

## **Donnybrook**

St Brigid 1 February 2022

Readings: Ephesians 3:14-21 and Luke 6:32-38

### **Welcome**

St Brigid was renowned for her hospitality and bounty. Our Gospel today reflects something of that in the marvellous words: a full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be poured into your lap. It is a very appealing image of abundance beyond measure. It can therefore be a bit of a surprise to hear the next sentence: the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given back.

### **Topic**

What is going on?

### **Steps**

At first glance, you could be forgiven for thinking that Jesus is teaching a kind of tit for tat morality, a *quid pro quo*. If you do this, you'll get that. In Kohlberg's analysis of moral development, this is the child up to the about the age of nine. I am good to avoid punishment; I am good with a view to being rewarded.

Jesus is really offering something much deeper. When I pardon, it is not so much that I will be rewarded with pardon from God but rather I will have a heart capable of receiving that God is offering. When I am compassionate, it is not so much I earn God's compassion but that I become capable of receiving what God's wants to give me. When I refuse to condemn, again it is not so much that the reward will be non-condemnation from God; rather, God's gift is capable of lodging in me.

We find this also in the Lord's Prayer: forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

### **Conclusion**

While we might tend to think in a transactional way, this Gospel reading is really about the kind of person that I am before others and before God. On the feast of St Brigid, we are invited to live generously, to think kindly of others, to be hospitable and loving. This is what God is like and we are all made in the image and likeness of God.