

26th December

St Stephen

First Martyr

Our word 'Martyr' goes back to the Greek word for 'witness', and St Stephen was the first martyr in the full sense of the world. He was not only the first Christian to die for the Faith; the Acts of the Apostles also contain the long speech (quoted in the Epistle only in excerpts) in which he gave eloquent witness of Christ as fulfilment of God's promises in the Old Testament, now seated at the right hand of God. This courageous speech is the more astonishing since Stephen was the first deacon, thus a man responsible for the care of the poor, and not for preaching. From early Christianity onward, St Stephen has been widely venerated. Because he is the patron of the Cathedral of Passau, a centre of early medieval mission along the Danube, many churches in central Europe are dedicated to him, and also the first Christian king of Hungary took his name at Baptism.

Station at St Stephen's on the Caelian Hill

Red

2 Cl. (Duplex 2 Cl.)

INTROIT: Ps. 118:23:86, 23

Sederunt principes et adversum me loquebantur : et inique persecuti sunt me; adjuva me, Domine Deus meus, quia servus tuus exercebatur in tuis justificationibus. Ps. *ibid.* 1: Beati immaculati in via : qui ambulant in lege Domini. V. Gloria.

*Princes sat, and spoke against me : and the wicked persecuted me : help me, O Lord my God, for thy servant was exercised in thy justifications. Ps. *ibid.* 1: Blessed are the undefiled in the way : that walk in the law of the Lord. V. Glory.*

COLLECTS

Da nobis, quæsumus, Domine, imitari quod colimus : ut discamus et inimicos diligere; quia ejus natalitia celebramus, qui novit etiam pro persecutoribus exorare Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium tuum. Qui tecum vivit.

For the Octave of Christmas:

Concede, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus : ut nos Unigeniti tui nova per carnem nativitas liberet, quos sub peccati jugo vetusta servitus tenet. Per eundem Dominum.

Grant us, we beseech thee, O Lord, so to imitate what we revere, that we may learn to love even our enemies; for we celebrate the birthday to immortality of him who could plead even for his persecutors with thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth.

Grant, we beseech thee, almighty God, that the new birth, in the flesh, of thine only-begotten Son may set us free, whom the old bondage doth hold under the yoke of sin. Through the same Lord.

LESSON: Acts 6:8-10, 7:54-59

Lectio Actuum Apostolorum.

In diebus illis : Stephanus, plenus gratia et fortitudine, faciebat prodigia et signa magna in populo. Surrexerunt autem quidam de synagoga, quæ appellatur Libertinorum, et Cyrenensium, et Alexandrinorum, et eorum qui erant a Cilicia

A lesson from the Acts of the Apostles.

In those days: Stephen, full of grace and fortitude, did great wonders and signs among the people. Now there arose some of that which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of them that were of Cilicia and Asia,

et Asia, disputantes cum Stephano : et non poterant resistere sapientiæ, et Spiritui, qui loquebatur. Audientes autem hæc, dissecabantur cordibus suis, et stridebant dentibus in eum. Cum autem esset Stephanus plenus Spiritu Sancto, intendens in cælum, vidit gloriam Dei, et Jesum stantem a dextris Dei. Et ait : Ecce video cælos apertos, et Filium hominis stantem a dextris Dei. Exclamantes autem voce magna, continuerunt aures suas, et impetum fecerunt unanimiter in eum. Et ejicientes eum extra civitatem lapidabant : et testes deposuerunt vestimenta sua secus pedes adolescentis qui vocabatur Saulus. Et lapidabant Stephanum invocantem, et dicentem : Domine Jesu, suscipe spiritum meum. Positis autem genibus, clamavit voce magna, dicens : Domine, ne statuas illis hoc peccatum. Et cum hoc dixisset, obdormivit in Domino.

disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit that spoke. Now, hearing these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed with their teeth at him. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looking up steadfastly to heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And he said: Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. And they, crying out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and with one accord ran violently upon him. And casting him forth without the city, they stoned him : and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, invoking, and saying: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And, falling on his knees, he cried with a loud voice, saying: Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep in the Lord.

GRADUAL: Ps. 118:23, 86

Sederunt principes, et adversum me loquebantur : et iniqui persecuti sunt me. *Ps. 6:5:* Adjuva me, Domine Deus meus : salvum me fac propter misericordiam tuam.

*Princes sat, and spoke against me : and the wicked persecuted me. *Ps. 6:5:* Help me, O Lord my God : save me for thy mercy's sake.*

ALLELUIA: Acts 7:55

Video cælos apertos, et Jesum stantem a dextris virtutis Dei.

