

Saintly Notes

Proto-Martyr Stephen the Archdeacon (December 27)

Stephen was a kinsman of the Apostle Paul and one of those Jews who lived in the Hellenic provinces. Stephen was the first of the seven deacons whom the holy apostles ordained and appointed to the service of assisting the poor in Jerusalem. For this, he is called the archdeacon.

By the power of his faith, Stephen worked great miracles among the people. The wicked Jews disputed with him, but they were always defeated by his wisdom and the power of the Spirit, Who acted through him. Then the shameful Jews, accustomed to calumnies and slander, incited the people and the elders of the people against the innocent Stephen, slandering him as though he had blasphemed against God and against Moses. False witnesses were quickly found who confirmed this. Stephen then stood before the people, and all *saw his face as it had been the face of an angel* (Acts 6:15), that is, his face was illumined with the light of grace as was once the face of Moses when he spoke with God. Stephen opened his mouth and enumerated the many good works and miracles that God had performed in the past for the people of Israel, as well as the many crimes and opposition to God on the part of this people. He especially rebuked them for the killing of Christ the Lord, calling them *betrayers and murderers* (Acts 7:52). And while they gnashed their teeth, Stephen beheld and saw the heavens open and the glory of God. That which he saw, he declared to the Jews: *Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God!* (Acts 7:56).

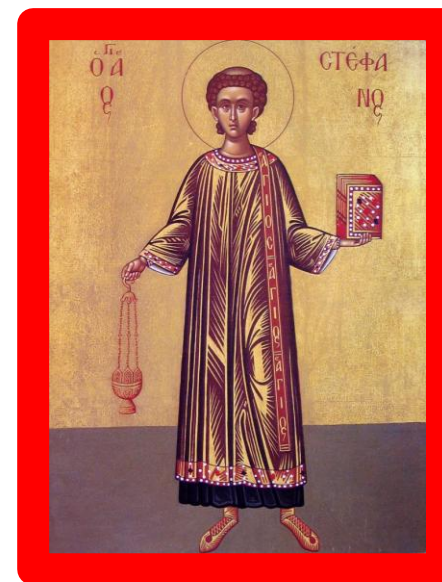
Then the malicious men took him outside the city and stoned him to death. Among his persecutors was his kinsman Saul, later the Apostle Paul. At that time, the Most-holy Theotokos, standing on a rock at a distance with St. John the Theologian, witnessed the martyrdom of this first martyr for the truth of her Son and God, and she prayed to God for Stephen. This occurred one year after the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles.

Gamaliel, a prince of the Jews and a secret Christian, clandestinely took St. Stephen's body and buried it on his own estate. Thus, this first among the Christian martyrs gloriously reposed and took up his habitation in the Kingdom of Christ God.

(*The Prologue from Ochrid*, Birmingham, 1985, Lazarica Press)

Proto-Martyr Stephen the Archdeacon & Sunday after the Nativity of Christ

December 27, 2009



Proto-Martyr Stephen the Archdeacon



Proto-Martyr Stephen the Archdeacon & Sunday after the Nativity of Christ

All Saints Orthodox Church, Raleigh NC
(www.allsaintsnc.org)
919-859-1332

The V. Rev. Nicholas R. A. Sorensen, Archpriest
The Rev. Philip Pelikan, Priest
The Rev. David Keim, Deacon

December 27, 2009

The Saints Whom We Remember

Commemoration of Joseph the Betrothed, David the Prophet and King,
and James the brother of the Lord

This Week's Schedule

Today: 8:00a Orthros; 9:00a Church School; 10:00a Divine Liturgy
Mon—Wed: Church Office Closed
Thursday: 6:30p Eve. Div. Liturgy—Circumcision of Jesus and St. Basil
Saturday: 5:30p Great Vespers; 6:30p SOYO Movie Night
Sunday: 8:00a Orthros; 9:00a Church School; 10:00a Divine Liturgy

First Antiphon

Refrain

Through the intercessions of the Theotokos

Second Antiphon

Refrain

Save us, O Son of God, Who wast born of a
Virgin . . .

