

AUGUST 2, 2020
Translation of the Relics of
the Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen

GREAT VESPERS

***LORD I CALL: Six stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 7, followed by four for the saint
Resurrection, tone 7:***

Come, let us rejoice in the Lord,
Who destroyed the dominion of death!
Let us sing to Him with the bodiless hosts,
for He enlightened the race of man!//
O our Maker and Savior, glory to You!

You endured the Cross and burial for our sake.
By Your death, You destroyed death as God.
We fall down before Your Resurrection on the third day, //
O Savior, glory to You!

When the Apostles beheld the Resurrection of the Maker,
they were amazed and sang the angelic praise.
This is the glory of the Church.
This is the richness of the Kingdom.//
O Lord, crucified for our sake, glory to You!

You were held by lawless men, O Christ,
but to me, You are God, and I am not ashamed.
You were smitten on the cheek, but I do not deny You.
You were nailed to the Cross and I do not conceal it,
for I glory in Your Resurrection: Your death is my life.//
O Almighty Lord and Lover of man, glory to You!

Fulfilling the prophecy of David,
Christ manifested His greatness in Zion to the disciples.
He is praised and always glorified,
together with the Father and the Holy Spirit.
At first as the Word, He was bodiless,
but then He took flesh and was slain for our sake.//
He rose in power as the Lover of man!

You descended into hell as You willed, O Christ,
overthrowing death as God, and rising on the third day as Master!
With Yourself You raised Adam from the bonds of hell and from corruption!//
Glory to Your Resurrection, only Lover of man!

Saint Stephen, tone 8:

O Stephen, chosen by the Apostles,
you were the first among the martyrs to suffer;
you are the foundation of those who serve as deacons.
you enlighten with unfading light
those who celebrate your radiant feast with splendor,

giving grace and mercy to your servants.
By your prayers, O martyr, guide them to everlasting life!

O Stephen, martyr of Christ,
you received a crown of grace on your head, in accordance with your name.
You adorned your neck with a chain of virtues as with one of gold.
You became an all-wise dwelling of the Wisdom you cherished,
keeping it as your beloved.//
Therefore you have been honored with grace and glory.

O most honored Stephen,
first of the martyrs to suffer,
you are crowned with grace and glory, O Apostle.
When you were stoned, you offered a crown to our King and God,
spiritual and more valued than gold and precious stones.//
Your deeds and name are beautiful.//
Remember all of us!

tone 2:

O most holy Stephen,
you appeared as first among deacons and first among martyrs,
for your path was to holy things,
and you led many martyrs to the Lord.
Thus, heaven was opened, and God appeared to you.//
Entreat Him that our souls may be saved!

GLORY... for the saint, tone 6:

O Apostle Stephen,
you were shown to be first among martyrs and deacons;
the adornment of athletes, the strength of the faithful, and the glory of the righteous.
As you stand before the throne of Christ, the King of all,
ask that those who celebrate your honored memory
may be counted worthy to be cleansed of their sins//
and to inherit the Kingdom of heaven!

NOW AND EVER...the Dogmatikon in tone 7:

No tongue can speak of your wonderful childbearing,
for the order of nature was overruled by God.
You were revealed to be a Mother above nature,
for you remained a Virgin beyond reason and understanding.
Your conception was most glorious, O Theotokos!
The manner of your giving birth was ineffable, O Virgin!
Knowing you to be the Mother of God,
devoutly we pray to you://
“Beseech Him to save our souls!”

APOSTIKHA: All stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 7:

As the Savior of the world You arose from the tomb.
As God You resurrected the race of man with Your flesh.//
O Lord, glory to You!

Come, let us worship the One Who rose from the dead,
and enlightened all creation!

By His death, He saved us from the torments of hell.//
By His Resurrection He has granted us eternal life and great mercy.

You descended into hell, capturing death, O Christ.
In three days You arose again,
resurrecting us who glorify Your Resurrection,//
O Lord and Lover of man.

When You were placed in the tomb as one asleep,
the sight was great and awesome.
But when You rose on the third day as almighty God,
You resurrected Adam with Yourself.//
Glory to Your Resurrection, only Lover of man!

GLORY...for the saint, tone 8

Rejoice in the Lord, crown-bearer Stephen!
You followed your Master,
for you were the first martyr of Christ our King.
You abolished the deception of the Enemy,//
and you pray to the Lord on our behalf.

NOW AND EVER...Resurrection Theotokion in tone 8:

Unwedded Virgin,
you ineffably conceived God in the flesh.
O Mother of God most high,
accept the cries of your servants, O blameless one!
Grant cleansing of transgressions to all!//
Receive our prayers and pray to save our souls!

