

# Month of December

## THE 3<sup>RD</sup> DAY

### Commemoration of Our Father among the Saints Birinus, Bishop of Dorchester-on-Thames

#### At Vespers

*On "Lord, I have cried...", these stichera, in Tone I: Spec. Mel.: "Joy of the ranks of heaven..."—*

Summoned to the service of the Lord, thou didst strive to enlighten Wessex with the wondrous light of Faith, O glorious Birinus; wherefore, having received grace from the Lord, thou ever helpest those amid misfortune and want, O wondrous saint of God.

Coming to the field of thy labors, O saint, thou didst uproot heathen beliefs like vile tares, cultivating the hearts of men with the Truth as with a plough, and planting the seeds of Faith therein; and thou didst reap a mighty harvest for the Lord thy God.

For thine unremitting toil in the vineyard of Christ thou didst receive abundant reward from Him in heaven, where thou dwellest in glory with the saints in the habitations of the righteous; wherefore, interceding with boldness, pray that we be saved.

*Glory...: Idiomelon, in Tone IV—*

Though thy sacred relics have been scattered by the ungodly, O holy hierarch Birinus, the grace which shone forth from them, unto the healing of those who approached them with faith, now filleth all England. Wherefore, honoring thy memory with fitting praise, we fall down in compunction, crying out to thee: O holy hierarch, never cease to pray that the souls of the English be turned to the Lord!

*Now & ever...: Theotokion, or this stavrotheotokion, in the same tone: Spec. Mel.: "As one valiant among the martyrs..."—*

As she beheld Thee, the Lamb and Shepherd upon the Tree, the Ewe-lamb who gave birth to Thee lamented and maternally exclaimed to Thee: "O Son most desired, Long-suffering One, how is it that Thou art suspended upon the tree of the Cross? How is it that Thy hands and feet have been nailed by the iniquitous, O Word, and Thou hast shed Thy blood, O Master?"

*Aposticha stichera from the Octoechos; and Glory...: Idiomelon, in Tone I—*

O ye Christians, let us gather together today on the feast of the holy Birinus, and with steadfast intent let us honor him as the adornment of the English land, a wellspring of healings and miracles, the great hierarch of Dorchester, who by his apostolic labors laid an unshakable foundation for the Holy Church of Christ in that city; for with great zeal he enlightened the hearts of those who lay in heathen darkness.

*Now & ever...: Theotokion, or this stavrotheotokion, in the same tone: Spec. Mel.: "O most lauded martyrs..."—*

Beholding Thine unjust slaughter, the Virgin, weeping, cried out to Thee, O Christ: O my Child most sweet! How is it that Thou diest unjustly? How is it that Thou hangest upon the Tree Who hast suspended the whole earth upon the waters? O most merciful Benefactor, Leave me not alone who am thy Mother, I pray Thee!"

*Troparion of the saint, in Tone VI—*

Taking up the Cross of Christ as it were a battle standard, thou didst set forth for the English lands, to wage war upon the ancient foe of mankind, O Birinus glorious in wonders; and, as a valiant champion of the Christian Faith, thou didst fight the good fight

until the end. Wherefore, thou hast received the trophy of victory from the King of kings Whom thou didst serve. Entreat Him, O holy hierarch, that He save our souls.

### At Matins

*At "God is the Lord...", the troparion of the saint, twice; Glory..., Now & ever...: Theotokion.*

*Canon of the saint, with 4 troparia, the acrostic whereof is "Birinus shepherded the lambs of Christ", in Tone V—*

#### Ode I

*Irmos:* Christ, Who hath delivered our race from the madness of idolatry, hath appeared on earth! To Him alone let us chant, for He hath been glorified.

Blessed Birinus took the easy yoke of Christ upon his shoulders, and set forth for distant Wessex to free men's souls from the madness of idolatry.

Imitating the apostles, the holy Birinus journeyed far to preach Christ, our God and Savior, to Whom alone let us chant, for He hath been glorified.

Raging seas could not keep the holy hierarch from the flock entrusted to his care by Christ, to Whom alone let us chant, for He hath been glorified.

*Theotokion:* In thy most pure womb, O Virgin, did the Word become incarnate, appearing to men on earth. To Him alone let us chant, for He hath been glorified.

#### Ode III

*Irmos:* God is King over the nations. God sitteth on His holy throne. And with understanding we chant unto Him as King and God.

Never failing in his care for the sheep and lambs of Christ, the wondrous hierarch Birinus taught them to worship Him as King and God.

Unto the king of Wessex didst thou preach, O saint, uprooting pagan superstitions from his heart and uniting him to the King of kings.

Saving the king, O Birinus, thou didst also save his people; for through thy preaching were thousands brought to divine understanding.

Sanctified by thee in the laver of regeneration, Cynegils was illumined by grace divine and was arrayed in a baptismal robe of pure white.

*Theotokion:* How didst thou, O Virgin, conceive in thy womb God Who is King over the nations, to Whom we all chant as eternal King and God?

*Sessional hymn, in Tone III: Spec. Mel: "Awed by the beauty of thy virginity..."—*

Hallowed by the oil of anointing and the indwelling of the Spirit of God, as a great high priest the holy Birinus faithfully served Christ his Lord, caring for the souls of the people, whom by his preaching he had brought into the light of grace out of the gloom and darkness of ignorance; wherefore, let us praise his godly memory.

*Glory..., Now and ever...: Theotokion—*

Like a vine which had not been cultivated didst thou put forth the most comely Cluster of grapes which poureth forth upon us the wine which maketh glad the souls and bodies of all. Wherefore, ever blessing thee as the cause of good things, with the angel we cry to thee: Rejoice, O thou Who art full of grace!

*Stavrotheotokion—*

Thy pure Mother who knew not wedlock, beholding Thee hanging dead upon the Cross, O Christ, said, weeping maternally: "How hath the iniquitous and thankless assembly of the Jews, which enjoyed Thy manifold and great gifts, rewarded Thee, O my

Son? I hymn Thy divine condescension!"

#### Ode IV

*Irmos:* Hearing of Thine advent from the densely wooded mountain, the prophet cried aloud: Glory to Thine ineffable incarnation!

Edifying his flock with the teachings of the Savior, the saint taught them to cry unto Him: Glory to Thine ineffable incarnation!

Praise ye the virtues of Birinus and the wonders he wrought through the power of God, crying: Glory to Thine ineffable incarnation!

Hearing the words of salvation, which fell from thy mouth like precious jewels, all cried out: Glory to Christ's ineffable incarnation!

*Theotokion:* Eminent among the angels, Gabriel was sent to the all-holy Mary to proclaim: Glory to God's ineffable incarnation in thee!

#### Ode V

*Irmos:* O almighty Word of God, send peace upon the whole world, enlightening and illumining with the light of truth all who glorify Thee, awakening out of the night.

Rising at dawn out of each night, the holy hierarch fervently did his Master's bidding, bringing the light of Truth to all, that they might glorify His incarnation.

Divine light dawned upon the people of Wessex, for the holy Birinus brought them the light of Christ, Who is the true Light that enlighteneth the whole world.

Exalt ye the honored memory of the God-bearing hierarch, for he illumined with grace divine a people who sat in darkness and the shadow of death and corruption.

*Theotokion:* David, thy forefather, called thee a queen, O Lady, and thou art verily the Queen of all that is, having given birth to Christ the King, the preëternal Word of God.

#### Ode VI

*Irmos:* Like Jonah I cry to Thee from the depths of the heart of the sea: Let my supplication come unto Thy holy and heavenly Church! Lead me up from my sins, I pray Thee, O Lord!

Two holy kings gave thee Dorchester as thy see, O Birinus—Cynegils of Wessex and Oswald of Northumbria; and therein thou didst establish the Church, to deliver men from their sins.

Heartfelt praise let us utter from the depths of our souls, giving thanks with gladness to the holy Birinus, who dwelleth now in the holy and heavenly Church, where he prayeth for our souls.

Exalted above all earthly things, the holy hierarch standeth now in the Holy Church triumphant, crying out to Christ most fervently: Lead up my people from their sins, I pray Thee, O Lord!

*Theotokion:* Like as Jonah cried out to the Lord, so do we send up entreaties to His most immaculate Mother, crying: Lead us up out of our sins, O Lady, and pray thou in our behalf to the Lord thy Son!

*Kontakion, in Tone IV: Spec. Mel.:* "Thou hast appeared..."—

With sacred hymns and spiritual songs we exalt the most blessed hierarch Birinus today, for he was a faithful servant of Christ and a vigilant shepherd of His flock, who ever prayeth in our behalf.

*Ikos:* With hymns of praise let us exalt Birinus, great among hierarchs, the enlightener of the Saxons and teacher of the Christian Faith; and let us bestow a wreath of

honor upon his brow, for he tirelessly uprooted the tares of idolatry from Wessex, and with the light of Christ dispelled the darkness of ignorance from men's souls. Wherefore, having received an everlasting reward from the Lord, he ever prayeth in our behalf.

