

Month of January

THE 15TH DAY

Commemoration of Our Venerable Mother Ita, Wonderworker of Limerick & All Ireland

At Vespers

On “Lord, I have cried...”, these stichera, in Tone VIII: Spec. Mel.: “O all-glorious wonder...”—

Thou wast like a most fragrant rose, perfuming all the faithful with the sweetness of the virtues and ever dispelling the stench of the passions by grace, O venerable mother Ita, adornment of the Irish lands, confirmation of the Church of Christ, nurturer of a multitude of saints, boast of virgins and wellspring of wonders.

Christ God hath bestowed thee upon Ireland as a treasure beyond all reckoning; for, having struggled there for the virtues, O most glorious Ita, thou drivest away hordes of the demons by thine mighty intercession. Wherefore, with joy we bless thee and celebrate thy memory today, O irresistible torrent of miracles.

Forsaking all the vanities of life, thou didst wed the preëternal Word, abiding in stillness of soul, that thou mightest bear the word of God in thy heart; and like a ewe-lamb, pure and innocent, thou didst offer thyself wholly unto God. Wherefore, we cry out: Rejoice, O wondrous Ita, who now delightest in the glory of paradise!

Glory...: Idiomelon, in Tone IV—

To all who honor her with reverence, the venerable Ita crieth with a loud voice: “Come, my children, learn ye the lessons of my life! For I forsook my father's royal house, and spurned riches and a marriage of wealth and princely state; and, humbling myself in holy poverty and obedience, I embraced fasting and abstinence as my companions, and watered my soul with tears, and filled my ears with sighing. Instead of costly vesture I put on the coarse raiment of ascetic toil; but now my divine Bridegroom hath cast off such rags from me, and covered me with gladness, crowning me with heavenly glory and surpassing honor. Wherefore, be ye ever of good cheer, and fortify your souls with hope, for our Savior, Redeemer and Lord, Who loveth mankind, shall likewise change all your sorrows into joy.”

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

When she beheld Thee, the Lamb and Shepherd, upon the Tree, the Ewe-lamb who gave Thee birth lamented and maternally exclaimed to Thee: “O my Son most desired! How is it, O Word, that thy hands and feet have been pierced with nails by the iniquitous? How is it that Thou hast shed Thy blood, O Master?”

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

Be thou ever mindful of us in thy confident entreaties before the throne of God, O right wondrous and venerable mother. For, panting like a hart after the waters of wisdom divine, thou didst drink deeply thereof, in nowise knowing satiety; for which cause Christ hath glorified thee with the venerable Bridget, exalting thy God-pleasing struggles with hers in the sight of all the faithful. Wherefore, with faith we all now cry out to thee, O blessed Ita: Rejoice, thou who hast been crowned with the victor's wreath of glory! Rejoice, O dutiful handmaid of Christ! Rejoice, thou who among the wise wast most wise! Rejoice, O boast of Ireland!

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

“Called from on high...”—

Lament Me not, O Mother, beholding thy Son and God hanging upon the Tree, Who suspended the earth freely upon the waters and fashioned all creation; for I shall arise and glorify Myself, and shall break the might of the kingdom of hades, destroy its power, and deliver those who have been bound by its villainy, in that I am compassionate; and I shall lead them to my Father, as I love mankind.

Troparion of the saint, in Tone VI—

Casting aside thy royal rank, and embracing the godly monastic life, thou didst found a renowned school of piety, wherein thou didst nurture the souls of saints in reverence and the knowledge of God; and having thus labored to please thy Bridegroom and Master, thou hast moved all the land of Erin to cry unto Him: Have pity on us, O Lord of all, and grant that we may ever stand with Ita at Thy right hand!

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 “Royal Deirdre became Ita the venerable”, in Tone VI—

Ode I

Irmos: Traversing the deep on foot, as though it were dry land, and seeing the tyrant Pharaoh drowned, Israel cried aloud: Let us chant unto God a hymn of victory!

Regal birth and material things held no allure for the virgin Deirdre, who sought the Lord with fervent tears, crying aloud: Let us chant unto God a hymn of victory!

Offering herself to Christ, Deirdre longed to take up His easy yoke, that with all the pious she might ever cry aloud: Let us chant unto God a hymn of victory!

Yearning for the Promised Land, Deirdre followed her Master; and, crossing the deep of worldly passions unscathed, she cried: Let us chant unto God a hymn of victory!

