

# Daily Orthodox - December 27th, 2024

Today is Friday of the 27th Week after Pentecost — 3rd Day of the Feast of the Nativity.

## Fasting Obligations

- **OCA, GOARCH, Antioch:** No fasting obligations.

Today, we commemorate...

### 1. The Holy Protomartyr Stephen the Archdeacon

“ Stephen was a kinsman of the Apostle Paul and one of those Jews who lived in the Hellenic provinces. Stephen was the first of the seven deacons whom the holy apostles ordained and appointed to the service of assisting the poor in Jerusalem. For this, he is called the archdeacon. By the power of his faith, Stephen worked great miracles among the people. The wicked Jews disputed with him, but they were always defeated by his wisdom and the power of the Spirit, Who acted through him. Then the shameful Jews, accustomed to calumnies and slander, incited the people and the elders of the people against the innocent Stephen, slandering him as though he had blasphemed against God and against Moses. False witnesses were quickly found who confirmed this. Stephen then stood before the people, and all *saw his face as it had been the face of an angel* (Acts 6:15), that is, his face was illumined with the light of grace as was once the face of Moses when he spoke with God. Stephen opened his mouth and enumerated the many good works and miracles that God had performed in the past for the people of Israel, as well as the many crimes and opposition to God on the part of this people. He especially rebuked them for the killing of Christ the Lord, calling them *betrayers and murderers* (Acts 7:52). And

while they gnashed their teeth, Stephen beheld and saw the heavens open and the glory of God. That which he saw, he declared to the Jews: *Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God!* (Acts 7:56). Then the malicious men took him outside the city and stoned him to death. Among his persecutors was his kinsman Saul, later the Apostle Paul. At that time, the Most-holy Theotokos, standing on a rock at a distance with St. John the Theologian, witnessed the martyrdom of this first martyr for the truth of her Son and God, and she prayed to God for Stephen. This occurred one year after the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles. Gamaliel, a prince of the Jews and a secret Christian, clandestinely took St. Stephen's body and buried it on his own estate. Thus, this first among the Christian martyrs gloriously reposed and took up his habitation in the Kingdom of Christ God.

## 2. The Venerable Martyrs Theodore and Theophanes the Branded

“ Theodore and Theophanes were blood brothers, born in Palestine and well educated in both secular and spiritual wisdom. They were monks in the community of St. Sava the Sanctified and later were ordained presbyters. They suffered harshly for their defense of icons under three emperors: Leo the Armenian, Michael Balbus and Theophilus. The demented Theophilus beat them with his own hands and ordered that they be branded with iron on their faces with derisive verses, for which they were called "the Branded." They were cast into prison in the town of Apamea in Bithynia. