

**27 DECEMBER**  
**Afterfeast**  
**± Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen C1**  
**Confessor Theodoros of Palestine and Constantinople C7**

**VESPERS**

**Lord I have cried**

Tone 4

O Lord, I have cried to you, listen to me;  
O Lord, listen to me.

O Lord, I have cried to you, listen to me;  
Note the voice of my plea when I cry to you.  
O Lord, listen to me.

<sup>2</sup> Let my prayer be directed before you like incense,  
the raising of my hands be an evening sacrifice.  
O Lord, listen to me.

S6: O Lord, if you mark offences, who will stand?  
But there is forgiveness with you.  
O Stephen, your soul was illuminated with the grace of the Holy Spirit *and* your face shone like an angel. Your body was made radiant by the brightness within you *and* the contemplation of God's light was your only joy. Therefore, O leader and glory of the martyrs, the heavens were marvellously opened to you.

S5: O Lord, I have waited for you for your name's sake;  
my soul has waited for your word,  
my soul has hoped in the Lord.

The hail of stones became the steps of a ladder by which you ascended to the gates of heaven. You saw the Lord as he stood at the right hand of the Father; he offered you a crown with his own life-giving hand. Truly you have fulfilled the meaning of your name. Now, O glorious conqueror, you stand before him as the first warrior offered in battle.

S4: Let Israel hope in the Lord  
from morning watch until night,  
from morning watch.

*You were* distinguished for signs, wonders and heavenly preaching *and* destroyed the malice of the evil council. O blessed Stephen, you begged God to forgive them as they stoned you to death. By using the words of the Saviour as he hung on the Cross, you commended your pure spirit into his hands.

S3: For there is mercy with the Lord  
and abundant redemption with *him*.  
He will redeem Israel from all his offences.

O venerable Theodoros, servant of Christ, the wounds of exile at the hands of the evil usurper on the imperial throne were added to those of leaving your country. He overthrew the traditions of faith and destroyed the holy icons of the Saviour. You baffled him with the grace of God.

S2: Every nation, praise the Lord;  
every people, acclaim him!  
O Theodoros, holy singer for our God, neither agony, nor prison in the darkness without light, nor wounds, nor blows were able to separate you from the love of Christ. Neither the painful, dreary illness, nor the lack of food could accomplish it. You were not disturbed, yet endured everything and foresaw the reward above in the midst of your tortures.

S1: For his mercy is strengthened over us  
and the truth of the Lord remains for ever.  
The just Judge of combats gave you joyful rest because of your pains and afflictions. He gave you his radiance because of your imprisonment in darkness. He wrote your name in the book of life because of what was carved on your face. You took your place in the assembly of the first-born in the heights of heaven and, because you were full of joy, joined the festive choir of the angels.

Glory: Tone 2

1

The all-beautiful Stephen, *who is* adorned with the crimson of his own blood as though with precious gems, is offered to the King and Lord of all who is born on earth today. O lovers of the martyrs, come and weave the flowers of song into a crown, and honour the Proto-martyr of Christ our God, for his spirit is radiant with wisdom and love. We will receive peace and great mercy through his prayers.

Both now:

A great and mighty wonder has come to pass this day. A virgin bears a child and her womb suffers no corruption. The Word is made flesh, yet does not cease to live with the Father. Angels and shepherds give glory, and, together with them, we cry out, "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth!"

*Entrance*

**Phos Ilarón**

P/D: Wisdom! Stand upright!  
O Jesus Christ, joyful light of the holy glory  
of the immortal, heavenly, holy, blessed Father,  
when we come to the setting of the sun  
and see the light of evening,  
we praise God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

For it is right at all times to worship you  
with voices of praise,  
O Son of God *and* Giver of life.  
Therefore the world glorifies you.

**Prokeímenon**

*Of the Day*

**Ektení**

**Prayer**

O Lord, allow us this night to be guarded from sin. Blessed are you, O Lord, God of our fathers! Praised and glorified be your name for ever. Amen. O Lord, let your mercy be on us, for we have hoped in you. Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your statutes. Blessed are you, O Master; make me understand your statutes. Blessed are you, O Holy *One*; enlighten me with your statutes. O Lord, your mercy lasts for ever; do not overlook the work of your hands. To you belongs worship, to you belongs praise, to you belongs glory, to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and to ages of ages. Amen.

**Plirotiká**

**Prayer**

P: Peace be with you all. R: And with your spirit  
D: Bow down your heads to the Lord. R: To you, O Lord.

P: For blessed and glorified is the power of your Kingdom, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages. *Amen*.

**Apósticha**

Tone 1

Let us sing to the eternal Son who sprang from the bosom of the Father before all ages. In the fullness of time he rests on the throne of his Mother's arms. Together with the angels, the shepherds and the Wise Men, let us worship him.

S1: The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit on my right  
until I make your enemies a stool for your feet." <sup>Ps 109</sup>  
O faithful, let us assemble in Bethlehem and see the Creator of all who lies in the manger. The Wise Men from Chaldea offer him three precious gifts, for as our King and God he will live three days among the dead.

S2: I have fathered you from the womb before the Morning Star. <sup>109</sup>  
When you were born in the cave from the Virgin, the host of angels hovered round you and cried out, "Glory to you in the highest! O

God, glory to you, for you have taken the form of a servant! *You were* born from the womb of the unwedded Mother and Virgin, *and* have renewed the inhabited earth.

Glory: Tone 6

O blessed Stephen, *you are* the adornment of Christ's warriors, the first among deacons and the first among martyrs. *You are* the joy of the faithful and the glory of the just. As you stand before Christ, the Lord of all, pray for us who celebrate your honourable memory, so that we may receive remission of our sins and be counted worthy of the kingdom of heaven.

Both now:

All the angels in heaven rejoice and greatly celebrate today. The whole creation leaps with joy, for the Saviour and Lord is born in Bethlehem. Every idolatrous error has ceased and Christ reigns throughout all the ages.

### Song of Simeon

B/P: O Master, now let your servant depart in peace  
according to your word,  
<sup>2</sup> for my eyes have seen your salvation,  
which you have prepared before all peoples,  
<sup>3</sup> a light of revelation for *the* nations  
and *the* glory of your people Israel.

### Triságon Prayers

#### Apolytikia

Tone 4

O Stephen, holy proto-martyr and mighty warrior of Christ our God, you were victorious in battle and crowned with glory. You have shamed the council of your persecutors and seen your Saviour enthroned at the right hand of the Father. Continually intercede for the salvation of our souls.

Tone 8

O Guide of Orthodoxy, teacher of reverence and holiness, star of the world, companion of bishops, divinely-inspired and wise Theodoros. You enlighten us all through your teaching. Intercede with Christ God to save our souls.

Tone 4

O Christ our God, your nativity has illuminated the world with the light of wisdom. For by it, O Sun of Justice, those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star to worship you and to know you as the Dawn from above. O Lord, glory to you!

#### Dismissal

### ORTHROS

#### God is the Lord Ps 117

R: God is the Lord and has appeared to us.

Blessed is the one who comes in the Lord's name. *Ps 117*

S1: Thank the Lord, for he is good,  
for his mercy lasts for ever.

S2: All the nations surrounded me,  
but I opposed them in the Lord's name.

S3: This *is* the Lord's doing  
and it is wonderful in our eyes.

#### Apolytikia

Tone 4

O Stephen, holy proto-martyr and mighty warrior of Christ our God, you were victorious in battle and crowned with glory. You have shamed the council of your persecutors and seen your Saviour enthroned at the right hand of the Father. Continually intercede for the salvation of our souls.

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O Guide of Orthodoxy, teacher of reverence and holiness, star of the world, companion of bishops, divinely-inspired and wise Theodoros.

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#### Small Litany

P: For yours is the might, and yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages. *Amen*

#### Kathisma 1

Tone 1

O Jesus, you reign above on the fiery throne with the Father who has no beginning and with the Holy Spirit. Yet you are pleased to be born as a child in the flesh from a pure Mother who has not known man. A star reveals you to the Persian Wise Men. Glory to your will *which is* boundless in goodness! Glory to your appearance! Glory to your condescension to us from the heights! *X2*

#### Kathisma 2

Tone 4

Your heart became a fountain of Christ's Spirit. You exposed the stubbornness of the Jews. You announced to them that the Son of God had bloomed from David's seed. O beautiful *martyr*, you were filled with the perfection of wisdom and grace. As we honour your thrice-blessed memory, may we be saved by your prayers.

Glory: Both now:

How is the *Lord* contained in a womb, whom nothing can contain? How can the one who is in the bosom of the Father be held in the arms of his Mother? This is according to his good pleasure, as he knows and desires. For although he was without flesh, he has chosen to become flesh; the existing one has become what he was not for our sakes. Without departing from his own nature he has shared our nature. Because he wanted to fill the world on high with citizens, Christ has undergone a twofold birth.

#### Small Litany

P: For blessed is your name, and glorified is your kingdom, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. *Amen*

#### Psalm 50

O God, have mercy on me in your abundant mercy  
and wipe out my offence through your great compassion.  
<sup>4</sup> Wash me thoroughly from my lawless act  
and cleanse me from my sin.  
<sup>5</sup> For I know my lawlessness  
and my sin is always before me.  
<sup>6</sup> I have sinned against you alone  
and done this evil before you  
<sup>6b</sup> so that you might be justified in your words  
and overcome when you are judged.  
<sup>7</sup> For see, I was conceived in lawlessness  
and my mother gave birth to me in sin.  
<sup>8</sup> For see, you have loved truth  
and revealed to me the hidden and secret *things* of your wisdom.  
<sup>9</sup> You will sprinkle me with hyssop and I will be clean;  
you will wash me and I will become whiter than snow.  
<sup>10</sup> You will make me hear about joy and gladness;  
the humbled bones will rejoice.  
<sup>11</sup> Turn your face from my sins  
and wipe out all my lawlessness.  
<sup>12</sup> O God, create a pure heart within me  
and renew an upright spirit within me.  
<sup>13</sup> Do not banish me from your presence  
or remove your Holy Spirit from me.  
<sup>14</sup> Restore the joy of your salvation to me  
and make me firm with your directing Spirit.

- <sup>15</sup> I will teach the lawless your ways  
and the ungodly will return to you.
- <sup>16</sup> O God, set me free from the guilt of blood;  
O God of my salvation,  
my tongue will rejoice in your justice.
- <sup>17</sup> O Lord, you will open my lips  
and my mouth will proclaim your praise.
- <sup>18</sup> For if you had wanted sacrifice, I would have given it;  
you will not be pleased with burnt offerings.
- <sup>19</sup> Sacrifice for God is a broken spirit;  
God will not despise a broken and humbled heart.
- <sup>20</sup> O Lord, be good to Zion in your pleasure  
and let the walls of Jerusalem be built.
- <sup>21</sup> Then you will be pleased with a sacrifice of justice,  
with an offering and burnt sacrifices;  
then they will offer calves on your altar.

### Kontákia

Tone 3

Today the Virgin gives birth to the transcendent Being and the earth offers a cave to the unapproachable *Lord*. Angels with shepherds glorify him. The wise men travel with the star, because for our sake the eternal God was born as a little Child.

Tone 3

Yesterday the Master assumed our flesh and became our guest; today his servant, the glorious proto-martyr Stephen, is stoned to death and departs in the flesh.

### Íkos

Today the first martyr Stephen shines as a bright star for the Church of Christ and all the earth is illuminated by his dazzling rays. He confounded the faithlessness of the Jews and exposed their errors through words of wisdom proved by the Scriptures. He faithfully testified that Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary, is truly the Son of God. He is the one who confounds their stiff-necked stubbornness; *he is* the glorious protomartyr Stephen.

### Synaxáron

Today we remember the holy apostle, protomartyr and archdeacon Stephen, one of the seven deacons of Acts 6. At his defence before the Jewish Council he showed that the Law and the Temple were not essential for the people of God. He rebuked them for their hardness of heart. Before his stoning he had a vision of Jesus at the right hand of God. On the Twenty Seventh the heaven was opened to him.

On the same day we commemorate our renowned father Theodoros the branded, brother of Theophánis the hymnographer, of Palestine and Constantinople, who lived in the Ninth Century.

Together with them we remember:

Martyr Mavríkios of Apamia with 70 Companions C4

Archbishop Theódoros of Constantinople C7

O God, have mercy on us through their holy prayers. Amen.

### Katavasias

1: In times past the Master who accomplishes wonders saved his people and made the watery wave of the sea into dry land. Now he has been willingly born from a maiden and so establishes a path for us by which we can ascend to heaven. We glorify him the *Lord* who is equal in being with the Father and also with mortal men.

3: O Benefactor, graciously accept, the praises of your servants and bring down the spiteful, haughty looks of the enemy. O blessed Lord, you see everything, so raise us far above sin and establish your singers firm and unshaken on the foundation of the faith.

4: In past time Habakkuk the prophet was counted worthy to see ineffably the figure and symbol of Christ's birth; he foretold in song the renewal of the human race. For a young Baby, even the Word, has now come from the mountain, which is the Virgin, for the renewal of the peoples.

5: O Christ, we watch in vigil during the night of the deeds of dark error and sing to you as our Benefactor. "Come to us and grant us cleansing. Ease the path for us by which we may ascend and so attain glory."

6: Jonah was enclosed in the remotest depths of the sea; he implored you to come and still the storm. O Christ, I am pricked by the dart of the tyrant and call out to you, the Slayer of evil; I implore you to come quickly and rescue me from my slothfulness.

7: The children were captured and held fast by love for the King of all. They did not despise the ungodly threats of the tyrant in his boundless fury. As the terrible fire withdrew before them, they said to the Master, "Blessed are you throughout all the ages!"

8: Let us praise, bless and worship the Lord.

The children of the Old Covenant who walked in the fire without being burnt, prefigured the womb of the Maiden which remained sealed when she gave birth in a manner beyond nature. The same grace of God brought both these wonders to pass in a miracle and raised the nations to sing in praise.

### Ode 9

My soul glorifies the Lord

and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour. R:

R: *You are* more honourable than the Cherubim  
and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim.  
You gave birth to God the Word without defilement;  
O true Theotokos, we glorify you.

<sup>2</sup> For he has regarded his servant's humility;  
see, from now all generations will call me blessed. R:

<sup>3</sup> For the Almighty has accomplished great *things* for me  
and his name is holy.

His mercy is from generation to generation  
on those who fear him. R:

<sup>4</sup> He has accomplished strength with his arm  
*and* scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. R:

<sup>5</sup> He has put down the mighty from *their* thrones  
and exalted the humble.

He has satisfied the hungry with good *things*  
and dismissed the rich with nothing. R:

<sup>6</sup> He has helped his servant Israel  
in remembering his mercy,

as he spoke to our fathers,  
to Abraham and his seed for ever. R:

9: It would be easier, as a refuge from danger, for us to keep silence in fear. O Virgin, it is hard indeed to compose songs in love which are put together in harmony. O Mother, give us strength to fulfil our good intention.

### Small Litany

P: For all the powers of heaven praise you, and to you we send up glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages. *Amen*

### Exaposteilária

Tone 3

Stephen is offered to the King as a living sacrifice, for today he departs in the flesh to the almighty God who came to live in the flesh. He completed his combat with honour for the sake of Christ.

Tone 2

The one who was filled with the grace and power of God truly accomplished wonders. He contested the assembly of the murderers of our God who were weaving deluded plots. Stephen spoke about God and cried out with a loud voice, "I see Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father!" They then stoned him and he rose to Christ; he carried his crown to heaven.

Tone 2

The Word who is coeternal, consubstantial and co-equal to the Father and the Son, has now come into the world as a Child through the Virgin in Bethlehem. The proto-martyr Stephen clearly announced him with joy as Saviour and God while he was being stoned at the hands of criminals. He climbed to Christ in the heavens as he carried his crown.

### Praises

#### Tone 1

Let everything with breath  
praise the Lord.  
Praise the Lord from the heavens;  
praise him in the heights.  
To you, O God, is due a song.

Praise him, all his angels;  
praise him, all his powers.  
To you, O God, is due a song.

S4: Praise him with cymbal and dance;  
praise him with strings and flute.  
O faithful, let us weave a crown for the champion, the first of the fighters and the flower of victory. He leads the hosts of martyrs, who prepare their way, towards the Lord, for he saw beforehand the goal. He cried out with joy, "See, I gaze on the open heavens and on the Son of God standing at the right hand of the Father who has no beginning."

#### Tone 2

S3: Praise him with tuneful cymbals;  
praise him with joyful cymbals.  
Let everything with breath praise the Lord.  
O archdeacon and proto-martyr Stephen, you are the blessed companion of the angels in heaven and have clothed yourself in holiness. Pray and intercede for us to the Lord and Saviour who alone is sinless.

S2: The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit on my right  
until I make your enemies a stool for your feet." Ps 109  
Most holy Stephen, first among deacons and the first among martyrs, you have opened the way for all the saints and lead countless martyrs to the Lord. Therefore the heavens opened and God revealed himself to you. Pray that he will save our souls.

#### Tone 4

S1: I have fathered you from the womb before the Morning Star. 109  
The blessed Stephen, the first-fruits of the martyrs, full of grace and power, did great signs and wonders among the people. Although he shone like an angel, he was stoned by a lawless mob. He saw the glory of the incarnate Son at the right hand of the Father. He was taken up to heaven by the Spirit of love. There he lives with the choirs of angels and prays that our souls may be saved.

#### Glory: Tone 5

Hail, O proto-martyr and first of deacons, gateway of confessors and joy of apostles! In the midst of your trial the heavens were opened to you *and* you saw the Son of God standing at the right hand of the Father who has no beginning. Your face shone like an angel and you cried out with joy as the evil assembly stoned you, "O Lord, do not hold this sin against them." Pray for us who in love celebrate your memory, so that, as we forgive our enemies, he may grant us remission of our sins.

#### Both now:

Today a great mystery is fulfilled in Bethlehem. The invisible *Lord* has appeared to us. The bodiless *one* has taken our flesh; the uncircumscribed Word assumes the limitations of matter. The one who is all becomes as though he were nothing, for the Virgin bears her first-born Son in the cave, and the manger becomes a heavenly throne. The animals keep vigil like the Cherubim *and* the shepherds marvel. The Wise Men offer their gifts, *and* the angels rejoice and sing, "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth!" God takes delight in men; his name is Emmanuel for all time.

### Great Doxology

Glory to you who have shown us the light!  
glory to God in the highest!  
Peace on earth and goodwill to men!  
<sup>2</sup> We praise you, we bless you, we worship you,  
we glorify you, we thank you for your great glory,  
<sup>3</sup> O Lord King, heavenly God, almighty Father,  
O Lord, only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ,  
and you, O Holy Spirit!  
<sup>4</sup> O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sin of the world;  
have mercy on us,  
*for* you take away the sin of the world.  
<sup>5</sup> Receive our prayer,  
*for* you sit on the right of the Father,  
and have mercy on us.  
<sup>6</sup> For only you are holy, only you are Lord,  
O Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.  
<sup>7</sup> I will bless you every day  
and always praise your name for ever and ever. Ps 144  
<sup>8</sup> O Lord, allow us this day  
to be guarded from sin.  
<sup>9</sup> Blessed are you, O Lord God of our fathers!  
Praised and glorified be your name for ever. Amen. Daniel 3  
<sup>10</sup> O Lord, let your mercy *be* on us,  
*for* we have hoped in you. Ps 32.  
<sup>16</sup> Blessed are you, O Lord!  
Teach me your statutes. X3 Ps 118  
<sup>12</sup> O Lord, you have been our refuge  
from generation to generation. Ps 89  
I said, "O Lord, have mercy on me;  
heal my soul, for I have sinned against you." Ps 40  
<sup>14</sup> O Lord, I have fled to you;  
teach me to do your will, for you are my God. Ps 142  
<sup>15</sup> For with you is the source of life  
and in your light we will see light. Ps 35  
<sup>16</sup> Stretch out your mercy  
to those who know you. Ps 35

### Triságion

### Apolytikion

#### Tone 4

O Stephen, holy proto-martyr and mighty warrior of Christ our God, you were victorious in battle and crowned with glory. You have shamed the council of your persecutors and seen your Saviour enthroned at the right hand of the Father. Continually intercede for the salvation of our souls.

### LITURGY

#### Antiphon 1 Ps 110 Tone 2

S1: O Lord, I will acknowledge you with my whole heart;  
I will proclaim all your wonders.

R: At the prayers of the Theotokos, Saviour, save us!

S2: In *the* council of the upright and in the assembly,  
great are the works of the Lord!

S3: They are researched for all his purposes!

S4: His work is confession and splendour;  
his justice remains from age to age.

S5: Glory: Both now:

#### Antiphon 2 Ps 111 Own Tone

S1: Blessed is the man who fears the Lord;  
he will take great pleasure in his commandments.

R: Save us, O Son of God.  
You were born from the Virgin.  
We sing to you, "Alleluia!"

S2: His seed will be powerful on the earth;  
the generation of the upright will be blessed.

S3: Glory and wealth *will be* in his house  
and his justice remains from age to age.  
S4: Light has risen in the darkness for the upright;  
he is merciful, compassionate and just.  
S5: Glory: Both now:

**Antiphon 3 Ps 109 Tone 4**

S1: The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand  
until I make your enemies a stool for your feet."

R: O Christ our God, your nativity has illuminated the world with the  
light of wisdom. For by it, O Sun of Justice, those who worshipped  
the stars were taught by a star to worship you and to know you as the  
Dawn from above. O Lord, glory to you!

S2: The Lord will send you a sceptre of power from Zion;  
rule among your enemies.  
S3: Sovereignty is yours on the day of your power  
*and* in the splendour of your saints.

**Entrance Ps 109**

I have begotten you from the womb before the Morning Star.  
The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind,  
"You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."  
Save us, O Son of God.  
You were born from the Virgin.  
We sing to you, "Alleluia!"

**Apolytikia**

Tone 4

O Christ our God, your nativity has illuminated the world with the  
light of wisdom. For by it, O Sun of Justice, those who worshipped  
the stars were taught by a star to worship you and to know you as the  
Dawn from above. O Lord, glory to you!

Tone 4

O Stephen, holy proto-martyr and mighty warrior of Christ our God,  
you were victorious in battle and crowned with glory. You have  
shamed the council of your persecutors and seen your Saviour  
enthroned at the right hand of the Father. Continually intercede for  
the salvation of our souls.

*Of the Church*

**Kontáktion**

Tone 3

Today the Virgin gives birth to the transcendent Being and the earth  
offers a cave to the unapproachable *Lord*. Angels with shepherds  
glorify him. The wise men travel with the star, because for our sake  
the eternal God was born as a little Child.

**Trisagion**

**Prokeímenon Ps 18 Tone 8**

R: His sound has gone out into all the earth.  
S: The heavens declare God's glory.

**Apostolos**

From the Acts of the Apostles (6:8-7:5, 47-60)  
In those days Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders  
and signs among the people. <sup>9</sup>Then some of those who belonged to  
the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the  
Cyre'nians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and  
Asia, arose and disputed with Stephen. <sup>10</sup>But they could not  
withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. <sup>11</sup>Then  
they secretly instigated men, who said, "We have heard him speak  
blasphemous words against Moses and God." <sup>12</sup>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, <sup>13</sup>and set up false  
witnesses who said, "This man never ceases to speak words against  
this holy place and the law; <sup>14</sup>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." <sup>15</sup>And gazing at him, all who  
sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

<sup>1</sup>And the high priest said, "Is this so?" <sup>2</sup>And Stephen said: "Brothers  
and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father  
Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran,  
<sup>3</sup>and said to him, 'Depart from your land and from your kindred and  
go into the land which I will show you.' <sup>4</sup>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; <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>But it was Solomon who built a  
house for him. <sup>7</sup>Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made  
with hands; as the prophet says, <sup>8</sup>'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?' <sup>9</sup>Did not my hand make all these  
things?' <sup>10</sup>You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears,  
you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.  
<sup>11</sup>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, <sup>12</sup>you who  
received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it." <sup>13</sup>Now  
when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground  
their teeth against him. <sup>14</sup>But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into  
heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right  
hand of God; <sup>15</sup>and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and  
the Son of man standing at the right hand of God." <sup>16</sup>But they cried  
out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together upon  
him. <sup>17</sup>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. <sup>18</sup>And as they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus,  
receive my spirit." <sup>19</sup>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.

**Alleluia Ps 88 Tone 2**

S1: O Lord, the heavens will acknowledge your wonders.  
S2: God is glorified in the council of the saints.

**Gospel**

From the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (21:33-42)  
The Lord said to his disciples, "Hear another parable. There was a  
householder who planted a vineyard, and set a hedge around it, and  
dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to tenants, and  
went into another country. <sup>34</sup>When the season of fruit drew near, he  
sent his servants to the tenants, to get his fruit; <sup>35</sup>and the tenants took  
his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. <sup>36</sup>  
Again he sent other servants, more than the first; and they did the  
same to them. <sup>37</sup>Afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They  
will respect my son.' <sup>38</sup>But when the tenants saw the son, they said to  
themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and have his  
inheritance.' <sup>39</sup>And they took him and cast him out of the vineyard,  
and killed him. <sup>40</sup>When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes,  
what will he do to those tenants?" <sup>41</sup>They said to him, "He will put  
those wretches to a miserable death, and let out the vineyard to other  
tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons." <sup>42</sup>Jesus said to  
them, "Have you never read in the scriptures: 'The very stone which  
the builders rejected has become the head of the corner; this was the  
Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes'?"

**Communion Ps 18**

<sup>5</sup>Their sound has gone out into all the earth  
and their words to the ends of the world. Alleluia!