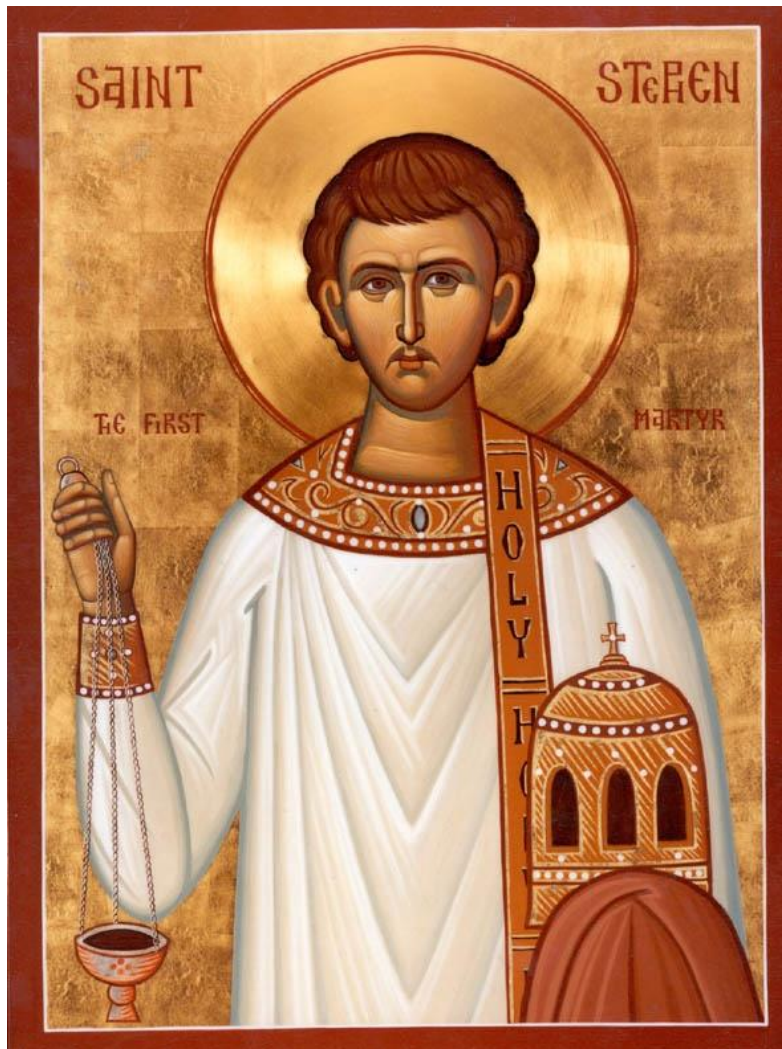


AKATHIST TO THE HOLY ARCHDEACON STEPHEN THE PROTOMARTYR



**For strength to overcome anger
For the ability to see our own sins
For ability to confess our sins in true
repentance**

Kontakion 1

Thrice-blessed Stephen, Protomartyr of Christ's Holy Church, Protodeacon of the New Testament and Apostle of the Seventy Apostles, because of your great faith and love for the Savior, you have been deemed worthy of the triple-crowned glory. Now that you stand at His Right Hand and ever intercede on our behalf, we offer our praise to you:

Rejoice, Holy Saint Stephen, Protomartyr of Christ's Holy Church!

Ikos 1

Holy Disciple, you heard the call of the Lord Jesus Christ to follow Him, to become a shining light to the world and to fearlessly preach the Gospel. You did not pause at His word: "If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you." But putting your hand to the plow you emulated the Savior by shedding your blood for His sake. To you who gave your life for Him, Who is the Life of all, we sing:

Rejoice, first martyr of the Holy Martyrs!
Rejoice, Godly lamb of the Lamb of God!
Rejoice, Holy Apostle of Jesus Christ!
Rejoice, true Israelite of the New Jerusalem!
Rejoice, first deacon of the One Holy Church!
Rejoice, intercessor for all mankind!

Rejoice, Holy Saint Stephen, Protomartyr of Christ's Holy Church!

Kontakion 2

Holy Israelite, in whom there is no guile, you are a true son of the One Living God. Now that you have taken up residence in the bosom of Abraham with Isaac and all the righteous, you unceasingly cry out in praise to God: **Alleluia!**
(People sing Alleluia!)

Ikos 2

Seed of Abraham and righteous heir of the Eternal Covenant, you saw in the Person of Jesus Christ the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the Promised Messiah. As His Disciple and true follower, you received from Him the pearl of great price. And to you who have, in turn, bequeathed to us the precious pearl of the Heavenly Kingdom, we cry:

Rejoice, new Abraham of the New Covenant!
Rejoice, new Moses of the New Testament!
Rejoice, new Joshua of the Never-setting Sun!
Rejoice, new David of the King of Kings!
Rejoice, new Solomon of the Word and Wisdom!
Rejoice, new Daniel of the Lion of Judah!

