



**Our Father among the Saints Patrick,
Enlightener of Ireland and Equal to the Apostles
Whom the Holy Church Celebrates on March 17.**

Saint Patrick, the Apostle of the Irish, was seized from his native Britain by Irish marauders when he was sixteen years old. Though the son of a deacon and the grandson of a priest, it was not until his captivity that he sought out the Lord with his whole heart. In his *Confession*, the testament he wrote toward the end of his life, he says, “After I came to Ireland—every day I had to tend sheep, and many times a day I prayed—the love of God and His fear came to me more and more, and my faith was strengthened. And my spirit was so moved that in a single day I would say as many as a hundred prayers, and almost as many at night, and this even when I was staying in the woods and on the mountain; I would rise for prayer before daylight, through snow, through frost, through rain, and I felt no harm.” After six years of slavery in Ireland, he was guided by God to make his escape, and afterwards struggled in the monastic life at Auxerre in Gaul, under the guidance of the holy Bishop Germanus (July 31). Many years later he was ordained bishop and sent to Ireland once again, about the year 432, to convert the Irish to Christ. His arduous labours bore so much fruit that within seven years, three bishops were sent from Gaul to help him shepherd his flock, “my brethren and sons whom I have baptized in the Lord—so many thousands

of people," he says in his *Confession*. His apostolic work was not accomplished without much "weariness and painfulness," long journeys through difficult country, and many perils; he says his very life was in danger twelve times. When he came to Ireland as its enlightener, it was a pagan country; when he ended his earthly life some thirty years later, about 461, the Faith of Christ was established in every corner.

Alleluia

Dismissal Hymn of Saint Patrick. Third Tone

OHOLY Hierarchy, equal of the Apostles, Saint Patrick, wonderworker and enlightener of Ireland: intercede with the merciful God that He grant unto our souls forgiveness of offences.

Kontakion of Saint Patrick. Fourth Tone *Be quick to anticipate*

THE Master revealed thee as a skilful fisher of men; * and casting forth the nets of Gospel preaching, thou drewest up the heathen to piety. * Those who were children of idolatrous darkness * thou didst render sons of day through holy Baptism. * O Patrick, intercede for us who honor thy memory.

VESPERS

For Lord, I have cried, we chant the following Stichera: *Fourth Tone. Unto them that fear Thee*

NOT in worldly strength and wisdom did the Lord find His messenger, * but in bondage and nakedness; * yet clothed with a noble mind, * fortitude, and fervor. * Wherefore, He Who sent rustic Galileans forth as lights * gave thee their burden and sacred dignity; * and thou, through years of diligence, didst show thyself worthy of His grace. * Now, O Patrick, attend to us, who extol thee with joy of heart.

WITH thy sweat of apostolic toils, thy tears shed in fervent prayer, and with streams of baptismal grace * didst thou make a heathen land, * which was dry and barren, richly to sprout forth with the verdure of the Faith of Christ; * then em'erald Ireland exulted to behold * a newly hallowed Christian folk that grew and flourished because of thee, * her Apostle and man of God, * whom the Angels themselves revere.

COME to us, O Patrick, as we keep thy sacred memorial; * guide our hearts with thy shepherd's staff * to fervor of faith and love * and divine compunction. * Let thy comely feet, which once walked through Erin's hills and fields, * bearing the Gospel to bondsmen and to kings, * stand also in our midst, as thou receivest kindly our offerings * and entreatest the Trinity * to grant mercy and life to all.

But if the feast be on a Saturday, say the following:

Glory. Plagal of Second Tone

HE that regardeth the lowly made Himself known to thee in thy captivity, when thou hadst been humbled with hunger and weariness, that He might exalt thee to the heights of glory, O holy Father Patrick. From the tending of sheep, He called thee to the fishing of men; and when the Irish saw in thine earthen vessel the abundance of the power of God, they believed in Him that dwelt in thee. Intercede for us also, who honour thy memorial, to bless us in this season of temperance, and to make us worthy of His Kingdom.