#### Ode VII

*Irmos:* Blessed, all-hymned and all-glorious art Thou, O God Who lookest upon the depths and sittest upon the throne of glory!

All-glorious is the sacred memory of the holy hierarch Birinus, who now sitteth upon a throne of glory in the heights of heaven.

Many who before were drowning in the depths of heathen error did the most blessed hierarch lift up to the heights of heaven.

Blessed and most wondrous is the saint of God, for he put his hand to his Master's plough and did not turn back.

*Theotokion:* Sacred hymns let us offer now to the all-hymned Virgin Mary, who in her loving-kindness looketh down upon us with pity.

#### Ode VIII

*Irmos:* Him Who bedewed the furnace and preserved the children amid the burning flame do ye hymn, O children, bless, O priests, and exalt supremely, ye people, for all ages!

O ye children of the Orthodox Church, lift up your voices in praise of God Who is wondrous in His saint, crying. Ye priests and people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

For our sins and iniquities we fear the burning of the fiery furnace; but, bedewed by God's saint, let us cry: Ye priests and ye people, exalt Christ supremely for all ages!

Come, ye who love Birinus, and, burning with zeal to imitate his virtues, let us cry to God: Ye children, hymn; ye priests, bless; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages.

*Theotokion:* Her who was prefigured by the bush, which burned with flame yet was not consumed, do ye children hymn, ye priests bless, ye people exalt supremely for all ages.

#### Ode IX

*Irmos:* O most hymned Theotokos, thou rod sprung forth from the root of David, thou hast borne for us a most comely Blossom, the Cause of our ancient blessedness. Wherefore, we all magnify thee with hymns.

Rivers of grace issued forth from thy tomb, O Birinus, watering Dorchester with blessedness, filling the vale of the River Thames with the souls of the saved, as with comely flowers; wherefore, we magnify thee.

In royal Winchester did the holy Hædda enshrine the sacred relics of the hierarch Birinus, where they put forth the sweet fragrance of gracious healings for those who approached them with faith and the fear of God.

Sent forth to proclaim the Godhead of the Son of David, Birinus bore to a distant land the words that are able to restore men to their ancient blessedness; wherefore, we glorify him with spiritual songs and hymns of praise.

*Theotokion:* The most hymned Theotokos is eternally praised in the courts of heaven, for she gave birth in the flesh to the Creator of all things, in manner past understanding and recounting; wherefore, we also dare to magnify her.

*Exapostilarion: Spec. Mel.: "O Light immutable..."—*

The Light that shone forth timelessly from the Father before the ages in later

times filled thy soul, O Birinus most wise, that thou mightest serve as a radiant beacon enlightening the souls of all who sat in the darkness of sin.

*Theotokion—*

The Light that shone forth timelessly from the Father before the ages hath now, in these latter days, sprung forth in time from thee, O Virgin, for the salvation of the world. Him do thou never cease to entreat in behalf of the world.

*Aposticha stichera from the Octoechos; and Glory...: Idiomelon, in Tone II—*

A faithful steward wast thou for thy Master, O Birinus, for with diligence thou didst labor to increase that which He had entrusted to thee, and like a good shepherd thou didst go forth to seek the lost sheep, which finding, thou didst restore to the flock of Christ. Wherefore, praising thine archpastoral care, we honor thy holy memory with love, O hierarch.

*Now & ever...: Theotokion, or this stavrotheotokion, in the same tone: Spec. Mel. :*

*“When from the Tree...”—*

When the unblemished Ewe-lamb beheld her Lamb willingly led as a man to the slaughter, weeping, she said: “Dost Thou hasten now to leave me childless who gave Thee birth, O Christ? What is this Thou hast done, O Deliverer of all? Yet do I hymn and glorify Thine utter goodness which passeth understanding and recounting, O Thou Who lovest mankind!”

## At Liturgy

*Prokimenon, in Tone I—*

My mouth shall speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.

*Stichos:* Hear this, all ye nations; give ear, all ye that inhabit the world.

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, §318

Brethren: Such a High Priest became us, Who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this He did once, when He offered up Himself. For the law maketh men high priests who have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, Who is consecrated for evermore. Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a High Priest, Who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a Minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

*Alleluia, in Tone II—*

*Stichos:* The mouth of the righteous shall meditate wisdom, and his tongue shall speak of judgment.

*Stichos:* The law of his God is in his heart, and his steps shall not be tripped.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW, § 11

The Lord said to His disciples: “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Who is in heaven. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you: Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one

tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

*Communion verse—*

In everlasting remembrance shall the righteous be; he shall not be afraid of evil tidings.