



**Holy Ghost Orthodox Church**  
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**CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!**

**\*\*\*FAST FREE PERIOD\*\*\***

**\*\*\*FROM JANUARY 07 THROUGH JANUARY 17\*\*\***

**ON THE MEND:** Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Archbishop Daniel, Metropolitan Antony, Metropolitan Yuriy, Anastasia [Metropolitan Yuriy's mom], Metropolitan Theodosius [OCA], Archbishop Jovan, Bishop Robert, Father George & Pani Lillian Hnatko, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Elias Warnke, Father Nestor Kowal, Father George Yatsko, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Emilian Balan, Father John & Pani Mary Anne Nakonachny, Father Steve Repa, Protopresbyter William Diakiw, Archpriest Dionysi Vitali, Protodeacon Joseph Hotrovich, Father Adam Yonitch, Pani-Dobrodijka Sonia Diakiw, Father Paisius McGrath, Father Michael Smolynec, Father Lawrence & Matushka Sophia Daniels, Father John Harrold [Saint Sylvester], Joshua Agosto and his family, Eva Malesnick, Stella Peanoske, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Virginia Bryan, Joseph Sliwinsky, Gary & Linda Mechtly, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Sam Wadrose, Isabella Olivia Lindgren, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Erin, Michael Miller, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Liz Stumpf, Theodore Nixon, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Linda Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, George Rocknage, Robert McKivitz, Liz Obradovich, Halyna Zelinska [Archbishop Daniel's mother], Charlotte, Andrew Mark Olynyk, Deborah Finley, Claire Senita, Eleanor Kelly, Bryan, Nancy Barylak, Patrick Keenan, Khrystyna Chorniy, Anthony Cormier, Nathan Forbeck, Sarah Doyle, Samuel Peters, Esther Holupka, David Vallor,

Henry Faraly, Julie Eiler, Dorothy Lednovich, Bob C., Allie—young girl with leukemia, Heather Kramer, Jane Wartinbee, Matthew—young man with cancer, Nicholas Orlando, Mary Ann Kuznik, Michael Pryhodzenko, Sonia Luciw, Theresa Ditto, Mary Ann Musial, Mary Pelino, Yvonne Christy, Myron & Barbara Spak, Julia Duda, Lisa Pandle, Kris & Julie Hanczar, John Kennedy, Loretta, Nancy, Carol, & Michael Sheliga, Gaelle Kelly, Irma McDivitt, Robin Young, Mckayla, Rachel, Carl & Margaret Reed, Lydia Wilson, Robert Pointon, Walter Cecelia, John Persico, Jeff Miller, Mary Kernick, Glenn Miller, Jean Marie, Donna & Walter McCrackin, Bonnie & Eugene Blair [Pani Gina's parents], David Hoenshell, Barbara Macino, Shelley Hill, Mikaela Kapeluck, Linda Cawley, Gerald Cogley, Helen Bozo, Corey Guich, Robert Vangrin, Pauline Witkowsky, Sera White, Donald Griffey, Deborah Smith, Nancy & Eric Dunik, Julian Strozh [young lady with cerebral palsy], Dr. Kirsten Ream, Patricia Corey, Michelle, Katie Swarm, Richard Dunst, Michelle, Patrick, Linda Morris, Howard Simpson, Chris, David Hiles, Jennifer, Jerry Quinn, Cher Mount, Frank & Janet Horrell, Jim Wandling, Gail, Sirena Sharp, Ron Paulovich, Sandi Anderson, Lina, Shirley, Denny Mader, Ella Campbell, Tom Hyatt, Bill Janiro, Jean Symanko-Andy's sister, William Lemonakis, Barbara McDougall, Alma Wyke, Lindsay Romanczak & family, Virginia Catherine Pynch, Susan Lucas, Neil Carter & family, James Paluh, Mickie Weikel, Evelyn Krempasky, Tammy Strunk, Loida Esbry, Darlene Chicka Deskins, Drew, Alice & Keith Philipa, Kateryna Kocelko, Nancy Heinbaugh, Mira Filipović, Lynn, Jacqueline, Sharon, Zan Cheng, Kristy, Elaine Ellenberger, Brandon, Anna Tranchine, Demetra, Blase Urban, Catherine Hogel & children, Jennifer & Dylan, Ron Schwartz, Lydia Wilson, Flora Tomlin, Howell Swarm, Jane Bielewicz Allred, Manny "Lazarus" Lopez, Glenn & Lucas Burlack, Katie Elizabeth, Mileva, & Michael, Deirdré Straughan, Terri Paluh, Lori & Steve Lucier, Kyranna Cherpas, Pastor Bruce Nordeen, Heather Ried, Carla Perry, Linda Elliot, Dennis McDaniel, Luke Tinsley, Brent, Tricia, Katherine Gorman, Pamela Jaquette, Michael Pawlyshyn, Sherri Walewski, Marika Zeliszczuk, Donna Davis, Jackie Crimbchin, Marta Charron, Mary [Corba], Stella McKeag, Margie Sekelsky, Gary Howell, Fran Fulton, Gina Catanese, Bill Vizza, Jamie Swarm, Kevin Allen (from Ancient Faith Radio), Kathy Flaherty, Tori Reade-Henry's niece, Derick-Glen Burlack's neighbor, Michael, Nichole & Christopher, Ben Douglas, Dianne Donahue, Zachary, Natasha, Noah Willard, Jodi Hanczar, Gregory Cervo, Lisa Bruce, Martha Nezolyk, Kathy Cvetkovich, Judy, Will, Emma, Ginny, Ye-Jin, Maria, John & JoAnn, Jim & Kitty, Phil Bouse, Ralph & Beverly Stoker, Noah Willard, Nikola, Natalie, Nikola, & Nevenka