Third Antiphon

Tone 4

The Lord said unto my Lord: sit Thou at My
right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy
footstool. The Lord shall send Thee a rod of
strength out of Zion. With Thee is dominion in
the day of Thy power, in the beauties of Thy
saints.

Troparion of the Nativity: Thy Nativity, O
Christ our God, hath given rise to the light of
knowledge in the world; for they that
worshipped the stars did learn therefrom to
worship Thee, O Sun of Justice, and to know

that from the east of the Highest Thou didst
come. O Lord, glory to Thee.

Entrance Hymn

Come, let us worship . . . Alleluia.

Troparion

for the Resurrection—Tone 4

Having learned the joyful message of the
Resurrection from the angel the women
disciples of the Lord cast from them their
parental condemnation. And proudly broke the
news to the Disciples, saying, Death hath been
spoiled; Christ God is risen, granting the world
Great Mercy.

Troparion

of Nativity—Tone 4

See above.

Troparion

of Sunday after Nativity—Tone 2

Proclaim, O Joseph, to David, the grandparent
of God, the amazing wonders; for thou hast
seen a Virgin great with child; for with the
shepherds thou didst give glory, with the Magi
thou didst worship, and by the angel it was
revealed to thee. Wherefore, plead thou with
Christ God to save our souls.

Troparion

of St. Stephen—Tone 4

O first of strivers among the Martyrs, thy head
was crowned with a kingly crown, through the
struggles that thou didst endure for the sake of
Christ God; for thou didst reproach the folly of
the Jews, and therefore, didst see thy Savior on
the right hand of the Father. Wherefore, O
Stephen, to Him continuously plead for our
souls.

Troparion

of All Saints—Tone 4

As with fine porphyry and royal purple Thy
Church has been adorned with Thy martyr's
blood shed throughout all the world. She cries
to Thee, O Christ God, send down Thy
bounties on Thy people, grant peace to Thy
habitation and great mercy to our souls.

Kontakion

of the Nativity—Tone 3

Today the Virgin giveth birth to the
Transcendent in essence; the earth offereth the
cave to the unapproachable One; the angels
with the shepherds glorify Him; and the Magi
with the star travel on their way; for a new
child hath been born for our sakes, God before
the ages.

The Trisagion

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal . . .

Scripture

for today and next Sunday

Today: (See insert)

Next Sunday:

Epistle: 2 Tim. 4:5–8

Gospel: Mark. 1:1–8

Megalynarion—Tone 8

It is truly meet and right . . .

Communion Hymn

Tone 8

Praise the Lord . . . Alleluia.

Post-Communion Hymn

We have seen the true light . . .

Parish Notes

Altar Servers Today

Nicholas Christopoulos, Christian
Christopoulos, William Christopoulos,
Christopher Wingenbach, Ilya Moundous,
Gabriel Pope.

Special Attention

- **Baklawa Report.** 600 dozen were made in 2009:
Total Sales: \$7,642.80
Expenses: 918.64
Total Profit: \$6,724.16
With the help of our Lord and Parish family, this is the best year yet. God's Blessing & Happy and Prosperous New Year to All!
- **Please Note the Epiphany House Blessing Sign-Up Sheets on the Wall Opposite the Doors to the Parish Hall.**
- **Special Christmas Offering.** Please read the insert about the special Christmas offering this year. ***Note that this offering is an extra special gift and is not to replace your regular general fund offering and regular building fund offering.
- **Thank You.** To our All Saints family for your many expressions of love during this Christmas Season. We love you all and pray for a peaceful and blessed New Year. Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

*Fr. Nicholas and Klr. Barbara
and Family*

Today's Epistle and Gospel Readings

Prokeimenon:

His voice has gone out into all the earth.

The heavens declare the glory of God.

