

THE 2nd DAY OF THE MONTH OF AUGUST
COMMEMORATION OF THE TRANSLATION OF THE RELICS OF THE HOLY
PROTOMARTYR AND ARCHDEACON STEPHEN.

AT VESPERS

At "Lord, I have cried ...," 6 stichera, three in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: "O most glorious wonder ...":

O Stephen, first among the martyrs to suffer, * foundation of them that minister as deacons, * elect of the apostles: * with unwaning light do thou illumine * them that celebrate thy radiant festival with splendor, * bestowing grace and mercy upon thy servants, O martyr, * guiding them to everlasting life * by thy supplications.

O Stephen, martyr of Christ, * receiving upon thy head a crown of graces * in accordance with thy name, * having adorned thy neck with a necklace of virtues as with one of gold, * thou didst become an all-wise habitation of wisdom, * which thou didst cherish, * laying it up as something thou didst love; * wherefore, thou hast been honored * with glory and grace.

O most honored Stephen, * first of the martyrs to suffer, * crowned with glory and grace, O apostle, * when thou wast stoned * thou didst offer to our King and God * a precious crown, * noetic and of greater value * than gold and precious stones. * Sweet are thy deeds and name. * Remember thou all of us.

And three stichera, in Tone II, the composition of Anatolius:

First among deacons and first among martyrs wast thou shown to be, O most holy Stephen; for thy path was to holy things, and thou didst lead many martyrs to the Lord. Wherefore, heaven was opened to thee, and God appeared to thee. Him do thou entreat, that our souls be saved.

In sanctity wast thou clothed, O blessed Stephen, protomartyr and proto-deacon, converser with the angels. Intercede with the sinless Savior and Lord, and pray for us.

Let us honor the proto deacon Stephen, the protomartyr and valiant favorite of Christ; for, standing in the midst of the iniquitous, he beheld the Son at the right hand of the Father.

Glory ..., in Tone VI, the composition of Anatolius:

First among martyrs and deacons wast thou shown to be, O apostle Stephen, adornment of athletes, confirmation of the faithful, glory of the righteous. As thou standest before the throne of Christ, the King of all, ask thou that they that celebrate thine honored memory be accounted worthy to be cleansed of their sins and to inherit the kingdom of heaven.

Now and ever ..., Theotokion, or this Stavrotheotokion:

Spec. Mel.: "On the third day ...":

Seeing Thee crucified, O Christ, she that gaveth birth unto Thee cried out: "What strange mystery is this that I see? How is it that Thou diest, suspended in the flesh upon the Tree, O Bestower of life?"

At the Aposticha, stichera from the Oktoechos and Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

The composition of Cyprian: Rejoice in the Lord, O crown-bearer Stephen, thou emulator of the Master; for thou wast the first martyr of Christ our King and didst abolish the deception of the iniquitous Jews; and thou prayest unto the Lord in our behalf.

Now and ever ..., Theotokion, or this Stavrotheotokion:

Spec. Mel.: "O most glorious wonder ...":

Beholding Thee nailed * to the Cross, O Jesus, * accepting sufferings of Thine own will, * Thy Virgin Mother, O Master, * cried out: "Woe is me, * O my sweet Child! * How is it that Thou must needs unjustly endure wounding, * O Physician Who curest the infirmity of man * and deliverest all from corruption * in Thy lovingkindness?"

Troparion, in Tone IV:

For the sufferings which thou didst endure for Christ God, thy head hath been crowned with a royal diadem, O Stephen, first among them that have suffered; for, having denounced the insanity of the Jews, thou didst behold thy Savior at the right hand of the Father. Him do thou therefore entreat in behalf of our souls.

After the dismissal of vespers, the priest vesteth in phelonion and the deacon in sticharion, and, accompanied by candles and censer, they bear the precious Cross into the sanctuary, whilst the troparion "Save O Lord, Thy people ..." and the Kontakion are chanted; and it is placed upon the altar table.

AT MATINS

Both canons from the Oktoechos, with eight troparia, without their martyria; and the canon of the protomartyr, with six troparia, the acrostic whereof is: "I crown the protomartyr with hymns," the composition of Theophanes, in Tone VIII:

ODE I

Irmos: Once the staff of Moses, working wonders, having struck the sea in the form of a Cross and divided it, drowned the tyrant Pharaoh in his chariot and saved Israel who fled on foot, chanting a hymn unto God.