Jovonovich, Julia Collier, Amy Kemerer, Thomas Smith, Tracy Slaughaupt, Louis & Teresa Bercelli, Tom Nolan, Silvia Martin, Sarah Dorning, Evelyn Burlack, Dena & George, Georgia, Lawanda [Evelyn's niece], Maureen Sams, John Kendall, Judi Danser, Darcy, Denis Strittmatter, Nancy, Ian Brick, Cecilia Barnhart, Logan Magorien, Pam Grant, Debbie & Jerry Novosel, Noah Willard, Bishop Athanasius Akunda of Western Kenya, Sandra Dillard, Danielle McCann, and Susan Pulcini—Father Ted Pulcini's mom. ARNOLD: Homer Paul Kline. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

**Happy Birthday to another January baby, who was missed on Father Bob's list last week: Henry Tkacik, Jr., who will celebrate on the 23<sup>rd</sup>! May God grant him Many Happy, Healthy, Prosperous, and Blessed Years! M'nohaya Lita! God Bless!**

**PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS: All Christians and the others in the Middle East who are suffering during this time of great tragedy and unrest. May God watch over and keep them safe! Lord have mercy!**

Please remember ALL American service men and women in your prayers. May God watch over them and all American service men and women—and bring them all home safely!

**REMEMBER—PRAYERS ARE ALWAYS FREE!**

Communion Fasting: nothing to eat or drink after midnight, EXCEPT in cases where your doctor tells you to eat or drink something for medical reasons: medication, diabetes, etc. If you have a question, please ask Father Bob.

**AT ANY TIME—if there is an emergency, if you have questions, or if you just need to talk, please CALL FATHER BOB at [412] 279-5640.**

#### **SCHEDULE OF SERVICES**

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 13 OBEDNITZA DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL 10:30 AM  
33<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; SUNDAY AFTER NATIVITY & BEFORE  
THEOPHANY; LEAVE-TAKING OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST; VENERABLE  
MELANIA THE YOUNGER-NUN OF ROME; SAINT PETER MOHYLA-METROPOLITAN  
OF KIEV**

