



## S. STEPHANI PROTOMARTYRIS

St. Stephen the First Martyr of the Church

### INTROIT *Psalm 118:23, 86, 23.*

Sedérunt príncipes, et advérsus me *Princes met and talked against me, and the*  
 loquebántur: et iníqui persecúti sunt me: ádjuva *wicked persecuted me wrongfully; help me, O*  
 me, Dómine, Deus meus, quia servus tuus *Lord my God, for Your servant meditates on*  
 exercebátur in tuis justificatióibus. Ps 118:1 *Your statutes. Ps 118:1 Happy are they whose*  
 Beati immaculáti in via, qui ámbulant in lege *way is blameless, who walk in the law of the*  
 Dómini. V. Gloria Patri... *Sedérunt príncipes...* *Lord. v. Glory be... Princes met...*

### COLLECT

Da nobis, quaesumus, Dómine, imitári quod *Grant us, we beseech You, O Lord, to imitate*  
 cólimus: ut discámus et inimícos dilígere; quia *what we celebrate, so that we may learn to love*  
 ejus natalícia celebrámus, qui novit étiam pro *even our enemies; because we keep the*  
 persecutóribus exoráre Dóminum nostrum *anniversary of the death of Him Who knew how*  
 Jesum Christum, Fílium tuum: Qui tecum vivit *to plead even for His persecutors with our Lord,*  
 et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus per *Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who livest and reignest*  
 omnia saecula saeculorum. R. Amen. *with God the Father, in the unity of the Holy*  
*Spirit, one God, world without end. R. Amen*

### *Pro Octava Nativitatis*

Concéde, quaesumus, omnípotens Deus: ut nos *Grant, we beseech You, almighty God, that the*  
 Unigénititui nova per carnem Nativitas liberet; *new birth, in the flesh, of Your only-begotten*  
 quos sub peccáti iugo vetústa sérvitus tenet. Per *Son may deliver us whom the bondage of old*  
 eundem Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum *keeps under the yoke of sin. Through the same*  
 filium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate *Jesus Christ, thy Son, Our Lord, Who liveth and*  
 Spiritus Sancti, Deus, per omnia saecula *reigneth with thee in the unity of the Holy*  
 saeculorum. R. Amen. *Ghost, God, world without end. R. Amen.*

### EPISTLE *Act 6:8-10; 7:54-59*

Lectio Actuum Apostolorum. In diebus illis: *In those days, Stephen, full of grace and power,*  
 Stéphanus plenus grátia et fortitúidine, faciébat *was working great wonders and signs among*  
 prodígia et signa magna in pópulo. Surrexérunt *the people. But there arose some from the*  
 autem quidam de synagóga, quæ appellátur *synagogue which is called that of the Freedmen,*  
 Libertinórum, et Cyrenénsium, et *and of the Cyrenians and of the Alexandrians*  
 Alexandrinórum, et eórum, qui erant a Cilícia et *and of those from Cilicia and the province of*  
 Asia, disputántes cum Stéphano: et non póterant *Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not*  
 resístere sapiéntiæ et Spiritui, qui loquebátur. *able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit*  
*Who spoke. Now as they heard these things,*

Audiéntes autem hæc, dissecabántur córdibus suis, et stridébant déntibus in eum. Cum autem esset Stéphanus plenus Spíritu Sancto, inténdens in coelum, vidit glóriam Dei, et Jesum stantem a dextris Dei. Et ait: Ecce, vídeo coelos apértos, et Fílium hóminis stantem a dextris Dei. Exclamántes autem voce magna continuérunt aures suas, et ímpetum fecerunt unánimiter in eum. Et ejiciéntes eum extra civitatem, lapidábant: et testes deposuérunt vestiménta sua secus pedes adolescéntis, qui vocabátur Saulus. Et lapidábant Stéphanum invocántem et dicéntem: Dómine Jesu, súscipe spíritum meum. Pósitis autem génibus, clamávit voce magna, dicens: Dómine, ne státuas illis hoc peccátum. Et cum hoc dixísset, obdormívit in Dómino.  
R. Deo gratias

*they were cut to the heart and gnashed their teeth at him. But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and he said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed upon him all together. And they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And while they were stoning Stephen he prayed and said, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, saying, Lord, do not lay this sin against them. And with these words he fell asleep. R. Thanks be to God.*

### **GRADUALE Psalm 118:23; 118:86**

Sedérunt príncipes, et advérsus me loquebántur: et iníqui persecúti sunt me Ps 6:5 Adjuva me, Dómine, Deus meus: salvum me fac propter misericórdiam tuam. Allelúja, allelúja, Act 7:55. V. Vídeo coelos apértos, et Jesum stantem a dextris virtútis Dei. Allelúja.