Standing before the Master, illumined with the radiant brilliance of the Spirit and with thy supernatural sufferings, O crown-bearer Stephen, most rich crown of the martyrs, enlighten them that hymn thine endurance.

As first among the athletes to run the race and head of the assembly of the martyrs, O glorious and wondrous Stephen, thou wast accounted worthy to behold Him Who setteth the contest extending to thee a divinely woven wreath of victory on His life-bearing right hand.

As Thou alone art a Treasury of goodness, O Savior, Thou didst show forth from the bosom of the earth a priceless treasure, riches which cannot be squandered, a possession which cannot be taken away: the relics of Thy protomartyr Stephen.

Manifestly illumined with angelic splendor, O protomartyr Stephen, foremost among the deacons, thou wast revealed by angelic hymns where thou wast hidden, and, full of spiritual fragrance, thou hast been truly honored as is meet.

Theotokion: O all-immaculate one, thou gavest birth unto the divine Word of the Father, Who before was incorporeal, yet became incarnate for our sake. O abode of virginity, vessel of purity, and temple of sanctity, O Bride of God, Mistress of the world!

ODE III

Irmos: O Christ, Who in the beginning established the heavens in wisdom and founded the earth firmly upon the waters: make me steadfast upon the rock of Thy commandments, for none is holy save Thee, Who alone lovest mankind.

Thou wast shown to be a sacred speaker of divine mysteries and a theologian, disputing with the assemblies of the Jews and mightily denouncing their godlessness and their disposition which opposeth God, O most excellent martyr Stephen.

Come ye all, and together let us honor with divine hymns the protomartyr of Christ, the first to minister as deacon, the converser with angels, who hath splendidly shown to the martyrs the threshold of the course.

The first of the martyrs, the first of them that were chosen to serve as deacons, appeareth as a treasure hidden in the earth; and he hath filled the world with divine fragrance and the Church with rich gifts.

Resurrect my mind which hath been slain, through the activity of life which was preached by thee, O wise one, to hymn thine honored solemnity, and account me worthy to follow in thy footsteps, O blessed Stephen.

Theotokion: Thou hast been shown to be the portal of the noetic Orient, the Most High, Who appeared on earth, O Virgin; for through thee, O all-pure one, the Word hath entered in unto us, to save all from ignorance.

Sedalion, in Tone I: Spec. Mel.: "Thy tomb, O Savior...":

O apostle of Christ, first among deacons, wise protomartyr, chief among the martyrs: having sanctified the ends of the earth by thy sufferings, thou hast enlightened the souls of men by thy miracles. From all misfortunes deliver them that honor thee, O most laudable Stephen. (Twice)

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

O all-holy Virgin, thou hope of Christians, with the hosts on high do thou unceasingly entreat God, to Whom thou gavest birth in manner past understanding and recounting, that He grant remission of all our sins and amendment of life unto all that glorify thee with faith and love.

Stavrotheotokion: The unblemished ewe-lamb, beholding the Lamb and Shepherd hanging dead upon the Tree, exclaimed, weeping and maternally crying out: "How is it that Thou endurest this abasement and voluntary suffering which are past recounting, O my Son, O all-good God?"

ODE IV

Irmos: Thou art my strength, O Lord! Thou art my power! Thou art my God, Thou art my joy, Who, without leaving the bosom of the Father, hast visited our lowliness. Wherefore, with the prophet Habakkuk, I cry unto Thee: Glory to Thy power, O Lover of mankind!

O glorious protomartyr who art full of faith, divine power and grace, today hast thou poured forth for us streams of fragrant myrrh, a fountain welling forth a river of divine blessings, and thou hast opened unto us a sweet torrent.

The feast day of the protomartyr hath been made manifest unto the imperial city as sacred, splendid and harmonious, truly full of light and spiritual gladness, preserving the dominion of the honored Church and dispelling the audacity of the barbarians.

Thou hast received a good inheritance as is fitting, O blessed Stephen, and where Christ the King of all is, there hast thou made thine abode; for thou hast been shown to be His minister, working signs and wonders with power and granting healing unto the sick.

Stephen, the great preacher of the Truth, the true champion of suffering, hath been planted as an upright and steadfast pillar of the Church, and stretcheth from the earth even unto the heavens, enlightening all the ends of the earth with the radiance of piety.

Theotokion: O Savior and Deliverer of all, Thou art the new Adam, superseding the first Adam, born of the Virgin, who supersedeth Eve, our first mother, replacing death with true and immortal life. Wherefore, knowing her who gaveth birth unto Thee to be the Theotokos, all we, the faithful, call her blessed as is meet.

ODE V

Irmos: Wherefore hast Thou turned Thy face from Me, O Light never-waning? And why hath a strange darkness covered me, wretch that I am? Yet turn me, and guide my steps to the light of Thy commandments, I pray.

The vain council of the iniquitous Jews didst thou denounce with true boldness; and, covered by the stones which they cast at thee, O divinely eloquent Stephen, as a victor thou wast taken up into the heavens by the Spirit.

As one comely as the dawn thou hast appeared to the world, O glorious Stephen, driving away the darkness, dispelling the illusions of the demons, and healing the sufferings of the infirm and the sores of their spiritual ailments, O divinely inspired one.

Rejoicing noetically with the angels, O blessed one, thou dost truly sanctify the ends of the earth by thine arrival and grace, redolent with the sweet fragrance of spiritual myrrh, delivering us from misfortunes and temptations.

Theotokion: Possessed of maternal boldness toward thy Son, O most pure one, abandon not thy kindred care for us, we pray; for thee alone do we Christians set before the Master to intercede mercifully for our cleansing.

ODE VI

Irmos: Cleanse me, O Savior, for many are my transgressions; and lead me up from the depths of evil, I pray, for to Thee have I cried: hearken unto me, O God of my salvation!

Being like unto the angels in thy volition, thou didst acquire an angelic mien, O blessed one; and rejoicing and dancing with them, save them that hymn thee.

The power of thy divinely inspired words manifestly fell like a loud clap of thunder upon the ears of the iniquitous and darkened their visage, O blessed one, who art pleasing unto God.

Thou wast vouchsafed to see the glory of the Father and the co-essential radiance thereof, O Stephen, and He awarded thee with splendid crowns for thy sufferings.

Theotokion: **T**he only-begotten Son, Who was invisible from before the ages, in the latter days became thy firstborn: the God of my salvation, Who, through thee, became visible in the flesh, O Mother of God.

Kontakion, in Tone VI:

Thou wast the first to be sown on the earth by the heavenly Husbandman, O most laudable Stephen, and thou wast the first on earth to shed thy blood for Christ, O blessed one; first hast thou been to be crowned with the wreath of victory in the heavens, O first among athletes, crown-bearer, who wast first among martyrs.

Ikos: **B**eholding the blooms of paradise, which fill the whole world with their comely fragrance, I marvel at their strange appearance; for amid the icon of winter many blossom forth, which is passing strange for flowers. And the martyr of Christ who was first to blossom forth is become a gate for them that suffer under the law and flower amid the winter of torment, and hath shown the straight path to all that wish to suffer. Thou art the initiator of the contest, who hast shown forth in thy pangs, O crowned one, first among the martyrs to suffer.

ODE VII

Irmos: **O**nce, in Babylon, the fire stood in awe of the condescension of God; wherefore, the youths, dancing with joyous step in the furnace, as in a meadow, chanted: **Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!**

The flow of thy blood hath opened the portals of heaven and hath shown thee standing before the Judge of the contest, Who extendeth to thee a crown; and thou criest: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Seizing the divinely manifest one like wild beasts, the deicides slew him with their hands which were defiled by murder, whilst he prayed earnestly for them that were slaying him, and chanted: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

With the law didst thou upbraid the iniquitous, being a lawful emulator of the Savior, and didst show them to be opposed to God; and, stoned to death by them, thou didst chant: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Theotokion: **H**aving conceived the Timeless One within time without knowing wedlock, O pure one, thou gavest birth unto the Word, Who before was incorporeal, but received flesh of thee, O Virgin. To Him do we chant, crying aloud together: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

ODE VIII

Irmos: **M**adly did the Chaldean tyrant heat the furnace sevenfold for the pious ones; but seeing them saved by a greater power, he cried out to the Creator and Deliverer: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Resplendent with supernatural radiance, O most excellent Stephen, the angelic visage of thy countenance showed forth the grace which issued forth from thee and which was richly hidden within thy soul. Wherefore, thou didst cry out: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

O crown-bearer Stephen, with the sprinkling of thy blood cleanse thou the hurts of my soul and my sinful wounds; for unto thy merciful aid and Christ-like character have I had recourse, crying out: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

A crown of graces, whereof thou art the namesake, hath been placed upon thy precious head by the impartial Judge, Whom thou didst piously proclaim to be the Creator, God and King of all, crying out unceasingly: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Into the hands of the Creator didst thou surrender thy spirit, and, rejoicing, the hosts of heaven received as a comrade thee who, before on earth, wast equal to the angels and now hast joined their choirs, unceasingly chanting: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Theotokion: **T**hou wast a vessel of unwaning Light, O most pure one, for thou gavest birth unto the Light of them that are in darkness and shadow and Who illumineth all with the grace of the knowledge of God. To Him do we, the faithful, unceasingly chant: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

ODE IX

Irmos: **H**eaven was stricken with awe, and the ends of the earth were amazed, that God appeared to men in the flesh, and that thy womb became more spacious than the heavens. Wherefore, the ranks of angels and men magnify thee, who art the Theotokos.

The initiator of the sufferings of the martyrs, who hath brightly shown the straight path of torment which leadeth to the heavens, the protomartyr Stephen summoneth all in spirit to divine gladness, to partake of light and to share in sanctity.

Captivated by the love of Christ, and emulating His meekness and words, Stephen said: "Lay not this sin to the charge of my murderers, O Lord; but receive my spirit, O Good One, and account me worthy of the divine kingdom and the ineffable food which are with Thee!"

Comely and angelic of men, full of wisdom and faith, shining with rays of divine splendor, with thy mouth of godly speech thou didst theologize like a river, orating in godly manner, O divinely blessed one; and thou hast received a heavenly inheritance.

Thou wast crowned with a wreath of graces, surrounded by the choirs of the martyrs; and, standing before Christ, the Judge of the contest, pray thou in behalf of us that celebrate with splendor thy truly radiant feast, O blessed one, and deliver us from misfortunes.

Theotokion: O all-immaculate Mistress, Mother of God, as the merciful intercessor for all Christians, deliver thy suffering servants from misfortunes and temptations, and heal them that are afflicted with the wounds of cruel transgressions and are held fast by grievous pangs.

Exapostilarion: Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast visited us ...":

The casting of stones hath woven for thee a transcendent wreath of incorruption, and the drops of thy blood have dyed for thee a robe of royal purple, O excellent Stephen, first among martyrs.

Theotokion: O holy and all-pure Mistress, who alone hast not known wedlock, our salvation and hope: beseech thou our Deliverer, Who was born of thee, that He save the world from falsehood, misfortunes and tribulations.

On the Praises, four stichera, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "As valiant among the martyrs ...":

Assembling mystically, O ye that love the feasts of the Church, * let us celebrate today * the prayerful and honored memory of the protomartyr, * thereon receiving healing * through his precious gifts; * and let us cry aloud: * O rightly hymned martyr, * pray thou that they that celebrate thy memory * be delivered from misfortunes. **(Twice)**

Like steps and stairs * on the ascent to heaven * were the stones which were cast at thee; * and, ascending thereon, * thou didst behold the Lord * standing at the right hand of the Father, * extending to thee the crown, whereof thou art the namesake, * in his life-bearing right hand. * And thou standest nigh unto Him, as one right victorious * and foremost among them that have suffered.

Having illumined thy thought * with spiritual grace, * thou wast shown to be like an angel in mien, O Stephen, * when thy body shone * with inner radiance * and thy spiritual splendor was manifest unto them that looked upon thee, * for which cause thou didst receive sight of the Light * when the heavens were most gloriously opened unto thee, * O first and boast of the martyrs.

Glory ..., in Tone IV:

Stephen, the good beginning of the martyrs, full of grace and power, working signs and great wonders amongst the people, was slain, stoned by the iniquitous; yet he shone forth like an angel, and beheld the glory of Thee, Who wast crucified for our sake, standing at the right hand of power, and he was taken up into the heavens by the Spirit of grace. Wherefore, abiding with the choirs of the angels, he prayeth that our souls be saved.

Now and ever ..., Theotokion, or this Stavrotheotokion:

Spec. Mel.: "As valiant among the martyrs ...":

As she beheld Thee, * the Lamb and Shepherd, upon the Tree, * she that gaveth birth to Thee lamented, * and exclaimed to Thee maternally: * "O my most desired Son, * how is it that Thou hast been suspended upon the tree of the Cross, O Longsuffering One? * How is it that Thy hands and feet * have been pierced by nails by the iniquitous, O Word, * and that Thou hast shed Thy blood, O Master?"

At the Aposticha, the stichera from the Oktoechos;

Glory ..., in Tone II, the composition of Cyprian:

O protomartyr, apostle and first deacon, portal of the martyrs and glory of the righteous, boast of the apostles: standing before the Sanhedrin, thou beheldest the heavens opened, and the Son of God standing at the right hand of the invisible Father. Wherefore, shining forth in countenance like an angel, with joy thou didst cry out concerning them that were stoning thee to death: "Lay not this sin to their charge!" And now ask thou cleansing of sins and great mercy for them that with love praise thee.

Now and ever ..., Theotokion, or this Stavrotheotokion:

Spec. Mel.: "Rejoice ...":

Desiring that all receive salvation, O my sinless Christ, Thou wast pleased to pay a great price, Thy precious blood, for our deliverance. Wherefore, beholding Thee nailed, Thy Mother, lamenting, rent her hair, saying: "O Child, all-immaculate Lamb, desiring to deliver the world by Thy precious blood, how hast Thou set where I cannot see, O never-setting Sun, Who grantest unto all enlightenment, peace and great mercy?"

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, eight troparia: four from the Oktoechos, and four from Ode III of the canon to the Protomartyr.

Thou wast shown to be a sacred speaker of divine mysteries and a theologian, disputing with the assemblies of the Jews and mightily denouncing their godlessness and their disposition which opposeth God, O most excellent martyr Stephen.

Come ye all, and together let us honor with divine hymns the protomartyr of Christ, the first to minister as deacon, the converser with angels, who hath splendidly shown to the martyrs the threshold of the course.

The first of the martyrs, the first of them that were chosen to serve as deacons, appeareth as a treasure hidden in the earth; and he hath filled the world with divine fragrance and the Church with rich gifts.

Theotokion: **T**hou hast been shown to be the portal of the noetic Orient, the Most High, Who appeared on earth, O Virgin; for through thee, O all-pure one, the Word hath entered in unto us, to save all from ignorance

Troparion, in Tone IV:

For the sufferings which thou didst endure for Christ God, thy head hath been crowned with a royal diadem, O Stephen, first among them that have suffered; for, having denounced the insanity of the Jews, thou didst behold thy Savior at the right hand of the Father. Him do thou therefore entreat in behalf of our souls.

Kontakion, in Tone VI:

Thou wast the first to be sown on the earth by the heavenly Husbandman, O most laudable Stephen, and thou wast the first on earth to shed thy blood for Christ, O blessed one; first hast thou been to be crowned with the wreath of victory in the heavens, O first among athletes, crown-bearer, who wast first among martyrs.

Prokimenon, in Tone VIII: Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

Stichos: The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaimeth the work of His hands.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES [6:8 - 7:60]

And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of

Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, and set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us. And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. Then said the high priest, Are these things so? And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Haran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child. And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years. And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place. And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs. And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him, and delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance. But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh. Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls. So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers, and were carried over into Shechem, and laid in the sepulcher that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, till another king arose, which knew not Joseph. The same dealt subtly with our kindred, and evil entreated our

fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live. In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months: and when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian: for he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them; but they understood not. And the next day he showed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one another? But he that did his neighbor wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday? Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Midian, where he begat two sons. And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sinai an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush. When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him, saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold. Then said the Lord unto him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground. I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee back into Egypt. This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush. He brought them out, after that he had showed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years. This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: to whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts

and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon. Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen. Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Joshua into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David; who found favor before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built him a house. Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things? Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it. When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Alleluia, in Tone: The heavens shall confess Thy wonders, O Lord, and Thy truth in the congregation of saints.

Stichos: God is glorified in the council of the saints.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW [21: 33-42].

Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: and when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent

unto them his son, saying: They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves: This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him: He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them: Did ye never read in the Scriptures, the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner, this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.

Communion Verse: Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.