I see the heavens opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of the power of God.

ad libitum: SEQUENCE

Magnus Deus in universa terra.

Great is the Lord in all the earth.

Magna sunt ejus ubique omnia, in cælo atque in terra, opera.

Great are all his works, everywhere, in heaven and in earth.

Qui est Rex regum, Dominus omnium, a Patre genitus ante sæcula.

Who is the King of kings, the Lord of all, born from the Father before all times.

Cujus caritas vera cælo sublevat Stephanum de terra

Whose true love lifteth up Stephen from earth unto heaven,

Atque perenni vita ornat candida digniter corona.

And graced him in the eternal life with a shining crown.

Plenus erat Stephanus Deitate atque gratia, Magna dabat prodigia docens verissima dogmata.

Stephen was full of divinity and grace, He shewed many wonders, and taught the most truthful doctrine.

Cum autem prædicaret jam præsentia
Nostræ redemptionis nova gaudia;

Intento in superna, cæli patet janua,

Dixitque circumstanti plebi voce publica,

Sacra plenus gratia : / Ecce Dei video admira-
bilem gloriam

Claritate fulgida, / atque Jesum stantem in vir-
tutis Dei dextera.

Cum hoc audisset impia gens Judaica, / dans
fremittum concita, / quassat lapidibus
Stephani membra.

Sed stat fortiter patiens Martyr et orat : / Ne
his, Christe, noxam statua, / sed jam accipe
animam meam.

Et cum hoc dixisset, in Domino obdormivit
pace æterna.

(Ter) Tu et nobis, Martyr O Stephane, sempi-
terna impetra gaudia.

*But when he preached that the new joys of our
redemption were already present,*

*The gate of heaven stood already open to this man,
yearning for the things above,*

*And he said to the people around him with loud
voice,*

*Full of holy grace: / Behold, I see the admirable glory
of the Lord,*

*In shining light, / and Jesus standing at the right
hand of the power of God.*

*When the impious crowd of Jews heard this, / they
hissed angrily, / and broke Stephen's limbs with
stones.*

*But the patient martyr stands bravely and prays: /
Do not count this sin against them, O Christ, /
but now receive my soul.*

*And when he said that, he fell asleep in the Lord in
eternal peace.*

*(Thrice) Obtain also for us eternal joys, O martyr
Stephen.*

GOSPEL: Mt. 23:34-39

Sequentia Sancti Evangelii secundum
Matthæum.

In illo tempore : Dicebat Jesus Scribis et Phari-
sæis : Ecce, ego mitto ad vos prophetas et
sapientes et scribas, et ex illis occiditis, et cruci-
figitis, et ex eis flagellabitis in synagogis vestris,
et persequemini de civitate in civitatem : ut
veniat super vos omnis sanguis justus, qui effu-
sus est super terram, a sanguine Abel justi
usque ad sanguinem Zachariæ, filii Barachiaë,
quem occidistis inter templum et altare. Amen,
dico vobis, venient hæc omnia super generatio-
nem istam. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, quæ occidis
prophetas, et lapidas eos, qui ad te missi sunt,
quoties volui congregare filios tuos quemadmo-
dum gallina congregat pullos suos sub alas, et
noluisti? Ecce, relinquetur vobis domus vestra
deserta. Dico enim vobis, non me videbitis
amodo, donec dicatis : Benedictus qui venit in
nomine Domini.

*Continuation of the holy Gospel according to
St Matthew.*

*At that time: Jesus said to the Scribes and Pharisees:
Behold I send to you prophets, and wise men, and
Scribes; and some of them you will put to death and
crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues,
and persecute from city to city : that upon you may
come all the just blood that hath been shed upon the
earth, from the blood of Abel the just, even 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 shall come upon this genera-
tion. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the
prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee,
how often would I have gathered together thy children,
as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings,
and thou wouldst not? Behold your house shall be left
to you desolate. For I say to you, you shall not see me
henceforth till you say: Blessed is he that cometh in
the name of the Lord.*

OFFERTORY: *Acts 6:5, 7:59; 6:15, 7:58, 59, 6:9-10, 15*

Elegerunt Apostoli Stephanum levitam plenum fide et Spiritu Sancto, quem lapidaverunt Judæi orantem, et dicentem : *Domine Jesu, accipe spiritum meum, alleluia. ¶ Videbant faciem ejus tamquam faciem Angeli Dei : et concurrentes lapidibus cædebant eum orantem et dicentem. *Domine. ¶ Positis autem genibus Stephanus orabat dicens : Domine Jesu, ne statuas illis hoc peccatum, quia nesciunt, quid faciunt, alleluia.

vel: ¶ Surrexerunt autem quidam ex Judæis disputantes cum Stephano et non poterant resistere Spiritui Sancto, qui loquebantur : Viderunt faciem ejus tamquam faciem Angeli et lapidibus cædebant eum, alleluia.

*The Apostles chose Stephen, a Levite, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, whom the Jews stoned, praying and saying : *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit, alleluia. ¶ They saw his face as if it had been the face of an Angel of God : and running together they killed him with stones, while he was praying and saying : *Lord. ¶ Falling on his knees, Stephen prayed and said : Lord, lay not this sin to their charge, for they know not what they do, alleluia.*

or: ¶ There arose some of the Jews disputing with Stephen, and they were not able to resist the Holy Ghost, which was speaking : they saw his face as if it had been the face of an Angel, and they killed him with stones, alleluia.

SECRETS

Suscipe, Domine, munera pro tuorum commemoratione Sanctorum : ut, sicut illos passio gloriosos effecit, ita nos devotio reddat innocuos. Per Dominum.

For the Octave of Christmas:

Oblata, Domine, munera nova Unigeniti tui nativitate sanctifica : nosque a peccatorum nostrorum maculis emunda. Per eundem Dominum.

Receive, O Lord, our offerings in commemoration of thy saints : that, as suffering rendered them glorious, so devotion may render us innocent. Through our Lord.

Sanctify, O Lord, the gifts we offer by the new birth of thine only-begotten Son, and cleanse us from the stains of our sins. Through the same Lord.

PREFACE

Of Christmas

Vere dignum et justum est, æquum et salutare, nos tibi semper, et ubique, gratias agere : Domine sancte, Pater omnipotens, æterne Deus. Quia per incarnati Verbi mysterium, nova mentis nostræ oculis lux tuæ claritatis infulsit : ut dum visibiliter Deum cognoscimus, per hunc in invisibilium amorem rapiamur. Et ideo cum Angelis et Archangelis, cum Thronis et Dominationibus, cumque omni militia cælestis exercitus, hymnum gloriæ tuæ canimus, sine fine dicentes :

Today, the COMMUNICANTES of the CANON begins as follows

Communicantes, et diem sacratissimum celebrantes, qua beatæ Mariæ intemerata virginitas huic mundo edidit Salvatorem : sed et memoriam venerantes, in primis ejusdem gloriosæ semper Virginis Mariæ, Genitricis ejusdem Dei et Domini nostri Jesu Christi ...

It is truly meet and just, right and salutary, that we should always, and in all places, give thanks to thee, O holy Lord, Father almighty, eternal God. For by the mystery of the Word made Flesh, the light of thy glory hath shone anew upon the eyes of our mind : so that while we acknowledge him as God seen by men, we may be drawn by him to the love of things unseen. And therefore with the Angels and Archangels, with the Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts of the heavenly army, we sing a hymn to thy glory, evermore saying:

Communicating, and keeping that most holy day, on which the spotless virginity of the blessed Mary brought forth a Saviour to this world; and also venerating the memory, first of the same glorious Mary, ever a Virgin, Mother of the same our God and Lord Jesus Christ ...

COMMUNION: *Acts 7:55, 58, 59*

Video cælos apertos, et Jesum stantem a dextris virtutis Dei : Domine Jesu, accipe spiritum meum, et ne statuas illis hoc peccatum.

I see the heavens opened, and Jesus standing on the right hand of the power of God : Lord Jesus, receive my spirit, and lay not this sin to their charge.

POST-COMMUNIONS

Auxilientur nobis, Domine, sumpta mysteria : et, intercedente beato Stephano Martyre tuo, sempiterna protectione confirmet. Per Dominum.

May the mysteries which we have received, O Lord, assist us : and, through the intercession of blessed Stephen, thy martyr, may they be to us a source of everlasting protection and strength. Through our Lord.

For the Octave of Christmas:

Præsta, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus : ut natus hodie Salvator mundi, sicut divinæ nobis generationis est auctor, ita et immortalitatis sit ipse largitor. Qui tecum vivit.

Grant, we beseech thee, O almighty God, that, as the Saviour of the world, who was born this day, procured for us divine sonship, he may also bestow on us immortality. Who liveth.