TROPARIA

Resurrection, tone 7

By Thy Cross, Thou didst destroy death!
To the thief, Thou didst open paradise!
For the myrrhbearers, Thou didst change weeping into joy!
And Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God,
To proclaim that Thou art risen,
Granting the world great mercy.

Saint Stephen, tone 4

Your relics have risen from the depths of the earth,
like a treasury for the immortal life of all creation.
The Church, rejoicing in the grace that she receives from them,
duteously honors you, Protomartyr Stephen.//
Preserve us from error and heresy by your intercession!

Resurrectional Dismissal Theotokion, tone 4

The mystery of all eternity,
unknown even by Angels,
through you, Theotokos, is revealed to those on earth:
God incarnate by union without confusion.
He voluntarily accepted the Cross for us,
by which He resurrected the first-created man,//
saving our souls from death.

THE DIVINE LITURGY

TROPARIA

Resurrection, tone 7

By Thy Cross, Thou didst destroy death!
To the thief, Thou didst open paradise!
For the myrrhbearers, Thou didst change weeping into joy!
And Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God,
To proclaim that Thou art risen,
Granting the world great mercy.

Saint John of Damascus

Teacher of Orthodoxy, piety, and purity!
Enlightener of the universe!
And divine inspiration to monastics
by your teachings we are all enlightened,
and by your spiritual music, O all-wise John of Damascus,
pray to Christ our God for the salvation of our souls!

Saint Stephen, tone 4

Your relics have risen from the depths of the earth,
like a treasury for the immortal life of all of creation.
The Church, rejoicing in the grace that she receives from them,
duteously honors you, Protomartyr Stephen.
Preserve us from error and heresy by your intercession!

KONTAKIA

Resurrection, tone 7

The dominion of death
Can no longer hold men captive
For Christ descended shattering and destroying its powers
Hell is bound, while the prophets rejoice and cry:
The Savior has come to those in Faith,
Enter, you faithful, into the Resurrection!

Saint Stephen, tone 6

You were the first to be sown on the earth by the Heavenly Husbandman, O all-praised one.
You were the first to shed your blood on the earth for Christ, O blessed one.
You were the first to receive the crown of victory from Him in heaven,
Stephen, first of the suffering God-crowned martyrs.

Steadfast Protectress of Christians

Steadfast protectress of Christians,
Constant advocate before the creator:
Do not despise the cry of us sinners,
But in your goodness come speedily to help us who call on you in faith.
Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us, O Theotokos,
For you always protect those who honor you.

PROKEIMENON, tone 7: The Lord shall give strength to His people! The Lord shall bless His people with peace!

Vs. Offer to the Lord, O yes sons of God! Offer young rams to the Lord!

EPISTLE: (124) 1 Corinthians 1:10-18 Brethren, I beseech you by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared unto me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius, lest any should say that I had baptized in my own name. Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the Gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of no effect... For the message of the Cross is foolishness to them that perish, but unto us who are being saved, it is the power of God.

Alleluia in the seventh tone: It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Thy Name, O Most High!
vs. To declare Thy mercy in the morning and Thy truth by night.

GOSPEL: (58) Matthew 14:14-22 At that time, when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Sent the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food." But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." He said, "Bring them here to Me." Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children. Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.

COMMUNION HYMN: Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! Alleluia....

The Transfer of the Relics of the Holy Protomartyr Stephen from Jerusalem to Constantinople took place about the year 428.

After the holy Protomartyr Archdeacon Stephen was stoned by the Jews, they left his holy body unburied to be devoured by the beasts and birds. After a day and a night the renowned Jewish teacher of the Law, Gamaliel sent people to take up the body of the Protomartyr. Gamaliel buried him on his own property, in his own tomb, not far from Jerusalem.

When Lord's secret disciple Nicodemus died, Gamaliel also buried him near the grave of St Stephen. Afterwards Gamaliel himself, who had been baptized with his son Abibas, was buried near the grave of the Protomartyr Stephen and St Nicodemus.

In the year 415 the relics of the saint were uncovered in a miraculous manner and solemnly transferred to Jerusalem by Bishop John and the bishops Eutonium of Sebaste and Eleutherius of Jericho. From that time healings took place from the relics.

Afterwards, during the reign of holy Emperor Theodosius the Younger (408-450), the relics of the holy Protomartyr Stephen were transferred from Jerusalem to Constantinople and placed in the church of the holy deacon Laurence (August 10). When a church dedicated to the Protomartyr Stephen was built, the relics were transferred there on August 2. St Stephen's right hand is preserved in the Serapionov chamber of the Trinity-Sergius Lavra.