†Epistle: Acts 6:8—7:5, 47–60 (RSV)

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), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, arose and disputed with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. Then they secretly instigated men, who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, and set up false witnesses who said, "This man never ceases to speak words 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 which Moses delivered to us." And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel. The high priest said, "Is this so?" And Stephen said: "Brethren and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, 'Depart from

your land and from your kindred and go into the land which I will show you.' Then he departed from the land of the Chaldeans, and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living; yet he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot's length, but promised to give it to him in possession and to his posterity after him, 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 with hands; as the prophet says, 'Heaven is My throne, and earth My footstool. What 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 always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, Whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it." Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they grinded their teeth against him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into 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 together upon him.

(Continued on Back)

Today's Epistle and Gospel Readings

Prokeimenon:

His voice has gone out into all the earth.

The heavens declare the glory of God.

†Epistle: Acts 6:8—7:5, 47–60 (RSV)

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), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, arose and disputed with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. Then they secretly instigated men, who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, and set up false witnesses who said, "This man never ceases to speak words 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 which Moses delivered to us." And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel. The high priest said, "Is this so?" And Stephen said: "Brethren and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, 'Depart from

your land and from your kindred and go into the land which I will show you.' Then he departed from the land of the Chaldeans, and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living; yet he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot's length, but promised to give it to him in possession and to his posterity after him, 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 with hands; as the prophet says, 'Heaven is My throne, and earth My footstool. What 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 always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, Whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it." Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they grinded their teeth against him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into 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 together upon him.

(Continued on Back)

(Continued from Front)

Then 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 as they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And he knelt down and cried with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

† **Gospel: Matt. 2:13–23 (RSV)**

When the wise men had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the Child and His mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the Child, to destroy Him.” And he rose and took the Child and His mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt have I called My Son.” Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region, who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: “A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more.” But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, “Rise, take the Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the Child’s

life are dead.” And he rose and took the Child and His mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

(Continued from Front)

Then 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 as they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And he knelt down and cried with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

† **Gospel: Matt. 2:13–23 (RSV)**

When the wise men had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the Child and His mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the Child, to destroy Him.” And he rose and took the Child and His mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt have I called My Son.” Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region, who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: “A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more.” But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, “Rise, take the Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the Child’s

life are dead.” And he rose and took the Child and His mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

Special Christmas Offering

This year we are designating the Special Christmas Offering to help purchase the two small exterior domes on our new temple (approx. \$3500.00 per dome). The Special Pascha Offering this year was also designated for these domes, however, the donations only covered one of the domes. God willing we hope to be able to purchase both domes with the combined special offerings from Pascha and Christmas this year. Please use the special Christmas Offering envelope inserted in this bulletin.

(Small Exterior Domes)



May God bless you for your generosity!

**Christ is Born!
Glorify Him!**

Special Christmas Offering

This year we are designating the Special Christmas Offering to help purchase the two small exterior domes on our new temple (approx. \$3500.00 per dome). The Special Pascha Offering this year was also designated for these domes, however, the donations only covered one of the domes. God willing we hope to be able to purchase both domes with the combined special offerings from Pascha and Christmas this year. Please use the special Christmas Offering envelope inserted in this bulletin.

(Small Exterior Domes)



May God bless you for your generosity!

**Christ is Born!
Glorify Him!**

**A Word
from Our Fathers**

“The tragedy of creation came with the fall, and continues in our perpetual instability. Prone to evil, we detest and fight evil; in our longing for the absolute good, for God, we push Him away and resist Him.

Christ, having linked God and man inseparably in Himself, is the one and only solution of the apparently insoluble conflict. He is in truth the ‘Savior of the word.’ ”

(Archimandrite Sophrony: His Life is Mine)

**A Word
from Our Fathers**

“The tragedy of creation came with the fall, and continues in our perpetual instability. Prone to evil, we detest and fight evil; in our longing for the absolute good, for God, we push Him away and resist Him.

Christ, having linked God and man inseparably in Himself, is the one and only solution of the apparently insoluble conflict. He is in truth the ‘Savior of the word.’ ”

(Archimandrite Sophrony: His Life is Mine)