Liturgy of the Hours

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Morning Prayer

December 26, 2026

{ Feast – Stephen, First Martyr }

Liturgy of the Hours
EBREVIARY

Invitatory

Stand and make sign of cross on lips with thumb

Lord, open my lips.

— And my mouth will proclaim your praise.

Psalm 95

A call to praise God

Encourage each other daily while it is still today (Hebrews 3:13).

Come, let us worship the newborn Christ who has given the glorious crown to Saint Stephen.

— Come, let us worship the newborn Christ who has given the glorious crown to Saint Stephen.

Come, let us sing to the Lord
and shout with joy to the Rock who saves us.
Let us approach him with praise and thanksgiving
and sing joyful songs to the Lord.

— Come, let us worship the newborn Christ who has given the glorious crown to Saint Stephen.

The Lord is God, the mighty God,
the great king over all the gods.
He holds in his hands the depths of the earth
and the highest mountains as well.
He made the sea; it belongs to him,
the dry land, too, for it was formed by his hands.

— Come, let us worship the newborn Christ who has given the glorious crown to Saint Stephen.

Come, then, let us bow down and worship,
bending the knee before the Lord, our maker.
For he is our God and we are his people,
the flock he shepherds.

— Come, let us worship the newborn Christ who has given the glorious crown to Saint Stephen.

Today, listen to the voice of the Lord:
Do not grow stubborn, as your fathers did
in the wilderness,
when at Meriba and Massah
they challenged me and provoked me,
Although they had seen all of my works.

— Come, let us worship the newborn Christ who has given the glorious crown to Saint Stephen.

Forty years I endured that generation.
I said, "They are a people whose hearts go astray
and they do not know my ways."
So I swore in my anger,
"They shall not enter into my rest."

— Come, let us worship the newborn Christ who has given the glorious crown to Saint Stephen.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and will be for ever. Amen.

— Come, let us worship the newborn Christ who has given the glorious crown to Saint Stephen.

Morning Prayer

Hymn

Christ, life and goodness,
entered his creation,
bore wounds of sorrow,
banished death for ever,
rose to the Father,
at his right hand reigning,
throned in high heaven.

First followed Stephen,
chosen as a deacon:
noble the title,

his allotted portion,
granted in kindness
by Christ's loving Spirit
breathing upon him.

Firmly he stood fast;
stones rained down upon him,
bravely he suffered
death's unholy fury,
seeking forgiveness
for his foes with mercy,
heart ever gracious.

Weeping we beg you,
blessed ProtoMartyr,
one with the righteous,
citizen of heaven,
heir to the Kingdom,
from the brightest regions:
send us your favors.

One with the Martyrs,
let us sing rejoicing:
Praise and all glory
to the Triune Godhead,
who crowned Saint Stephen
in his holy combat
first of the Martyrs. Amen.

Metrical hymn, melody: Iste Confessor (Rouen/Poitiers), 11 11 11 5; from the Poitiers Antiphoner, 1746

Plainsong, mode VIII, melody 121; Liber Hymnarius, Solesmes, 1983, Text: Christus est vita veniens in orbem, 9th c.

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Sit or stand

Psalmody

Antiphon 1

My soul has held fast to you, my God; for your sake I suffered death by stoning.

Psalm 63:2–9

A soul thirsting for God

Whoever has left the darkness of sin yearns for God.

O Gód, you are my Gód, for you I lóng; *
for yóu my sóul is thírsting.
My bódy pínes for yóu *
like a drý, weary lánd without wáter.
So I gáze on yóu in the sánctuary *
to sée your stréngth and your glóry.

For your lóve is bétter than lífe, *
my líps will spéak your práise.
So I will bléss you áll my lífe, *
in your náme I will líft up my hánds.
My sóul shall be fílled as with a bánquet, *
my móuth shall práise you with jóy.

On my béd I remémber yóu. *
On yóu I múse through the níght
for yóu have béen my hélp; *
in the shádow of your wíngs I rejóice.
My sóul clíngs to yóu; *
your ríght hand hólds me fást.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, *
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, *
and will be for ever. Amen.

Antiphon

My soul has held fast to you, my God; for your sake I suffered death by stoning.

Antiphon 2

Stephen saw the heavens open; he saw and entered in. Happy the man to whom the heavens opened.

Canticle – Daniel 3:57–88, 56

Let all creatures praise the Lord

All you servants of the Lord, sing praise to him (Revelation 19:5).

Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord. *
Praise and exalt him above all forever.
Angels of the Lord, bless the Lord. *
You heavens, bless the Lord.
All you waters above the heavens, bless the Lord. *
All you hosts of the Lord, bless the Lord.
Sun and moon, bless the Lord. *
Stars of heaven, bless the Lord.

