

BIOGRAPHY

THERE is good reason to believe that St. Stephen was one of the Seventy-Two Disciples of Our Blessed Lord. After the Ascension he was chosen one of the seven deacons. The ministry of the Seven was very fruitful; but Stephen especially, "full of grace and fortitude, did great wonders and signs among the people." Many adversaries rose up to dispute with him, but "they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the spirit that spoke." At length he was brought before the Sanhedrim, charged, like his Divine Master, with blasphemy against Moses and against God. He boldly upbraided the chief priests with their hard-hearted resistance to the Holy Ghost and with the murder of the "Just One." They were stung with anger, and gnashed their teeth against him. But when, "filled with the Holy Ghost and looking up to Heaven, he cried out, 'Behold, I see the Heavens opened and the Son of man standing at the Right Hand of God,' they rushed upon him, and dragging him forth without the city, they stoned him to death".



ST. STEPHEN THE PROTOMARTYR

FEAST DAY:
26 DECEMBER

COLLECT

Grant us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, so to imitate what we revere, that we may learn to love even our enemies; for we celebrate the heavenly Birthday of him who knew how to pray for his very persecutors to our Lord, Jesus Christ, Thy Son; Who Liveth and Reigneth with Thee, in the Unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen

PRAYER TO ST. STEPHEN

O holy Stephen, Deacon of the Apostles, help of the poor, preacher of the Gospel and Protomartyr, hear our prayer to thee. Bless all the deacons and sub-deacons of the Church, and all altar boys. Give to them the grace to love God even as thou didst love Him and to serve Him as thou didst serve Him. Make them so fervent in their Faith that not even martyrdom wouldst separate them from Him. Guide thou all the Faithful to everlasting joy, which thou thyself dost enjoy, and may thy witness for the Sovereign King of all the world inspire us to imitate thee.

O St. Stephen, who sawest the Son of Man standing at the Right Hand of God, pray to that Same Son that He may bless this His Church to always remain faithful to Him, especially in these latter days when the Devil so wildly and violently attacks Her. Amen

Pray for us, St. Stephen the Protomartyr.
That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.