Rejoice, Holy Saint Stephen, Protomartyr of Christ's Holy Church!

Kontakion 3

When Abraham heard the call from God the Lord to leave his homeland, his kindred and his father's house behind, he did not fail to obey. But departing from Haran, he came and dwelt in the land of Canaan. There the Lord came to him and said, "I will make you a great nation. I will bless you, and your seed will be numbered as the stars of Heaven." And with great joy all

the host of Heaven sang out in praise: **Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)**

Ikos 3

The forefathers saw the wonders of Almighty God: the Flood, the Confusion of tongues, the Burning Bush, the Passover, the Crossing of the Red Sea, the giving of the Ten Commandments, and the Glory of the Tabernacle in the wilderness. But you, O chosen one, saw the wonder of Almighty God become Flesh. And to you who bore witness of Him and of His Heavenly glory, we cry:

Rejoice, flowing flood of the grace of God!
Rejoice, fiery tongue of the fire of Pentecost!
Rejoice, Godly Lamb of the Lamb of God!
Rejoice, Passover from death to life!
Rejoice, Israelite of the New Covenant!
Rejoice, partaker of the Heavenly Glory!

Rejoice, Holy Saint Stephen, Protomartyr of Christ's Holy Church!

Kontakion 4

The Lord appointed you, O glorious Stephen, to be one of the Seventy Apostles. He sent you out, two by two, as lambs among wolves, to go into the surrounding cities, towns and countryside, to every place where He was about to go. And entering upon this apostolic mission, you sang out in praise to God: **Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)**

Ikos 4

Desiring that you reap a hundredfold, the Savior sent you out into the bountiful harvest to both teach and harvest precious souls. You were told to take no possessions along the way, and when you came to a house of peace to remain there, to heal the sick, and to preach: “The Kingdom of Heaven has come near.” And to you, the great preacher, we cry:

Rejoice, blessed teacher of the Holy Gospel!
Rejoice, pious preacher, zealous for souls!
Rejoice, true Disciple of Jesus Christ!
Rejoice, Holy Apostle of the Holy Church!
Rejoice, healing of the sick and penitent!
Rejoice, judgment for the proud and arrogant!

Rejoice, Holy Saint Stephen, Protomartyr of Christ’s Holy Church!

Kontakion 5

When the Seventy returned from their missionary journey, they said to the Lord, “Even the demons are subject to us in Your Name.” But Jesus said, “Do not rejoice in this, but rejoice that your names are written in Heaven.” And when your name, O Apostle, was written in the book of Life, the Angels sang in praise to God: **Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)**

Ikos 5

The Lord said to you, O Holy Disciple, “Blessed are your eyes which see the things you see, for many Prophets and Kings desired to see what you see and did not see it, and to hear what you hear and did not hear it.” And to you, who were deemed worthy to see and hear such Heavenly things, we cry:

Rejoice, for you lifted the sick from their beds!
Rejoice, for you trampled upon the serpent's head!
Rejoice, for seventy names were added to the Book of Life!
Rejoice, blessed one of the seventy blessed ones!
Rejoice, for you saw what no Prophet ever saw!
Rejoice, for you heard what no king ever heard!

Rejoice, Holy Saint Stephen, Protomartyr of Christ's Holy Church!

Kontakion 6

When the number of believers in the Church of Jerusalem greatly multiplied, there arose a complaint from the Hellenists that their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of bread. And when the Twelve called the Church to assemble to address their needs, all the widows arose as one and sang in joy: **Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)**

Ikos 6

In order to devote themselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word, the Twelve Apostles said, "Let us seek out seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, and appoint them over this task." And to you, Saint Stephen, first appointed to this new ministry, we sing:

Rejoice, first-called to the Holy Diaconate!
Rejoice, man of God of good repute!
Rejoice, for you did not neglect the neglected!
Rejoice, for you served with great joy and zeal!
Rejoice, for the Lord heard the widow's prayer!
Rejoice, for you were sent to give them their daily bread!

Rejoice, Holy Saint Stephen, Protomartyr of Christ's Holy Church!

Kontakion 7

The Apostle Paul said, "Deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given too much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience." And seeing in you, Saint Stephen, the virtues of purity, simplicity, sobriety, reverence and love, the faithful rejoiced in song: **Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)**

Ikos 7

O Holy Disciple, you were tested and found worthy of the Holy diaconate. You were chosen along with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicholas, to become the first Deacons of Christ's Holy Church. And when the Twelve prayed and laid their hands upon your heads, you received the Chrism of the new office of Deacon. To you, the great Protodeacon, we cry:

Rejoice, first deacon of the first seven ones!
Rejoice, for you served the least and the last!
Rejoice, for you were given to inebriation of the Spirit!
Rejoice, for you were found worthy of all praise!
Rejoice, for you were zealous for Heavenly riches!
Rejoice, for your heart contained the Pearl of great price!

