

# Liturgy Alive of ST. STEPHEN, First Martyr

## ST. STEPHEN, First Martyr

Feast

December 26

### Introduction

From the very beginning of its existence, the Church suffered persecution, like its founder, Jesus. St Stephen was of Greek, pagan origin and highly respected in the young Church of Jerusalem. Like Jesus, he died praying for his persecutors, and entrusted himself, even as he died into the hands of God. He had been one of the seven deacons who assisted the apostles, particularly in the ministry to the poor. He is described in Acts of the Apostles as “filled with faith and with the Holy Spirit” and “full of fortitude.”

### Opening Prayer

Lord our God,  
we honor today St Stephen,  
the first martyr of your young Church.  
Make us good witnesses like him,  
people filled with faith and with the Holy Spirit,  
men and women who are full of fortitude,  
as we try to live the life of Jesus.  
Give us a great trust  
that we may live and die in your hands  
and make us pray for those who harm us,  
that you may forgive them and us.  
We ask you this through Christ our Lord.

### General Intercessions

- For faithful witnesses, who testify to God and to the values of the gospel by their life and when necessary by their death, we pray:
  
- For zealous and compassionate people, who serve their neighbors in their need, we pray:
  
- For people persecuted because of their faith, that they may keep steadfast in their faith and strong in the Holy Spirit, we pray:
  
- For deacons in the Church, that God may keep them generous in their ministry of service, we pray:

### Prayer over the Gifts

Lord our God,  
we bring before you bread and wine,  
as we remember how St Stephen  
gave food to the hungry.  
Make us, too, ministers of your love,  
who care for the poor,  
that no one in our Christian communities  
may suffer any want.  
For we try to be one heart and mind  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **Prayer after Communion**

Lord our God,  
as we celebrate the memory of St Stephen,  
take away from us all fear  
and dispose us to bear witness in all serenity  
to the death and resurrection of Jesus.  
May we learn from this martyr  
to become more like Jesus  
in what we say and in the way we live.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

### **Blessing**

How much Stephen was like Jesus , living in the hands of the Father and dying as he forgave those who were killing him and entrusted himself to God. May God give us such a beautiful faith and bless us, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.