Theotokion: All Christians rejoice in the blessed Mary, the Mother of our God, for whose sake we cry aloud in thanksgiving to Him: Let us chant unto God a hymn of victory!

Ode III

Irmos: There is none as holy as Thee, O Lord my God, Who hast uplifted the horn of Thy faithful and established us on the rock of the confession of Thee, O Good One.

Limerick was splendidly adorned, for in its midst did Ita lift up the standard of the precious Cross, establishing her convent upon our good Savior and God, as on a rock.

Deirdre no more, the venerable Ita gathered around her a community of women who desired to live in chastity; and constant prayer became the rock of their spiritual life.

Exalted upon the rock of the confession of the Lord, Ita taught all to worship Him in spirit and in truth, crying out: There is none as holy as Thou, O Lord my God

Theotokion: In thy maternal entreaties, O Virgin Mother, beseech the Lord our God, that He lift us up out of the pit of sin and establish us upon Himself as upon a mighty rock.

Sessional hymn, in Tone I: Spec. Mel.: “Thy tomb, O Savior...”—

The venerable Ita, the adornment of Erin, prayeth ever for the souls of the Irish people; for, having nurtured saints in piety and the true Faith, she now abideth with the

angelic hosts in paradise, where she sendeth up unceasing supplications in behalf of those who honor her holy memory.

Glory..., Now and ever..., Theotokion--

O all-holy Virgin, thou hope of Christians, unceasingly beseech God, to Whom thou gavest birth in manner past understanding and telling, in behalf of us who hymn thee, that He grant remission of all our sins, and correction of life to us who ever glorify thee with faith and love.

Stavrotheotokion--

The unblemished ewe-lamb, beholding the Lamb and Shepherd hanging dead upon the Tree, weeping, exclaimed, crying out maternally: How can I endure Thy condescension, which passeth telling, and Thy voluntary Passion, O my Son, Thou all-good God?

Ode IV

Irmos: Christ is my power, my God and my Lord, the honored Church doth sing, crying out in godly manner with a pure mind, keeping festival in the Lord.

Resisting all the temptations of the flesh, the holy one laid waste to her body with fasting, that she might ever piously pray to the Lord with a pure mind.

Desiring that Christ, her God and Lord, would be her strength and power, Ita went without earthly food, receiving instead angelic sustenance from heaven.

Rejoicing in the radiant memory of the holy one, the Holy Church of Christ keepeth her festival in godly manner, giving thanks to the Lord for her.

Theotokion: Elevating our minds to a state of spiritual purity, O ye faithful, in godly manner let us praise the all-immaculate Mother of Christ, our God and Lord.

Ode V

Irmos: O Christ Who shinest Thy light upon the world, illumine the heart of me who cry to Thee out of the night, and save me.

Brendan, who in later times shone with the radiance of holiness, didst thou rear in faith and piety, O venerable mother Ita.

Erin cherisheth the memory of the wondrous Ita, who by the grace that shineth forth from her doth illumine the faithful.

Come, let us give thanks unto Christ, Who in His love for mankind hath given us His saint as an ally against our adversary.

Theotokion: Adrift as on a tumultuous sea, and in peril of drowning, let us cry out to the all-pure Maiden who by her prayers can save us.

Ode VI

Irmos: The uttermost abyss of sins hath engulfed me, whose billows none can withstand; and like Jonah I cry to Thee, O Master: Lead me up from corruption!

Miracles doth Ita pour forth in abundance upon those in need, and the Master hath given her the power even to resurrect men from the corruption of death.

Exult greatly, O Killeedy, and keep festival; for in thee did the glorious Ita struggle in this earthly life and at death give her pure soul over to her Master.

In the supplications of the venerable one do we hope, for the Master hath given her the power to deliver us from the abyss, leading us up from corruption.

Theotokion: To thee do we cry when the abyss of sin threateneth to swallow our souls, O Lady! Thee do we beg for aid as we sink in the mire of base iniquity!

Kontakion, in Tone III—

Having spurned an earthly bridegroom and rejected all worldly wisdom, O venerable mother, by obedience thou didst acquire humility and righteousness, flourishing in the courts of God like a palm-tree, and, filled with the Holy Spirit, thou didst put forth all the virtues like a ripened harvest. Wherefore, we all cry out with gladness: Rejoice, O godly Ita, thou boast of Ireland!