Both now. Theotokion. As it is written

REPENTANCE thou possesseth not, * my hard and unrepentant soul. * Why delayest thou? For the stroke of death is nigh: * and like a thief thine ending * doth swiftly steal upon thee. * Run and fall down before the Mother of God.

OIKOS

ANOTHER fisherman hath been added by the Saviour unto the Twelve, not from the coasts of Galilee, but from the shores of the far northern seas. Preaching Christ, the true Rock, he taught Erin not to hibernate unto God, but brought her into the glorious vernal flowering of grace, showing himself to be the Apostle of Ireland, the Father of Saints, the undoing of druids and dread of demons, the glory of the Orthodox and joy of all who cry: O Patrick, intercede for us who honour thy memory.



High Cross Muiredachs

SYNAXARION

✠ On the Seventeenth of this month we commemorate our Father among the Saints Patrick, the Enlightener of Ireland and Equal to the Apostles.

Verses

Patrick now cometh, and the serpents quit Ireland,
For the serpent's counsel hath nothing in Patrick.

On the seventeenth Patrick stood before the Trinity's throne.

By his holy intercessions, O God, have mercy on us.

ODE EIGHT

Troparia

WHEN thou camest to Erin, she was heathen; * when thou wentest to Christ, * His Name was signed upon her. * And who can count the Saints that sprouted from the seed * planted through thy preaching * and heroic labours * in every part of Ireland?

ON the night of the Saviour's Resurrection, * thou didst kindle a light * that showed a new day dawning, * to end the wearied night of dark idolatry, driving out delusion * with the rising splendour * of Christ, the Sun of Glory.



Clonmacnois High Cross
Of the Scriptures

ODE NINE

Troparia

AS Anthony filled Egypt with men of prayer, * so thou madest the sons and daughters of the Irish kings * zealous monks and virgins of Jesus Christ; * and not in comfort, praise and ease, * but with persecutions and daily griefs, * disdained by fellow Britons, * but honoured of the Angels, * and glorified with God for evermore.

THOU doest well to fast, for thou shalt return; * was not said to thee only, O Patrick, * but to every soul * longing to return to her fatherland * from bitter bondage unto sin; * wherefore, bless our Fast with thy holy prayers, * that we may reach in gladness * the Saviour's Resurrection, * which hath restored from exile all the world.

Theotokion

WITH Sechnall and Germanus and all the Saints * who took part in thy labours to sanctify the Irish tribes; * with the Twelve Apostles whose peer thou art; * O Patrick, with the Patriarchs, * Prophets, Angels, Martyrs, and all the just; * and with the Queen of all things, * whose goodness hath no measure, * entreat Christ God for us who sing thy praise.

*For the Praises we allow for four verses and chant the following Stichera, repeating the first one:
Plagal of Fourth Tone, O Lord, though Thou didst stand*

REJOICE, thou who wast armed from on high * to bind the strong man and to spoil him of all his goods * as lawgiver to the Irish, for whom thou spentest thyself * and with years of struggles broughtest them to Christ. * Like Moses, thou wentest up into mountains to fast and pray, * seeking renewal of God's law in thine inmost heart, * going down again to thy people ablaze with light. * Thou wast the star whereby the Irish Saints set their Godward course, * beloved of all generations, whom God hath everywhere glorified. * Entreat Him, O Patrick, * to grant pardon of transgressions and mercy to our souls. *(Twice)*

WRESTED from country, kindred, and home, * to be a stranger and pilgrim upon the earth, * O Patrick, thou wast from heaven elected even from youth * to estrange the Irish from idolatry. * Thy dearest friends, country, comfort, and mother tongue, * even the faces of the longed-after Saints of Gaul, * didst thou see no more, in thy care for thy faithful flock. * While there was any

strength in thee, thou tookest no rest at all, * till thou hadst wrested a people out of the snares of the enemy, * presenting the Bridegroom * with a fair and spotless bride newly espoused through thy travails.

