

✠ Dec 27: Post-feast of the Nativity of Christ; The Holy Apostle, First Martyr and Archdeacon Stephen

Text from "[*The Divine Liturgy: An Anthology for Worship*](#)"; Pg. 769

First Antiphon

Verse 1: I will confess You, Lord, with all my heart,* I will declare all Your wondrous deeds (Ps 9:2).

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Saviour, save us.

Verse 2: In the council of the just and the congregation,* great are the works of the Lord, conforming to His will in every way (Ps 110:1-2).

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Mother of God O Saviour, save us.

Verse 3: His work is filled with praise and majesty,* and His righteousness endures forever (Ps 110:3).

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Mother of God O Saviour, save us.

+Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Now and for ever and ever. Amen.

If the second antiphon is sung: (Refrain: Through the prayers of the Mother of God O Saviour, save us.) *Otherwise we sing:* Only-begotten Son...

Third Antiphon

We sing the usual Third Antiphon, but with the festal refrain: Son of God, born of a virgin, save us who sing to You: Alleluia.

Troparion (Tone 4): Your Nativity, O Christ our God,* made the light of knowledge dawn on the world;* through it, those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star* to worship You, the Sun of Righteousness,* and to know You, the Dawn from on high.* Glory to You, O Lord.

Troparion (Tone 4): O apostle and first martyr for Christ,* you fought the good fight and exposed your persecutors' wickedness.* For when you were killed by stoning at the hands of the lawless,* you received a crown from on high from God's right hand,* while crying out to Him:* "O Lord, do not hold this sin against them."

+Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Now and for ever and ever. Amen.

Kontakion (Tone 3): Yesterday the Master came to us incarnate;* but His servant departs today from the flesh.* Yesterday the One who now reigns in the flesh was born;* but His servant today is killed by stoning.* For His sake the first martyr, the divine Stephen, gives up his life.

Prokimenon (Tone 8): Their utterance has gone forth into all the earth,* and their words unto the ends of the world (Ps 18:5).

verse: The heavens tell the glory of God, and the firmament declares the work of His hands (Ps 18:2).

Epistle: (Act 6:8-7:5, 47-60): *In those days*, Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and others of those from Cilicia and Asia, stood up and argued with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. Then they secretly instigated some men to say, ‘We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.’ They stirred up the people as well as the elders and the scribes; then they suddenly confronted him, seized him, and brought him before the council. They set up false witnesses who said, ‘This man never stops saying things against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses handed on to us.’ And all who sat in the council looked intently at him, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel. Then the high priest asked him, ‘Are these things so?’ And Stephen replied: ‘Brothers and fathers, listen to me. The God of glory appeared to our ancestor Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, “Leave your country and your relatives and go to the land that I will show you.” Then he left the country of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. After his father died, God had him move from there to this country in which you are now living. He did not give him any of it as a heritage, not even a foot’s length, but promised to give it to him as his possession and to his descendants after him, even though he had no child. But it was Solomon who built a house for him. Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands; as the prophet says, “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?” ‘You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are for ever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do. Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers. You are the ones that received the law as ordained by angels, and yet you have not kept it.’ When they heard these things, they became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen. But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ‘Look,’ he said, ‘I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!’ But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him;

and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' When he had said this, he died.

Alleluia (Tone 1): The heavens shall confess Your wonders, O Lord, and Your truth in the church of the saints (Ps 88:6).

verse: God is glorified in the council of the saints (Ps 88:8).

Gospel: (Mt 21:33-42): *The Lord spoke this parable:* "There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watch-tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, "They will respect my son." But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance." So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" They said to him, 'He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.' Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes"?'"

Instead of "**It is truly...**": O my soul, magnify the all-pure Virgin Mother of God, more honourable and glorious than the heavenly hosts

Irmos (Tone 1): To keep silence in fear would be easier for us to do, for this is free from danger, O Virgin Mother, and though it is hard indeed to properly weave hymns, O Mother, give us strength so that our good intention may be fulfilled.

Communion Verse: Their utterance has gone forth into all the earth,* and their words unto the ends of the world (Ps 18:5). Alleluia! (3x)