Ikos: Ita was like the merchant of the Gospel, who, finding a pearl buried in a field, sold all he had to purchase it. For, loving God and neighbor more than herself, with a pure heart and simplicity of soul she raised up generations of the devout and taught them well the lessons of piety. Wherefore, filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, with steadfast intent she mounted the ladder of the virtues to the heights of heaven, where she dwelleth now with all the saints. For this cause, O ye faithful, let us cry out, lifting up our voices in gladness: Rejoice, O godly Ita, thou boast of Ireland!

Ode VII

Irmos: Thy grace hath been revealed upon us, O Savior, and the light of Thy Cross hath shone forth upon the world. Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

As a mighty warrior of Christ our Savior, O Ita, thou didst arm thyself with the sign of His radiant Cross, crying: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

Though thou wast a woman by nature, O holy one, thou didst manfully prevail in battle over the demons, crying: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

Having fought the good fight against man's ancient foe, O God-bearer, thou didst receive a heavenly crown, crying: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

Theotokion: Ever blessed art thou, O pure Virgin, Maiden and Mother, for through thee was revealed to the world Jesus our Savior, the blessed Lord God of our fathers.

Ode VIII

Irmos: In the furnace Thy venerable children imitated the cherubim, chanting the thrice-holy hymn: Bless, hymn and exalt the Lord supremely for all ages!

Vaunted pride caused the daystar to fall; but thou, O saint, dost imitate the cherubim, singing: Bless, hymn and exalt the Lord supremely for all ages!

Ever dancing in heaven with the choirs of angels, O Ita, thou dost sing with them in praise of God: Bless, hymn and exalt the Lord supremely for all ages!

Now turn thou thy gladsome countenance upon us who honor thee, O Ita, and help us who sing: Bless, hymn and exalt the Lord supremely for all ages!

Triadicon: Exalt ye supremely the Most Holy Trinity—the all-unoriginate Father, the Spirit Who proceedeth from Him eternally, and the only-begotten Son!

Theotokion: Remember us as thou standest before the throne of thy Son and our God, O most blessed and all-hymned Theotokos, that we may be saved from sin.

Ode IX

Irmos: All of us, the generations of men, magnify thee, O Virgin Theotokos, the wellspring of our life.

All Ireland exulteth exceedingly, celebrating the holy memorial of the venerable one, its great intercessor.

Be thou for us an intercessor and a surety of clemency as thou prayest before the judgment-seat of God, O Ita.

Limerick and Waterford join chorus, keeping festival; for the one witnessed thy repose and the other thy birth.

Theotokion: Ecstasy filleth our souls as we magnify the Virgin Theotokos, who gave birth to the Source of our life.

Exapostilarion: Spec. Mel.: “The heaven with stars...” —

Loving Christ, thou didst preserve thy virginity incorrupt; and greatly desiring to know Him, thou didst with manly mind struggle to acquire divine wisdom; wherefore, O Ita, thou hast been crowned by His right hand.

Theotokion—

Thou wast the cause of the blessings bestowed by God upon the world, O Theotokos. And now also, for the salvation of all, do thou move to pity God, Who is readily appeased.

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

When the Spirit of God spake in thy heart, O Ita most blessed, thou didst forsake all the fleeting things of this world; and having mortified all the passions of flesh and mind, thou was caught up in spirit to the courts of the house of our God, where thou dost ever earnestly beseech the Holy Trinity, that our souls find mercy.

Now & ever...: Theotokion, or this stavrotheotokion, in the same tone: Spec. Mel.: “On the third day...” —

The pure Virgin, Thy Mother, beholding most iniquitous men nailing Thee unjustly to the Tree, O Savior, was wounded in her womb, as Symeon foretold.

At Liturgy

Prokimenon, in Tone IV—

Wondrous is God in His saints, the God of Israel.

Stichos: In congregations bless ye God, the Lord from the wellsprings of Israel.

EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS, §208

Brethren: Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Alleluia, in Tone I—

With patience I waited patiently for the Lord, and He was attentive unto me, and He hearkened unto my supplication.

Stichos: And He brought me up out of the pit of misery, and from the mire of clay.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW, §104

The Lord said this parable: “The kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made: ‘Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.’ Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise: ‘Give us of your oil; for our lamps are

gone out.’ But the wise answered, saying: ‘Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying: ‘Lord, Lord, open to us.’ But he answered and said: ‘Verily I say unto you, I know you not.’ Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.”

Communion verse—

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