*Princes met and talked against me, and the wicked persecuted me wrongfully. V. Help me, O Lord my God: rescue me because of Your kindness. Alleluia, alleluia. Acts 7:56 I see the heavens opened, and Jesus standing on the right hand of the power of God. Alleluia.*

### **GOSPEL Matthew 23:34-39**

Sequéntia sancti Evangélii secundum Matthæum. In illo témpore: Dicébat Jesus scribis et pharisæis: Ecce, ego mitto ad vos prophétas, et sapiéntes, et scribas, et ex illis occidétis et crucifigétis, et ex eis flagellábitis in synagógis vestris, et persecuémini de civitáte in civitátem: ut véniat super vos omnis sanguis justus, qui effúsus est super terram, a ságuine Abel justí usque ad ságuinem Zachariæ, filii Barachíæ, quem occidístis inter templum et altáre. Amen, dico vobis, vénient hæc ómnia super generatióem istam. Jerúsalem, Jerúsalem, quæ occídís prophétas, et lápidas eos, qui ad te missi sunt, quóies vólui congregáre filios tuos, quemádmódu[m] gallína cóngregat pullos suos sub alas, et noluísti? Ecce, relinquétur vobis domus vestra desérta. Dico enim vobis, non me vidébitis ámodo, donec dicátis: Benedíctus, qui venit in nómine Dómini. R. Laus tibi, Christe!

*At that time, Jesus said to the Scribes and Pharisees, Therefore, behold, I send you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from town to town; that upon you may come all the just blood that has been shed on the earth, from the blood of Abel the just unto the blood of Zacharias the son of Barachias, whom you killed between the temple and the altar. Amen I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. Jerusalem, Jerusalem! you who kill the prophets, and stone those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together, as a hen gathers her young under her wings, but you would not! Behold, your house is left to you desolate. For I say to you, you shall not see Me henceforth until you shall say, Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord!  
R. Praise be to Thee, O Christ.*

**CREDO** in Unum Deum, Patrem omnipoténtem, factórem coeli et terræ, visibílium ómnium et in visibílium.  
Et in unum Dóminum Jesum Christum, Fílium

*I believe in one God, the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things, visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. And born of the Father,*

Dei unigénitum. Et ex Patre natum ante ómnia saecula. Deum de Deo, lumen de lúmine, Deum verum de Deo vero. Génitum, non factum, consubstantiálem Patri: per quem ómnia facta sunt. Qui propter nos hómines et propter nostram salutem descendit de coelis. Et incarnátus est de Spíritu Sancto ex María Vírgine: Et homo factus est. Crucifíxus étiam pro nobis: sub Póntio Piláto passus, et sepúltus est. Et resurrexit tértia die, secúndum Scriptúras. Et ascendit in coelum: sedet ad dexteram Patris. Et íterum ventúrus est cum glória iudicáre vivos et mórtuos: cujus regni non erit finis.

Et in Spíritum Sanctum, Dóminum et vivificántem: qui ex Patre procedit. Qui cum Patre et Filio simul adorátur et conglorificátur: qui locútus est per Prophétas. Et unam sanctam cathólicam et apostolicam Ecclésiám. Confiteor unum baptísma in remissionem peccatórum. Et expécto resurrectionem mortuórum. Et vitam ventúri saeculi. Amen.

#### **OFFERTORY Act 6:5; 7:59**

Elegérunt Apóstoli Stéphanum Levítam, plenum fide et Spíritu Sancto: quem lapidavérunt Judaei orántem, et dicéntem: Dómine Jesu, áccipe spíritum meum, allelúja.

#### **SECRET**

Súscipe, Dómine, múnera pro tuórum commemoratióne Sanctórum: ut, sicut illos pássio glorióso effécit; ita nos devótio reddat innócuos. Per Dominum...

#### **Pro Octava Nativitatis**

Oblata, Dómine, múnera, nova Unigéniti tui Nativitáte sanctífica: nosque a peccatórum nostrorum máculis emúnda. Per eúndem Dóminum nostrum...

#### **PREFACE de Nativitate Domini**

Vere dignum et justum est, æquum et salutáre, nos tibi semper et ubíque grátias ágere: Dómine sancte, Pater omnípotens, ætérne Deus: Quia per incarnáti Verbi mystérium nova mentis nostræ óculis lux tuæ claritátis infúlsit: ut, dum visibíliter Deum cognóscimus, per hunc in invisibílium amorem rapiámur. Et ideo cum Angelis et Archángelis, cum Thronis et Dominatióibus cumque omni milítia coeléstis exércitus hymnum glóriæ tuæ cánimus, sine fine dicéntes: Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus...

