her desire to display traditional family values in her films, which has earned her great backlash from the secular media.

Despite these attacks, Bure has stayed strong on her course for Christ. Second Timothy 3:12 (MEV) tells us that, "Yes, and all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." Jesus said Himself in Luke 9:23 (MEV) "If anyone will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."

Seeing celebrity Christians like Bure clinging to their faith to share and encourage others in the hope of the Gospel is not only a biblical practice, but a great motivation for other Christians to stand firm in their faith, no matter what circumstances, slanders or other hardships may come.

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The Chosen Season Finale Is So Big it Literally Crashed the Web

When The Chosen season three finale was announced, fans literally broke the web by flocking to the Fathom Events website where tickets are being sold for viewers to watch the last two episodes in theaters.

“Unfortunately, the demand for tickets for The Chosen season finale crashed the Fathom Events website,” The Chosen wrote on Facebook.

“Episodes seven and eight of Season Three are so big they demand to be on the big screen. And apparently you demand it, too, as the rush for tickets initially crashed the Fathom Events website,” The Chosen updated viewers. “But now you can get tickets there or your local listing for our big Season Finale Thursday, Feb. 2 or Friday, Feb. 3.”

The final two episodes of the season will also be available for streaming on Feb. 5 and 7.

This comes after The Chosen’s smashing box office success for their Christmas release of the first two episodes in theaters back in December and their “Christmas With The Chosen: The Messengers” in 2021.

The show, which is the largest crowd-funded production of all time, has been skyrocketing with viewers since it was first released. The show does something very different than other films about the life of Christ. It not only takes audiences along Jesus’ journey to the cross and His Resurrection, but it

also gives a glimpse into what the lives of Jesus' 12 apostles would have been like on their way to meet Him and how dramatically those lives would have been altered once they gave up everything to follow Him.

The Chosen has been endorsed by everyday people spreading the word about the show, and by celebrities alike.

"The Chosen series offers us the promise of watching the life of Jesus from a whole new perspective," Dr. Alveda King writes on The Chosen's website. "I was so profoundly moved by the pilot, I can't wait for your family to experience and be changed by it."

In an interview with Charisma News, actor Noah James, who plays the disciple Andrew, discussed the immense experience of what it means to be in a role that has an impact on people's lives.

"When I see some of the images or paintings of some of the disciples, you know, for instance being martyred or anything, that affects me, it affects all of us quite deeply because you feel like you have this really personal connection to it in a way that maybe some other people don't," James said. "We're trying to live it out every day."

The Chosen's wild success is a phenomenon to more than just those who have funded and worked on the project. It's a total surprise to Hollywood as well. The Chosen is not subjected to the messages or platforms of the elite. They don't have to incorporate the rhetoric or beliefs applauded throughout the secular media. Creators can focus on what they do best—tell about Jesus as the way to salvation.

Through their own production platform with Angel Studios, The Chosen has been able to keep their message ignited on the Angel Studios app, which viewers can also use on Roku, FireTV and AppleTV. During the show's growth, other platforms like Fox Nation and Netflix have also picked up the show, no doubt

because of how popular it has become.

For so many, the Bible has come to life in a new way through The Chosen. Viewers will just have to wait to see how God moves through this remarkable show next.

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DeSantis Administration Cleared from Legal Battle Against University Professors

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has not violated a federal court order after a lawsuit entanglement with some of the state's college professors, as declared by federal Judge Mark Walker on Jan. 12.

Some Florida university professors sought legal action after DeSantis requested colleges turn in their spending for academics focused on inclusion, diversity and the controversial critical race theory, as reported by the Associated Press.

This lawsuit came less than two months after the same federal judge blocked DeSantis's "Stop WOKE" Act, as it served to keep ideologies like critical race theory from being taught in the classroom. The college professors against the DeSantis administration believed the request for information on diversity and critical race theory broke this order to pause the "Stop WOKE" Act.

When the act was blocked by Walker, he wrote, "Our professors

are critical to a healthy democracy, and the State of Florida's decision to choose which viewpoints are worthy of illumination and which must remain in the shadows has implications for us all."

Although Walker had concerns which led him to block "Stop WOKE," one of the bill's additions as of last March noted that: "Students shall develop an understanding of the ramifications of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping on individual freedoms, and examine what it means to be a responsible and respectful person, for the purpose of encouraging tolerance of diversity in a pluralistic society and for nurturing and protecting democratic values and institutions."

When DeSantis first signed House Bill 7, he made it clear in a press conference that he didn't want any person to feel isolated because of their race. Classes would teach African American, Hispanic and women's history, but it would not be legal for teachers to indoctrinate or teach students that any one person was superior, inferior or racist because of their background or skin color.

DeSantis is not the only governor in the fight against critical race theory. Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders of Arkansas put out an executive order to ban the teaching of CRT in schools.

"As long as I am governor, our schools will focus on the skills our children need to get ahead in the modern world, not brainwashing our children with a left-wing political agenda," Sanders said in her inaugural speech.

The debate about what should and should not be taught in the classroom has extended far beyond race and critical race theory and has found its way into the church. With huge pushes toward social justice as the core for many churches, there seems to be a growing divide between denominations and within

individual churches as was seen in the United Methodist Church split over ordaining and performing marriages for LGBTQ persons.