*Tone 8*

Galatians 1:11-19; Hebrews 7:26-8:2

Matthew 2:13-23; John 10:9-16

***Litany in Blessed Memory of Stephen Kuzman, Timothy Stutchell, Nicholas Vetosky, Robert Rohal, & Gary Atutes—Fr. Bob***

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 18**

**STRICT FAST DAY**

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 19**

**THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST**

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 20 OBEDNITZA DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL 10:30 AM**

**34<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY; AFTERFEAST OF THEOPHANY; SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY GLORIOUS PROPHET, FORERUNNER, AND BAPTIST JOHN**

*Tone 1*

Ephesians 4:7-13; Acts 19:1-8

Matthew 4:12-17; John 1:29-34

**\*\*\*\*BLESSING OF WATER AFTER SERVICE—DOWNSTAIRS\*\*\*\***

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 27 OBEDNITZA DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL 10:30 AM**

**35<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; LEAVE-TAKING OF THEOPHANY; HOLY FATHERS SLAIN AT SINAI & RAITHU-ISAIAH, SABBAS, MOSES & HIS DISCIPLE MOSES, JEREMIAH, PAUL, ADAM, SERGIUS, DOMNUS, PROCLUS, HYPATIUS, ISAAC, MACARIUS, MARK BENJAMIN, EUSEBIUS, ELIAS, & OTHERS; VENERABLE JOSEPH ANALYTINUS OF RAITHU MONASTERY; VENERABLE THEODULUS; VENERABLE STEPHEN**

**SAINT SAVA I, FIRST ARCHBISHOP OF SERBIA**

*Tone 2*

Colossians 3:12-16

Luke 18:18-27

## **BULLETIN INSERT FOR 13 JANUARY 2019**

**33<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; SUNDAY AFTER NATIVITY & BEFORE THEOPHANY; LEAVE-TAKING OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST; VENERABLE MELANIA THE YOUNGER-NUN OF ROME; SAINT PETER MOHYLA-METROPOLITAN OF KIEV**

### **TROPARION—TONE 8**

Thou didst descent from on high, O Merciful One!

Thou didst accept the three-day burial to free us from our sufferings!

Our Lord, our Life and Resurrection, Glory to Thee!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

### **KONTAKION—TONE 8**

By rising from the tomb,  
Thou didst raise the dead and resurrect Adam.  
Eve exults in Thy Resurrection,  
And the world celebrates Thy Rising from the dead,  
O greatly Merciful One!

### **PROKEIMENON—TONE 8**

**READER:** Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!

**PEOPLE:** **Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!**

**READER:** In Judah, God is known; His name is great in Israel!

**PEOPLE:** **Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!**

**READER:** Pray and make your vows.

**PEOPLE:** **Before the Lord our God!**

### **ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 8**

Come let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to God our Savior!

Let us come before His face with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to Him with psalms.



### **Nativity Epistle of the Permanent Conference of Ukrainian Orthodox Bishops Outside the Borders of Ukraine**

To the God-beloved Pastors, Honoured Monastics, and all Faithful Children of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the Diaspora and Ukraine,  
*"Today, the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One and the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One. Angels with shepherds give glory. The*

*magi journey with a star. For unto us is born a young Child, the Pre-eternal God" (Kondak of the Nativity of Christ).*

### **Christ is Born!**

Once again, according to the Mercy of God, we celebrate the Feast of the Nativity. Faithful hearts, full of gratitude to God, again glorify the Pre-eternal Word, the Divine Christ Child, Who for us and our salvation came down to earth and was incarnated from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man. Today the soul of every Christian with great spiritual joy cries out "Christ is Born—Glorify Him! Christ from Heaven—Let us meet Him! Christ on Earth—be exalted! Let all the earth sing to the Lord! (St. Gregory the Theologian.)