REJOICE, thou city set on a hill, * whose lofty eminence and beauty cannot be hid; * thou light unto kings and princes, the demons' fall from their seats; * sweet and living psalt'ry praising Jesus Christ; * wise teacher of mysteries clad in holy simplicity; divine Apostle graced in soul with humility; * Israelite indeed in whom no guile was ever found. * Rejoice, Patrick, loving father of innum'erable multitudes; * rejoice, good shepherd who daily didst lay thy life down that more be saved; * rejoice, willing exile, * who didst lead the souls of men to the fatherland above.

Glory. *Plagal of Fourth Tone*

THROUGH what tribulations didst thou espouse the Irish Church to her Bridegroom, O noble Patrick! Through poverty and journeyings, having no certain dwelling-place; ordaining and instructing priests, obtaining with hardship their sacred raiment, and the written word of God for the Churches. With perishable silver, and with perils, thou didst redeem many from bondage unto men, while ransoming many thousands from the devil with the imperishable mysteries of Christ, Who hath glorified thee as an Apostle for ever, and receiveth thy supplications in our behalf. Keep us in remembrance, O holy Hierarch, and intercede that our souls be saved.



The Lorica, or, St. Patrick's Breastplate

I bind unto myself today
the strong Name of the Trinity,
by invocation of the same,
the Three in One, and One in Three.

I bind this day to me forever,
by power of faith, Christ's Incarnation;
His baptism in the Jordan river;
His death on Cross for my salvation;
His bursting from the spiced tomb;
His riding up the heavenly way;
His coming promised to us soon:
I bind unto myself today.

I bind unto myself the power
of the great love of cherubim;
the sweet "Well done" in judgement hour;
the service of the seraphim;
confessors' faith, apostles' word,
the patriarchs' prayers, the prophets' scrolls;
all good deeds done unto the Lord,
and purity of virgin souls.

I bind unto myself today
the virtues of the starlit heaven,
the glorious sun's life-giving ray,
the whiteness of the moon at even,
the flashing of the lightning free,
the whirling wind's tempestuous shocks,
the stable earth, the deep salt sea,
around the old eternal rocks.

I bind unto myself today
the power of God to hold and lead,
His eye to watch, His might to stay,
His ear to hearken to my need;
the wisdom of my God to teach,
His hand to guide, His shield to ward;

the word of God to give me speech,
His heavenly host to be my guard.

Against the demon snares of sin,
the vice that gives temptation force,
the carnal lusts that war within,
the hostile men that mar my course;
of few or many, far or nigh,
in every place, and in all hours
against their fierce hostility,
I bind to me these holy powers.

Against all Satan's spells and wiles,
against false words of heresy,
against the knowledge that defiles
against the heart's idolatry,
against the wizard's evil craft,
against the death-wound and the burning
the choking wave and poisoned shaft,
protect me, Christ, till Thy returning.

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

I bind unto myself the Name,
the strong Name of the Trinity,
by invocation of the same,
the Three in One, and One in Three.
Of Whom all nature hath creation,
eternal Father, Spirit, Word:
praise to the Lord of my salvation,
salvation is of Christ the Lord.



HIGH CROSS DULEEK

An Excerpt from the Life of Saint Patrick

'Thou didst kindle a light...' is chanted in the second Troparion of the Eighth Ode. A quote from The Life of Saint Patrick which is found in the files of the Holy Transfiguration Monastery might help us to appreciate something of what happened when Saint Patrick ignited the Light of Christ during the Vigil of Pascha and initiated the Christian mission to Ireland.

"In St. Patrick's time, Ireland was ruled by many local kings, who were subject to greater (or provincial) kings, and the High-king of Ireland, with his royal seat at Tara, claimed a primacy over them all. The Druids were held in high regard throughout Ireland; they were judges and teachers, the advisors of kings, soothsayers, magicians, philosophers, poets and priests. At that time Laoghaire was High-king, and his chief Druids were Lochry and Lucetmael.