For Christians, it is crucial to remember that going along with the ways of the world will always seem brighter on the surface, but the rewards we seek are in heaven. By allowing the Lord to make our paths straight (Prov. 3:5-6), we will have a foundation against the ideologies that vie for our attention that only God deserves.

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Gen Z Flocks to the Feet of Jesus as Thousands Gather for Passion 2023

Thousands of students gathered in the past three weeks to attend the Dallas/Fort Worth and Atlanta Passion Conferences hosted by Louie and Shelley Giglio for days of worship, praise and teaching.

Major names including Sadie Robertson Huff, Tim Tebow, Jackie Hill Perry, Brandon Lake, Kari Jobe and Elevation Worship all brought something slightly different to the table to encourage students to live based on the Word of God and not the way of the world.

“This year we decided that there’s not going to be one thing that we go after with more passion, with more sacrifice, with more endurance, with more speed than for the cause of Christ,”

college football hall of famer Tebow said.

Conference lead speaker Sadie Robertson Huff encouraged students to stay true to the Word of God with their lifestyles to grow a deeper relationship with Christ:

“When we talk to Jesus, we come to Him with all of our spiritual language. Acting as if He doesn’t know anything about all of the other conversations we have. Acting as if He doesn’t see every other moment in life,” Robertson Huff says. “We dress in our Sunday best. We come to God in our perfect practiced prayer, we worship—we do all these things, but it looks nothing like the rest of our life.”

Passion Conferences were born in 1997 out of Louie and Shelley Giglio’s heart for students, that they would have a time to worship and grow through the Holy Spirit’s power. Louie Giglio continues to stay faithful to this message of what God can do, as he shared during a recent message at Passion City Church.

“We really just want to believe God’s still working and we might just be living in something that’s starting to look like revival,” Giglio said.

While the statistics may tell us that Christianity is on the decline, it’s gatherings like Passion that show all hope is not lost for the next generation. While many may not see God as pertinent to their lives, there are still plenty of Millennials and Gen Zers who are devoted to their faith and will cling to Jesus no matter what it may cost them.

In 1 Kings 19 as Elijah ran in fear of Jezebel, he truly believed in the moment that he was the only one left who loved the Lord. It was at this time God reminded him that there were 7,000 others who refused to worship Baal. Just as Elijah felt alone to continue God’s call on his life, Christians today are feeling the disintegration of the culture built around faith for a secular replacement. In fact, only 40% of Gen Zers grew up attending church services, compared to 57% of Baby Boomers

as children, which seemingly shows the disappearance of Christianity's pillars within less than a hundred years.

However, there are more than merely 7,000 Christians around us—there are millions! And there are brothers and sisters in Christ all around the world. God has not left us alone, and He is sharpening the next generation to spread His Gospel at all costs.

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FDA Clears Abortion Pill for Retailers Weeks Before 50th Annual March for Life

Just weeks before the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., the FDA announced that pharmacies can complete certification to sell Mifepristone, which can end a pregnancy by stopping the production of progesterone when used in conjunction with Misoprostol. Women up to 10 weeks pregnant will be able to purchase the pill.

Pharmacies will simply have to fill out a form and make sure their location can perform certain duties to carry the pill.

With this change to the FDA standards for Mifepristone use, retailers like Walgreens and CVS can sell this product to customers. Throughout the 2000s, the legal authorization for the use of these abortion pills became more and more relaxed. Mifeprex, a form of Mifepristone, was first approved by the FDA for up to seven weeks of identifiable pregnancy. Guidelines were changed in 2016 to allow women up to 10 weeks

pregnant to take Mifeprex. This is during the pregnancy timeline when fingers, toes and other body parts start to take better shape in the developing child.

While the generic brand of this medication was released, the FDA's latest change to their rules regarding the abortion pill comes just two weeks prior to the 50th annual March for Life in Washington D.C., the first march since the overturning of Roe v. Wade last summer.

"The FDA is failing women and girls by removing even the most basic precautionary requirements surrounding these dangerous drugs," March for Life tweeted.

Other human rights advocacy groups are expressing outrage about this decision to allow pharmacies to provide these abortive medications.

"Pure evil," conservative human rights organization Live Action wrote on Twitter. "Medicine is meant to heal, not kill. And it should not be available at any pharmacy. Shame on the Biden @US_FDA for ramping up its attacks on the most vulnerable."

Live Action founder Lila Rose also commented: "The Pro-Life House majority MUST stop the reckless Biden FDA."

Despite this blow from the FDA to the pro-life movement, the March for Life will still shine bright, featuring major champions of the faith including Samaritan's Purse president, Franklin Graham, The Chosen's Jonathan Roumie, and music group We Are Messengers.

It's true that our world has normalized what is evil and called it good and now calls what is good evil, just as the prophet Isaiah pointed out. There seems to be a darkness over our nation, as many continue to fight for the right to life. In Matthew 5:13-14, Jesus made it clear that His followers are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. He continued

by saying, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven," (v. 16, MEV).

The overturning of Roe v. Wade was a response to the prayers and actions of His people shining His light. While the darkness is still after His people, and abortion continues to threaten and take the lives of unborn children, the power of God's light is still able to overcome.

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