Rejoice, Holy Saint Stephen, Protomartyr of Christ's Holy Church!

Kontakion 8

Holy Saint Stephen, through the indwelling grace of the Holy Spirit, you possessed great faith and miraculous power, and you performed mighty signs and wonders among the people. Though the hardhearted Hebrews rejected your preaching that Jesus was the Messiah, those who did accept salvation cried out in faith: **Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)**

Ikos 8

When ungodly men stirred up the elders, scribes and people against you, Saint Stephen, you were seized and brought before their unlawful tribunal. These servants of the evil one brought false charges against you, saying, “This man does not cease to blaspheme Moses and our God.” But when they beheld your face, they saw the face of an Angel. And to you we cry:

Rejoice, for you were filled with the power of the Spirit!
Rejoice, for with power you cast out the demons!
Rejoice, for you performed great signs and miracles!
Rejoice, for the Jews were powerless to refute you!
Rejoice, for your accusers were convicted of blasphemy!
Rejoice, for you were convicted of being Angelic!

Rejoice, Holy Saint Stephen, Protomartyr of Christ’s Holy Church!

Kontakion 9

When the Lord Jesus Christ was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, He still addressed Judas the betrayer, as “friend.” And you, O Stephen, in emulating Him, addressed your accusers as “fathers and brothers.” And throughout the unlawful trial brought against you by the ungodly Jews,

you continually cried out to the Friend of Man: **Alleluia!**
(**People sing Alleluia!**)

Ikos 9

In defense before the ungodly council, Saint of God, you brought to their remembrance the Covenant of Promise given to the Patriarch Abraham and to his descendants. But the hard hearted Jews, like their stiff-necked fathers, rejected the God of Abraham and refused to hear your words. But all who have accepted the God of Abraham give praise to you:

Rejoice, true son of the Patriarchs!
Rejoice, true heir of the Promise eternal!
Rejoice, friend of the Friend of Man!
Rejoice, friend to each and every man!
Rejoice, Apostle of the Persecuted Lord!
Rejoice, Disciple worthy of His Passion!

Rejoice, Holy Saint Stephen, Protomartyr of Christ's Holy Church!

Kontakion 10

The Israelites of Old were freed from the bondage of Pharaoh through many signs and wonders. But your accusers, O Saint of God, were held fast in the chains of disbelief. Refusing to acknowledge your wondrous miracles, they remained enslaved to the prince of darkness. But you, the free son of Jesus Christ, have safely passed through the shadow of death, and now in the Promised Land you ever chant to God: **Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)**

Ikos 10

The unbelieving Jews, who falsely accused you, Saint Stephen, did not tremble in fear before Almighty God, as did the ancestors of Old before the quaking and smoking of Mount Sinai. But you, who were transfigured by the Triune God of Love, had no fear of their ungodly threats. To you of great courage, we cry:

Rejoice, freeman from the Law of Sinai!
Rejoice, bond slave of the Grace of Tabor!
Rejoice, righteous refugee from slavery to sin!
Rejoice, obedient citizen of Jesus Christ!
Rejoice, for your faith began with fear!
Rejoice, for it was perfected in love!

Rejoice, Holy Saint Stephen, Protomartyr of Christ's Holy Church!

Kontakion 11

The unrighteous Jews heard your righteous judgment that they were stiff-necked like their fathers and always resisted the Holy Spirit. And rejecting your words, as they did those of the Savior, they rushed to stone you to death. But looking up to Heaven and seeing Jesus standing at the right hand of God the Father, you called out in praise: **Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)**

Ikos 11

The stony-hearted Jews in the blindness of rage and disbelief, rained stones down upon your head, O Stephen, which became jewels in the crown of your Martyrdom. But emulating the Savior you called out to Him, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,"

and praying for your murderers you knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin.” O crowned one of God, receive our praise to you:

Rejoice, Israelite who received the Law and kept it!
Rejoice, Holy Apostle filled with the Holy Spirit!
Rejoice, martyr filling up the Passion of Christ!
Rejoice, Disciple filled with the passion of love!
Rejoice, for you saw Jesus at the Father’s right hand!
Rejoice, for you now stand at His right hand!

Rejoice, Holy Saint Stephen, Protomartyr of Christ’s Holy Church!

