DECEMBER 26, ST. STEPHEN, MARTYR

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(Station at St. Stephen's on the Caelian Hill)
The feast of St. Stephen is one of the oldest in the Liturgy. The Church of St. Stephen on the Caelian Hill was finished only under John I (523-26).
In the Collect we pray to God that we may imitate the example of Stephen, not only by forgiving our enemies, but by even loving them and asking for them the grace of conversion.
The Lesson in the Mass contains the trial of Stephen as preserved in the Acts of the Apostles, along with the account of his martyrdom.
Stephen is not only a martyr; he is one of the most striking personages of the apostolic age; so much so that the Greeks give him the title of Apostle, and the Roman Liturgy places him in the category of the prophets, doctors and masters, whose cruel fate is described to us in the Gospel for today.

INTROIT Psalms 118: 23, 86

Sedérunt príncipes, et advérsum me loquebántur: et iníqui persecúti sunt me: ádjuva me, Dómine, Deus meus, quia servus tuus exercebátur in tuis justificatiónibus. (Ps 118: 1) Beati immaculáti in via, qui ámbulant in lege Dómini V. Glória Patri et Fílio et Spíritui Sancto, sicut erat in princípio, et nunc, et semper, et in sǽcula sæculórum. Amen. Sedérunt príncipes, et advérsum me loquebántur: et iníqui persecúti sunt me: ádjuva me, Dómine, Deus meus, quia servus tuus exercebátur in tuis justificatiónibus.

Princes sat, and spoke against me; and the wicked persecuted me: help me, O Lord, my God, for Thy servant was employed in Thy justifications. (Ps. 118: 1) Blessed are the undefiled in the way: who walk in the law of the Lord. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Princes sat, and spoke against me; and the wicked persecuted me: help me, O Lord, my God, for Thy servant was employed in Thy justifications.

COLLECT

Da nobis, quǽsumus, Dómine, imitári quod cólimus: ut discámus et inimícos dilígere; quia ejus natalítia celebrámus, qui novit étiam pro persecutóribus exoráre Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum, Fílium tuum: Qui vivis et regnas, cum Deo Patre in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sǽcula sæculórum.

Grant us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, to imitate what we venerate, that we may learn to love even our enemies; for we celebrate the birth to life everlasting of him who knew how to pray even for his persecutors to our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who lives and reigns with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

Commemoration of Christmas

Concéde, quǽsumus, omnípotens Deus: ut nos Unigéniti tui nova per carnem Natívitas líberet; quos sub peccáti jugo vetústa sérvitus tenet. Per eúndem Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum, Fílium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sǽcula sæculórum.

Grant, we beseech Thee, almighty God, that the new birth in the flesh of Thine only-begotten Son may set us free, whom the old bondage doth hold under the yoke of sin. Through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

LESSON Acts 6: 8-10; 7: 54-59

In diébus illis: Stéphanus plenus grátia et fortitúdine, faciébat prodígia et signa magna in pópulo. Surrexérunt autem quidam de synagóga, quæ appellátur Libertinórum, et Cyrenénsium, et Alexandrinórum, et eórum, qui erant a Cilícia, et Asia, disputántes cum Stéphano: et non póterant resístere sapiéntiæ et Spíritui, qui loquebátur. Audiéntes autem hæc, dissecabántur córdibus suis, et stridébant déntibus in eum. Cum autem esset Stéphanus plenus Spíritu Sancto, inténdens in cælum, vidit glóriam Dei, et Jesum stantem a dextris Dei. Et ait: Ecce, vídeo cælos apértos, et Fílium hóminis stantem a dextris Dei. Exclamántes autem voce magna continuérunt aures suas, et ímpetum fecérunt unanímiter in eum. Et ejiciéntes eum extra civitátem, lapidábant: et testes deposuérunt vestiménta sua secus pedes adolescéntis, qui vocabátur Saulus. Et lapidábant Stéphanum invocántem et dicéntem: Dómine Jesu, súscipe spíritum meum. Pósitis autem génibus, clamávit voce magna, dicens: Dómine, ne státuas illis hoc peccátum. Et cum hoc dixísset, obdormívit in Dómino.