The coming of the Son of God to earth was the most important event in the entire history of the human race. It is an event which the human mind cannot fully comprehend, the wonder of wonders: "great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh." (1 Tim. 3:16)

The Nativity of Christ was the event which ushered in a new cultural life rooted in love for God and neighbor, an event which initiated the Kingdom of Christ on earth. Many things have happened and happen on our earthly planet. But none of them have been discussed and preached for ages as has the event of the Nativity of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The Nativity of Christ is for all of us a great and joyful feast. St. John Chrysostom writes: "The day of Christ's Nativity is the most important day among all the feasts, for it is shown to be the mother of all feasts. Without the Nativity of Christ there would be no Resurrection." Humanity awaited the coming into the world of the Saviour with great impatience. The Lord, yet in the earthly paradise of Eden, after the sin of Adam and Eve said that He would send them a Saviour Who would return to them and to the entire human race their lost happiness and conquer the power of the devil.

Adam's sin is the history of the sin of all mankind and every person individually. The transgression of Adam is repeated in each one of us when we turn from God and commit sin.

The greatest and deepest mystery of the Christian faith is the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God. The Pre-eternal God becomes a small child without ceasing to be God. As St. John the Evangelist writes, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn. 1:14).

Christ "for the sake of us men and for our salvation came down from the heavens and took flesh from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man" so that He might destroy the barrier between man and God which arose due to human sin. And every time we Christians celebrate the

Nativity of Christ a meeting takes place in our heart and soul with God Himself. We meet the Messiah—Christ—in the Mystery of the Eucharist. Through Holy Communion our human flesh is filled with His Divine power, which strengthens us spiritually and physically. We meet the Saviour in the other mysteries of our Orthodox Faith, which open to us the path to eternal life. We meet Christ in our daily life, sensing in everything His care and presence. And so every year Christ is born in the hearts and souls of faithful people.

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

In 2018 we celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Ukrainian Orthodox Churches in the USA and in Canada. We thank God for all His grace and bounties poured out upon us in the past. We beseech Him that in the coming century the Lord would continue to preserve and protect our Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the diaspora.

We especially beseech the Divine Christ Child that in this new year He would bless our ancestral homeland of Ukraine with peace, spiritual and economic growth, and our God-beloved Ukrainian people with unity, brotherly love, and a united Orthodox Church in Ukraine which is recognized by all other local Orthodox Churches.

We extend our gratitude to the Mother Church—the Great Church of Constantinople, and especially to His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew and the Holy Synod for all that they have done on behalf of the daughter Church, the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, during the past year of 2018.

We beseech Christ the Saviour, who said “I will build my Church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.” (Mt. 16:18), that in the new year the Lord will preserve His One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church from schism.

From sincere hearts and the depth of our souls we greet all of you on the occasion of the great feast of the Nativity of our Lord, the New Year of God’s goodness 2019, and the Holy Theophany. We prayerfully wish you God’s limitless mercies.

May the Newly-born in Bethlehem Lord and Saviour of world grant all of you good physical health, spiritual peace, familial warmth, joy, and prosperity.

Bowing before the manger in Bethlehem, we offer the New-born Christ Child our sincere and heartfelt prayers, and thank Him for all that we have.

May the joy of the Nativity enter into every Christian heart, be present within every family, and ever abide among all of you.

**Christ is Born! Glorify Him!**

*With Hierarchical Blessings,*

†**YURIJ**, Metropolitan, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada

†**ANTONY**, Metropolitan, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and in the Diaspora

†**JEREMIAH**, Archbishop, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Brazil and South America

†**DANIEL**, Archbishop, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Western Europe

†**ILARION**, Bishop, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada

†**ANDRIY**, Bishop, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada

**Encyclical of Archbishop Demetrios for the Feast of Saint Basil and the New Year 2019**

Protocol No. 01/19

***I can do all things in Christ Who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13)***

January 1, 2019 Feast of Saint Basil and New Year

*To the Most Reverend Hierarchs, the Reverend Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, the Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils of the Greek Orthodox Communities, the Distinguished Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Day, Afternoon, and Church Schools, the Philoptochos Sisterhoods, the Youth, the Hellenic Organizations, and the entire Greek Orthodox Family in America*

**Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,**

As we offer thanksgiving to God at the inception of the new year and with a vision for the marvelous works He will accomplish through us for His honor and glory, we also are mindful of the promise we have affirmed throughout this past year: *All Things are Possible to the One Who Believes in Christ*. This was the theme for our 44<sup>th</sup> Biennial Clergy Laity Congress in Boston last July, and it continues to be the inspiration for dynamic work throughout our Holy Archdiocese.