Kontakion 12

The stones that pummeled your body, O Saint of God, paved your path to Heaven and adorned the diadem of your suffering, O first-crowned Martyr of Jesus Christ and first Deacon of His Holy Church, you now send up endless litanies on our behalf, ever chanting to the Triune God: **Alleluia! (People sing Alleluia!)**

Ikos 12

Holy Forerunner of blessed martyrs, your courageous example prepared the way for all those who would give their lives for Jesus Christ. As you now worship in Heaven the Lamb, slain for the life of the world, we join with all the martyrs, who from every age give praise to you:

Rejoice, Holy forerunner of Holy Martyrs!
Rejoice, first-numbered of the numberless ones!
Rejoice, Protodeacon for all eternity!

Rejoice, great intercessor for all the world!
Rejoice, crowned one with crimson rubies!
Rejoice, kingly one of the King of Kings!

Rejoice, Holy Saint Stephen, Protomartyr of Christ's Holy Church!

Kontakion 13

(To be read three times)

Protomartyr Stephen, because of your great love for the Savior, you sacrificed everything for His sake, giving your own life for Him. Now that you stand at His Holy Right Hand in Heavenly glory, accept this our offering of praise and thanksgiving, and intercede on our behalf: that we may be granted all that is God-pleasing for our health and salvation, that united with you in Heaven, we may ever chant: **Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**
(People sing Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!)

Kontakion 1

Thrice-blessed Stephen, Protomartyr of Christ's Holy Church, Protodeacon of the New Testament and Apostle of the Seventy Apostles, because of your great faith and love for the Savior, you have been deemed worthy of the triple-crowned Glory. Now that you stand at His Right Hand and ever intercede on our behalf, we offer our praise to you:

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fearlessly preach the Gospel. You did not pause at His word: “If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you.” But putting your hand to the plow you emulated the Savior by shedding your blood for His sake. To you who gave your life for Him, Who is the Life of all, we sing:

Rejoice, first martyr of the Holy martyrs!
Rejoice, godly lamb of the Lamb of God!
Rejoice, Holy Apostle of Jesus Christ!
Rejoice, true Israelite of the New Jerusalem!
Rejoice, first Deacon of the One Holy Church!
Rejoice, intercessor for all mankind!

Prayer to Saint Stephen

Holy and great Protomartyr Stephen, you were appointed and blessed by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Promised Messiah, to become one of His Holy Apostles in the ranks of the Seventy. You preached the Gospel, healed the sick and cast out demons. You were found worthy to see and hear what prophets and kings could not. When the numbers of Christians greatly grew in Jerusalem, you were chosen by the Twelve Apostles and all the faithful to be the first deacon in Christ’s Holy Church. You brought aid to the hungry widows, performed signs and wonders among the people, and, in preaching the Gospel to the unreceptive Jews; you convicted them of their hard heartedness and disbelief. During your trial before their ungodly council, most pure and Holy Saint, you were granted the magnificent grace to see the Heavens opened and to see, standing at the right hand of God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ in His celestial

glory. And as the ungodly Jews rushed to murder you, you emulated your Magnificent Savior to the highest degree, committing your soul to Him, and asking that your murderers not be charged with the crime of murder. And then being stoned to death by the ones for whom you prayed, you filled up the suffering of Jesus Christ.

O Holy and great first Martyr of the Church of God, you now stand with the Lord on the right hand of God the Father with all the righteous, who have departed this life to their eternal reward. Now that you serve in the Most Holy Place and ever make intercession for the whole world, we unworthy sinners ask you to send up petitions on our behalf: that we may receive the grace of God to direct our lives toward Jesus Christ; that we might not reject that which is granted us to see and hear, but that our hearts may be open and receptive to the workings of the Holy Spirit in our lives; that we might always confess and never deny our Lord Jesus Christ; that we, following your example in following the Lord's example, might suffer with the suffering and give help to the helpless; that we may be given the grace to see our own sins, and with them to repent of them; that we may not be overcome by anger but be overcome by the Holy Spirit; and that we may be granted by God's Grace to accept all that is sent to us for our salvation.

O precious and Holy Deacon of the One, Holy and Divine Trinity, pray for us and for our beloved ones, that we may be granted the forgiveness of our many sins, and that we may strive to lead righteous and godly lives; that we may be granted to follow after you on the path to Heaven, which you so gloriously paved through the shedding of your blood by stoning; and that we, through the unbounded love of our Savior, may attain to the

Heavenly realm, to the Paradise of eternal joy, where all sickness, sorrow and sighing have fled away; and that with you and all the righteous, we ever chant in Chorus with the Holy Angels, “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord Almighty,” giving praise and glory to the One and Holy and Undivided Trinity, forever and ever. **Amen.**

Glorifying God Through His Light

50 Hour Prayer Vigil

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