Every shower and dew, bless the Lord. *
All you winds, bless the Lord.
Fire and heat, bless the Lord. *
Cold and chill, bless the Lord.
Dew and rain, bless the Lord. *
Frost and chill, bless the Lord.
Ice and snow, bless the Lord. *
Nights and days, bless the Lord.
Light and darkness, bless the Lord. *
Lightnings and clouds, bless the Lord.

Let the earth bless the Lord. *
Praise and exalt him above all forever.
Mountains and hills, bless the Lord. *
Everything growing from the earth, bless the Lord.
You springs, bless the Lord. *
Seas and rivers, bless the Lord.
You dolphins and all water creatures, bless the Lord. *
All you birds of the air, bless the Lord.
All you beasts, wild and tame, bless the Lord. *
You sons of men, bless the Lord.

O Israel, bless the Lord. *

Praise and exalt him above all forever.
Priests of the Lord, bless the Lord. *
Servants of the Lord, bless the Lord.
Spirits and souls of the just, bless the Lord. *
Holy men of humble heart, bless the Lord.
Hananiah, Azariah, Mishael, bless the Lord. *
Praise and exalt him above all forever.

Let us bless the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. *
Let us praise and exalt him above all forever.
Blessed are you, Lord, in the firmament of heaven. *
Praiseworthy and glorious and exalted above all forever.

Antiphon

Stephen saw the heavens open; he saw and entered in. Happy the man to whom the heavens opened.

Antiphon 3

Behold I see the heavens open, and Jesus standing at the right hand of the almighty God.

Psalm 149

The joy of God's holy people

Let the sons of the Church, the children of the new people, rejoice in Christ, their King (Hesychius).

Síng a new sóng to the Lórd, *
his práise in the assémbly of the fáithful.
Let Ísrael rejóice in its máker, *
let Zíon's sons exúlt in their kíng.
Let them práise his náme with dáncing *
and make músic with tímbrel and hárp.

For the Lórd takes delíght in his péople. *
He crówns the póor with salvátion.
Let the fáithful rejóice in their glóry, *
shout for jóy and táke their rést.
Let the práise of Gód be on their líps *
and a twó-edged swórd in their hánd,

to déal out véngeance to the nátions *

and púnishment on áll the péoples;
to bínd their kíngs in cháins *
and their nóbles in fétters of íron;
to cárry out the séntence pre-ordáined; *
this hónor is for áll his fáithful.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, *
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, *
and will be for ever. Amen.

Antiphon

Behold I see the heavens open, and Jesus standing at the right hand of the almighty God.

Sit

Reading

Acts 6:2b-5a

"It is not right for us to neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. Look around your own number, brothers, for seven men acknowledged to be deeply spiritual and prudent, and we shall appoint them to this task. This will permit us to concentrate on prayer and the ministry of the word." The proposal was unanimously accepted by the community.

Responsory

The Lord is my strength, and I shall sing his praise.

— The Lord is my strength, and I shall sing his praise.

The Lord is my savior,

— and I shall sing his praise.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,

— The Lord is my strength, and I shall sing his praise.

Stand

Gospel Canticle

Antiphon

The gates of heaven opened out to blessed Stephen, and he was crowned first of martyrs.

Luke 1:68–79

The Messiah and his forerunner

Make sign of cross

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; *
he has come to his people and set them free.
He has raised up for us a mighty savior, *
born of the house of his servant David.

Through his holy prophets he promised of old †
that he would save us from our enemies, *
from the hands of all who hate us.
He promised to show mercy to our fathers *
and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham: *
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
free to worship him without fear, *
holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.

You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High; *
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
to give his people knowledge of salvation *
by the forgiveness of their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God *
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,*
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, *
and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, *
and will be for ever. Amen.

Antiphon

The gates of heaven opened out to blessed Stephen, and he was crowned first of martyrs.

Intercessions

Our Savior's faithfulness is mirrored in the fidelity of his witnesses who shed their blood for the word of God. Let us praise him in remembrance of them:

— You redeemed us by your blood.

Your martyrs freely embraced death in bearing witness to the faith, give us the true freedom of the Spirit, O Lord.

— You redeemed us by your blood.

Your martyrs professed their faith by shedding their blood, give us a faith, O Lord, that is constant and pure.

— You redeemed us by your blood.

Your martyrs followed in your footsteps by carrying the cross, help us to endure courageously the misfortunes of life.

— You redeemed us by your blood.

Your martyrs washed their garments in the blood of the Lamb, help us to avoid the weaknesses of the flesh and worldly allurements.

— You redeemed us by your blood.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

Concluding Prayer

Lord,
today we celebrate the entrance of Saint Stephen
into eternal glory.
He died praying for those who killed him.
Help us to imitate his goodness
and to love our enemies.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

— Amen.

Dismissal

May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

— Amen.

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