*before all ages. God of God: Light of Light: true God of true God. Begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who, for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven. And became incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary: and was made man. He was crucified also for us, suffered under Pontius Pilate, and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures. And ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father. And He shall come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, of whose kingdom there shall be no end. And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, proceeding from the Father. Who together, with the Father and the Son, is adored and glorified: Who spoke by the prophets. And in one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead. And the life of the world to come. Amen.*

*The Apostles chose Stephen to be a levite, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit: whom the Jews stoned, praying and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Alleluia.*

*Receive our offerings, O Lord, in memory of Your saints, that, as their passion has given them eternal glory, so may this sacrificial act free us from guilt. Through our Lord...*

*Make holy the sacrificial gifts we offer, O Lord, and by the new birth of Your only-begotten Son cleanse us from the stains of our sins. Through our Lord...*

*It it truly meet and just, right and for our salvation, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto Thee, O holy Lord, Father almighty, everlasting God, for through the Mystery of the Word made flesh, the new light of Thy glory hath shone upon the eyes of our mind, so that while we acknowledge God in visible form, we may through Him be drawn to the love of things invisible. And therefore with Angels and Archangels, with Throne and Dominations, and with all the hosts of the heavenly army, we sing the hymn of Thy glory, evermore saying: Holy, holy, holy...*

**COMMUNION Act 7:55; 7:58; 7:59**

Vídeo coelos apértos, et Jesum stantem a dextris virtútis Dei: Dómine Jesu, accipe spíritum meum, et ne státuas illis hoc peccátum.

*I see the heavens opened, and Jesus standing on the right hand of the power of God: Lord Jesus receive my spirit, and do not lay this sin against them.*

**POSTCOMMUNION COLLECT**

Auxiliéntur nobis, Dómine, sumpta mystéria: et, intercedénte beáto Stéphano Mártire tuo, sempitérna protectióne confirment. Per Dominum... *May the sacrament we have received aid us, O Lord; and by the intercession of blessed Stephen, Your Martyr, may it sustain us under Your everlasting protection. Through the Lord...*

**Pro Octava Nativitatis**

Præsta, quaesumus, omnipotens Deus: ut natus hodie Salvátor mundi, sicut divínæ nobis generatiónis est auctor; ita et immortalitátis sit ipse largítor: Qui tecum vivit... *Grant, we beseech You, almighty God, that the Savior of the world, born this day, Who is the author of our birth in godliness, may bestow on us immortal life. Who livest...*

**TODAY'S REFLECTIONS**

The holy, glorious, all-laudable Apostle Stephen the Protomartyr was an early Christian convert from among the Hellenistic Jews, one of the original seven deacons ordained by the Apostles, and the first martyr of the Orthodox Church. The Church remembers the martyrdom of St. Stephen on December 27, and the translations of his relics on August 2.

St. Stephen was a Jew living in the Hellenic provinces, related to the Apostle Paul and one of the first seven deacons ordained by the Apostles to serve the Church in Jerusalem (thus making him an archdeacon). The Holy Spirit worked powerfully through his faith, enabling him to perform many miracles and always defeat the Jews who would dispute with him. The Jews in their hatred of St. Stephen lied about him to the people. But St. Stephen with his face illumined reminded the people of the miracles God had worked through him and even rebuked the Jews for killing the innocent Christ.

The people were enraged by what they thought was blasphemy and 'gnashed their teeth' at Stephen. It was then that he saw his Christ in the heavens and declared it so. Hearing this, the Jews took him outside the city and stoned him to death, with his kinsman Saul (later St. Paul) holding their coats while they did it. Afar off on a hill was the Virgin Mary and St. John the Theologian who witnessed this first martyrdom for the Son of God and prayed for him while he was being stoned. This occurred about a year after the first Pentecost.

When the Jews stoned St. Stephen, they left his body at the foothill of the city for two days to be eaten by dogs. But on the second night, Gamaliel—teacher of the Apostle Paul and the Apostle Barnabas—came and moved the body to his own land in Capharganda. Nicodemus, who died while weeping at this grave, was also buried there along with Gamaliel's godson Abibus and Gamaliel himself upon his repose.

After many years the memory of St. Stephen's burial place had left the minds of men, until 415 when Gamaliel appeared three times to Father Lucian, priest at Capharganda. He revealed to Fr. Lucian the place of his burial and everything about it. Fr. Lucian received the blessing of the Patriarch to exhume the saints from their grave where a strong, sweet fragrance filled the cave.

St. Stephen's relics were translated to Zion and honorably buried, and many of the sick were healed by his relics. The other three relics were placed inside a church atop the cave on a hill. Eventually, his relics were translated to Constantinople.