This powerful promise offered to us by our Lord should also guide and strengthen us throughout this New Year of 2019. We should anticipate the power and potential of our faith in Him. We should move forward in ministry and service with the assurance that His promises will be fulfilled. Through our worship and prayer, we should constantly ask for His will to be done knowing that the possibilities are boundless, the opportunities are immeasurable, and His marvelous works are unlimited!

Today as we celebrate the Feast of Saint Basil, we see through the witness of his life that all things are possible in Christ. In full dedication to God and faith in His divine will, Saint Basil led the faithful in worship and in ministries that offered help to the poor, sick, elderly, orphans, and travelers. By the power of God, he stood firm against false teachings and beliefs, revealing the power of truth through his sermons and theological works. Through his life of service what seemed impossible for many became possible, as they found hope, healing, and abundant life in Christ.



On January 1 and the Feast of Saint Basil, it is our annual tradition to recognize the work of our beloved Saint Basil Academy. For over 70 years this vital ministry of our Holy Archdiocese has been a witness of the promise that all things are possible through faith in Christ. Through the blessed work of the staff and directors and the support of many benefactors, children and youth have found care and healing, lives have been transformed, and many have experienced the unlimited possibilities of the power of faith and compassion. We give thanks to God for those who have offered this sacred ministry. As we are led by our Ladies Philoptochos Society in the cutting of the Vasilopeta, I ask that you offer your prayers and generous support for Saint Basil Academy.

Together, we know and affirm that faith in Christ makes this ministry possible and makes the impossible possible through our faith and our service in our parishes and communities. We know that the possibilities are endless and the transforming power of grace is inexhaustible. Thus, we should prayerfully approach all aspects of our service and witness throughout this year by seeking possibilities, exploring potential, and following the will of God. May His abundant blessings be upon our sacred work in His name in 2019, and may we live each day in faith and in anticipation of the great and marvelous things He will do!

With paternal love in Christ,

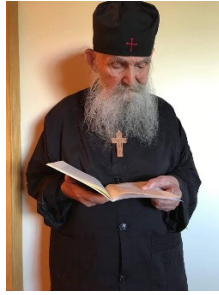
**† D E M E T R I O S Archbishop of America**

So, this spiritual warfare of ours must be constant and never-ceasing, and should be conducted with alertness and courage in the soul; they can easily be attained, if you seek these gifts from God. So, advance into battle without hesitation. *+Saint John of Kronstadt*



**On the remembrance of God, and on good thoughts**

*Elder Ephraim of Arizona*



It is not so easy for the demons to harm a person who keeps the constant remembrance of God in his soul. They can tempt him, but it is difficult for them to harm him. This is because he does not permit them to trip him up, for he is armed with the weapon of the constant remembrance of God. Whoever has his soul's eyes open and sees God is not easily harmed by the enemies. The very spiritual men of old did not need spiritual books. They did not have such a great need to read many patristic books, because they constantly meditated upon things about God. Whatever they saw immediately gave them an opportunity to meditate upon something, to discover something unknown. All of creation was a university for them. Wherever they turned their eyes, they saw something to meditate upon—sometimes the providence of God, other times His wisdom; sometimes His judgment, other times His teachings, and so on. With the eyes of their soul they saw invisible things. Meditating upon them filled their hearts with spiritual knowledge.

We people of today—since we do not have the eyes of our soul open—do not have the ability to remain in the spiritual meditation. Even when we do see something, we need religious books to know something about God. The minds of these spiritual men were so strong that they could conceive thoughts and ideas with deep wisdom. Our minds are so weak that they can barely retain anything. The Fathers then were, for the most part, simple people; yet, they acquired full knowledge, because the Holy Spirit helped them understand the Scriptures.