In those days: Stephen, full of grace and fortitude, did great wonders and signs among the people. Now there arose some of that which is called the synagogue of the Libertines and of the Cyrenians and of the Alexandrians and of them that were of Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen: and they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit that spoke. Now, hearing these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed with their teeth at him. But Stephen being full of the Holy Spirit, looking up steadfastly to heaven, saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And he said: Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. And they, crying out with a loud voice, stopped their ears and with one accord ran violently upon him. And casting him forth without the city, they stoned him and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, invoking and saying: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And falling on his knees, he cried with a loud voice, saying: Lord, lay not his sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep in the Lord.

GRADUAL Psalms 118: 23, 86

Sedérunt príncipes, et advérsum me loquebántur: et iníqui persecúti sunt me. (Ps 6: 5) Adjuva me, Dómine, Deus meus: salvum me fac propter misericórdiam tuam. Allelúja, allelúja, (Act 7: 56.) Vídeo cælos apértos, et Jesum stantem a dextris virtútis Dei. Allelúja.

Princes sat, and spoke against me: and the wicked persecuted me. (Ps 6: 5) Help me, O Lord my God: save me for Thy mercy's sake. Alleluia, alleluia. (Acts 7: 56) I see the Heavens opened, and Jesus standing on the right hand of the power of God. Alleluia.

GOSPEL Matthew 23: 34-39

In illo témpore: Dicébat Jesus scribis et pharisǽis: Ecce, ego mitto ad vos prophétas, et sapiéntes, et scribas, et ex illis occidétis et crucifigétis, et ex eis flagellábitis in synagógis vestris, et persequémini de civitáte in civitátem: ut véniat super vos omnis sanguis justus, qui effúsus est super terram, a sánguine Abel justi usque ad sánguinem Zacharíæ, filii Barachíæ, quem occidístis inter templum et altáre. Amen dico vobis, vénient hæc ómnia super generatiónem istam. Jerúsalem, Jerúsalem, quæ occídis prophétas, et lápidas eos, qui ad te missi sunt, quóties vólui congregáre fílios tuos, quemádmodum gallína cóngregat pullos suos sub alas, et noluísti? Ecce, relinquétur vobis domus vestra desérta. Dico enim vobis, non me vidébitis ámodo, donec dicátis: Benedíctus, qui venit in nómine Dómini.

At that time Jesus said to the scribes and pharisees: Behold I send to you prophets and wise men and scribes, and some of them you will put to death and crucify, and some you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city: that upon you may come all the just blood that hath been shed upon the earth, from the blood of Abel the just even unto the blood of Zacharias the son of Barachias, whom you killed between the temple and the altar. Amen I say to you, all these things shall come upon this generation. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not? Behold your house shall be left to you desolate. For I say to you, you shall not see me henceforth, till you say: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.

OFFERTORY Acts 6: 5; 7: 59

Elegérunt Apóstoli Stéphanum Levítam, plenum fide et Spíritu Sancto: quem lapidavérunt Judǽi orántem, et dicéntem: Dómine Jesu, áccipe spíritum meum, allelúia.

The Apostles chose Stephen to be a Levite, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit: whom the Jews stoned, invoking and saying: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit, alleluia.

SECRET

Súscipe, Dómine, múnera pro tuórum commemoratióne Sanctórum: ut, sicut illos pássio gloriósos effécit; ita nos devótio reddat innócuos.. Per Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum, Fílium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sǽcula sæculórum.

Receive, O Lord, our gifts, in commemoration of Thy Saints: that as suffering made them glorious, so our devotion may render us innocent. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

Commemoration of Christmas

Obláta, Dómine, múnera nova Unigéniti tui nativitáte sanctífica: nosque a peccatórum nostrórum máculis emúnda. Per eúndem Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum, Fílium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sǽcula sæculórum.

