

Stephen, Deacon and First Martyr

Year B

26th December 2020

Red

Prayer of the Day

We give you thanks, O Lord of glory,
for the example of Stephen, the first martyr,
who prayed for his persecutors,
and looked to him who was crucified, your Son Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, in glory everlasting. **Amen.**

A reading from the Second Book of Chronicles,

Chapter 24 beginning at Verse 17

¹⁷ Now after the death of Jehoiada the officials of Judah came and did obeisance to the king; then the king listened to them. ¹⁸ They abandoned the house of the Lord, the God of their ancestors, and served the sacred poles and the idols. And wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this guilt of theirs. ¹⁹ Yet he sent prophets among them to bring them back to the Lord; they testified against them, but they would not listen.

²⁰ Then the spirit of God took possession of Zechariah son of the priest Jehoiada; he stood above the people and said to them, "Thus says God: Why do you transgress the commandments of the Lord, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the Lord, he has also forsaken you." ²¹ But they conspired against him, and by command of the king they stoned him to death in the court of the house of the Lord. ²² King Joash did not remember the kindness that Jehoiada, Zechariah's father, had shown him, but killed his son. As he was dying, he said, "May the Lord see and avenge!"

[NRSV 2 Chronicles 24:17-22]

Hear the word of the Lord, ***thanks be to God.***

Psalm 31:1-8

- ¹ To you, Lord, have I come for shelter:
let me never be put to shame.
- ² O deliver me in your righteousness:
incline your ear to me and be swift to save me.
- ³ Be for me a rock of refuge, a fortress to defend me:
for you are my high rock and my stronghold.

- ⁴ Lead me and guide me for your name's sake:
bring me out of the net that they have secretly laid for me,
for you are my strength.
- ⁵ Into your hands I commit my spirit:
you will redeem me, O Lord God of truth.
- ⁶ I hate those that clutch vain idols:
but my trust is in the Lord.
- ⁷ I will rejoice and be glad in your loving-kindness:
for you have looked on my distress
and known me in adversity.
- ⁸ You have not given me over to the power of the enemy:
you have set my feet where I may walk at liberty.

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles,
Chapter 6 beginning at Verse 8

⁸ Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke.

⁵⁴ When they heard these things, they became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen. ⁵⁵ 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. ⁵⁶ "Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" ⁵⁷ But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. ⁵⁸ 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. ⁵⁹ While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." ⁶⁰ 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.

[NRSV Acts 6:8-10;7:54-60]

Hear the word of the Lord, ***thanks be to God.***

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew,
Chapter 10 beginning at Verse 17

Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ

¹⁷ Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; ¹⁸ and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. ¹⁹ When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; ²⁰ for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. ²¹ Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; ²² and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

[NRSV Matthew 10:17-22]

This is the Gospel of the Lord, ***praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.***

Sentence

**The Most High does not live in houses made with hands, as the prophet says,
'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool, says the Lord'.**