"As the Lord's Pascha approached, St. Patrick was filled with the desire to bear witness to the Resurrection of our Saviour Christ

by openly celebrating the Feast near the High-king's palace. Now, that year, the great Festival of Christ fell on the same day as an important heathen observance, and all the great men of Ireland had gathered to celebrate with the High-king. Their custom for this event was to extinguish all the fires in the land. No new fire could be kindled until a supposedly-sacred flame was lit at Tara in the High-king's presence.

"Saint Patrick, however, was keeping vigil in the darkness of the night with eight companions at a place some miles distant. When the appropriate time arrived, he set a torch to a great blaze to begin the actual Paschal celebration. This effective symbol of the Light of Christ was clearly seen across the plain in Tara.

"The High-king and his retinue were aghast at this transgression of their ancient custom. The druids took it as an evil omen, signifying that this new fire, and not theirs, was to spread throughout Ireland to illumine it. The rulers considered it an audacious act of rebellion. Thus Laoghaire set out with twenty-seven chariots, armed men, and the druids to arrest and punish those who had perpetrated this outrage.

"On their arrival, they dared not approach the fire which the Saint had lit, but rather, they waited from him to come away from it. The Enlightener calmly and fearlessly proclaimed the Resurrection of Christ to those assembled, and explained the meaning of what he had done. At this, the druid Lochry began to utter horrible blasphemies against Christ and His servants. The Saint made no answer, however, but simply continued in prayer. The druid continued his evil speech, and became more and more violent, until suddenly the judgment of God was visited upon him, and he fell down dead. The heathen, filled with both anger and dread, then tried to seize the small band of Christians, but the Lord protected his servants. The minds of their assailants were darkened so that the Saint's company passed out of their midst without harm.

"The next day, which was the Lord's Day, when all were gathered in the banquet-hall of the High-king, Saint Patrick, with five companions, boldly entered in (though the doors were shut against them) to contest for the faith of Christ before all the leaders of the people. Few that were present showed respect for the Saint, and he was subjected to the rage of the druids. Their leader, Lucetmael, trusting in the demonic power of magic, began in various ways to provoke the servants of Christ. When the Saint made it known that he had not come to engage in a battle of magic, Lucetmael, to show his own great might, in contract to these foreign preachers, wrought strange new marvels in the sight of all. First, he hade deep snow to appear on all the plain; when he was requested to remove the snow, he replied that he could not. The Saint then bestowed his blessing on the land, and the delusion vanished; the snow was no more to be seen. Thereafter, by invocation of demons,

the wizard brought darkness on the land, and refused even to attempt to lift it; but, by his prayers, the Enlightener drove the demonic darkness away, and the Sun was seen by everyone.

After this, the High-king, being a superstitious man, began to suggest various contests. Finally, according to the custom of those days, it was decided to submit both the Christians and the druids to trial by fire. In obedience to the King's command, both Lucetmael the wizard, and Benignus, an Irish youth who had become a disciple of St. Patrick, entered into the flames; the wizard, being arrayed in the bishop's mantle, trusted in the aid of demons, whom he invoked; as for the Christian youth, he called upon the Name of Jesus Christ, though he had been outfitted with the druid's magic cloak. And then the power of God was made manifest! The wizard was consumed by fire, though the Saint's mantle remained unharmed. The flames did not touch even a hair of Benignus' head; the wizard's cloak, however, was completely burned.

"Laoghaire the High-king and those with him were all astonished; Laoghaire was himself sorry for the loss of his two chief druids, in whose powers he had placed such confidence. He was not only angry at Patrick and his followers who had brought all this upon him, but he was also afraid of the might of their Faith. In the end, the Christians received permission from the rulers openly to preach the Gospel. Although the High-king did not himself become a Christian, others of the leaders of the people, and from among the druids as well, did believe and were baptized."

For the Schema monk Gabriel, who penned
the lines above in his own hand,
Memory Eternal.

Through the prayers of our Father among the Saints,
Patrick of Ireland, Equal to the Apostles,
Lord Jesus Christ our God
Have mercy on us.