The remembrance of God is an all-powerful weapon, a mighty suit of armor against Satan and the various sins. When the mind ceases to remember God and meditate upon divine things, man is overcome by negligence, indolence, forgetfulness, and then by evil desires!

If you see your mind rushing towards the world, know that your soul lacks divine consolation, which is why it turns to the world for consolation.

When a person's soul is warm towards God, he is enlightened and feels compunction, and it is impossible for his mind to incline towards the world at the same time. The soul inclines towards the world when it is not united, in a sense, with God. The mind is an area, a place. If God does not occupy

it, then the enemy will occupy it. This place cannot remain empty, having neither God nor evil, sin, temptation, or the activity of Satan. The mind is like a mill that is turning. Whatever is thrown into the funnel, which leads to the millstones below, will come out as flour of that type. If you throw wheat in, you will get wheat flour. If you throw thorns in, you will get thorn flour—a harmful substance. The mill is always turning; the mind of man is always working—like a mill. Do you want to have good results? Put good material into the mill. Do you want to find compunction, tears, joy, peace, etc.? Put good thoughts into the mill of your mind—for example, thoughts about the soul, about the Judgment, the remembrance of death, and so on—and then you will get corresponding spiritual results! But if a person puts sinful thoughts into the mill of his mind, he will definitely have sin as a result. The material that will be given to the mind depends on the intentions of man. And these intentions will be either commended or censured. We should always strive to have salvific thoughts and beneficial images in our mind, so that we do not leave room for Satan to throw in his garbage—sinful thoughts and fantasies!

### ***The Life of Saint Stephen the Deacon and First Martyr***

(Commemorated on December 27/January 09)

St. Stephen was a relative of St. Paul. He was the first of seven deacons whom the holy apostles ordained for the service of the poor in Jerusalem. This is why he is called the Archdeacon—the first, or chief, of them. St. Stephen did many things for the poor and widows in Jerusalem and by the power of his faith, he worked many miracles. He lived his life to be an example to everyone who saw him of how Jesus came to serve and not be served.

The Jewish authorities argued with him but were always beaten by his wisdom and the power of the Spirit who acted through him. Eventually, these men, who were very good at spreading rumors about people, stirred up the people and leaders against this innocent man. They said many things about him that weren't true, that he had blasphemed against God and against Moses, and quickly found people to lie and act as witnesses to support these rumors. But Stephen stood before all the people, and everyone saw his face "like the face of an angel": his face was illumined by the light of grace as was the face of Moses when he talked with God. Stephen opened his mouth and spoke about all of God's marvelous works and miracles, performed in the past for the people of Israel, and he told of the peoples' continued disobedience and ingratitude for what He had done.

He especially denounced the people for the slaying of Jesus, the Christ, calling them betrayers and murderers (Acts 7:52).

While they ground their teeth, Stephen looked and saw the heavens open and the glory of God. He described what he saw: "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56). Then the cruel-hearted people took him out of the city and stoned him to death. Among his murderers was his relative Saul, or Paul, who later became an apostle. At that time, the most holy Mother of God was standing on a rock at a distance with St. John the Theologian and witnessed the martyrdom of this first martyr for the truth of her Son and God, and she prayed for Stephen.

This all occurred exactly one year after the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, which we celebrate on Pentecost. St. Stephen's body was taken secretly and buried by Gamaliel on his own land. Gamaliel was a Jewish prince and a secret Christian. Thus, this first of Christ's martyrs made a glorious end and entered into the Kingdom of Christ our God. 400 years later in a vision to the priest Lucian, Gamaliel revealed the precise location of St. Stephen's relics. With the Patriarch's blessing the priest dug up the grave and a strong and fragrant odor came from the relics. The relics were then brought to Jerusalem where they were buried with ceremony. Later they were later taken to Constantinople. Since the day they were found, many sick people have been healed by approaching his holy relics and praying for his aid.