Sanctify, O Lord, the gifts offered to Thee, by the new birth of Thine Only-begotten Son: and cleanse us from the stains of our sins. Through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

PREFACE OF THE NATIVITY

Vere dignum et justum est, æquum et salutáre, nos tibi semper, et ubíque grátias ágere: Dómine sancte, Pater omnípotens, ætérne Deus. Quia per incarnáti Verbi mystérium, nova mentis nostræ óculis lux tuæ claritátis infúlsit: ut dum visibíliter Deum cognóscimus, per hunc in invisibílium amórem rapiámur. Et ídeo cum Ángelis et Archángelis, cum Thronis et Dóminatiónibus, cumque omni milítia cæléstis exércitus, hymnum glóriæ tuæ cánimus sine fine dicéntes:

It it truly meet and just, right and for our salvation, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto Thee, O holy Lord, Father almighty, everlasting God, for through the Mystery of the Word made flesh, the new light of Thy glory hath shone upon the eyes of our mind, so that while we acknowledge God in visible form, we may through Him be drawn to the love of things invisible. And therefore with Angels and Archangels, with Throne and Dominations, and with all the hosts of the heavenly army, we sing the hymn of Thy glory, evermore saying:

COMMUNICANTES FOR CHRISTMAS

Communicántes, et diem sacratíssimum celebrántes, quo beátæ Maríæ intemeráta virgínitas huic mundo édidit Salvatórem: sed et memóriam venerántes, in primis ejúsdem gloriósæ semper Vírginis Maríæ, Genetrícis ejúsdem Dei et Dómini nostri Jesu Christi: sed et beáti Joseph, ejúsdem Vírginis Sponsi, et beatórum Apostolórum ac Mártyrum tuórum, Petri et Pauli, Andréæ, Jacóbi, Joánnis, Thomæ, Jacóbi, Philíppi, Bartholomǽi, Matthǽi, Simónis et Thaddǽi: Lini, Cleti, Cleméntis, Xysti, Cornélii, Cypriáni, Lauréntii, Chrysógoni, Joánnis et Pauli, Cosmæ et Damiáni: et ómnium Sanctórum tuórum; quorum méritis, precibúsque concédas, ut in ómnibus protectiónis tuæ muniámur auxílio. Per eúndem Christum Dóminum Nostrum. Amen

Communicating, and keeping this most holy day, in which the spotless virginity of blessed Mary brought forth a Savior to this world and also reverencing the memory of the same glorious Mary, ever Virgin Mother of the same our God and Lord Jesus Christ: as also blessed Joseph, Spouse of the Virgin, and of Thy blessed Apostles and Martyrs Peter and Paul, Andrew, James, John, Thomas, James, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon and Thaddeus: Linus, Cletus, Clement, Sixtus, Cornelius, Cyprian, Lawrence, Chrysogonus, John and Paul, Cosmas and Damian, and of all Thy Saints, through whose merits and prayers, grant that we may in all things be defended by the help of Thy protection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMUNION Acts 7: 55, 58, 59

Vídeo cælos apértos, et Jesum stantem a dextris virtútis Dei: Dómine Jesu, áccipe spíritum meum, et ne státuas illis hoc peccátum.

I see the Heavens opened, and Jesus standing on the right hand of the power of God: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit, and lay not this sin to their charge.

POSTCOMMUNION

Auxiliéntur nobis, Dómine, sumpta mystéria: et, intercedénte beáto Stéphano Mártyre tuo, sempitérna protectióne confírment. Per Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum, Fílium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sǽcula sæculórum.

May the mysteries we have received, O Lord, help us, and through the intercession of blessed Stephen, Thy Martyr, establish us by Thine everlasting protection. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.

Commemoration of Christmas

Præsta, quǽsumus, omnípotens Deus: ut natus hódie Salvátor mundi, sicut divínæ nobis generatiónis est auctor; ita et immortalitátis sit ipse largítor. Qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitáte Spíritus Sancti, Deus, per ómnia sǽcula sæculórum.

Grant, we beseech Thee, almighty God, that as the Savior of the world, born on this day, is the Author of our heavenly birth, so He may also be to us the Giver of immortality. Who lives and reigns with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever.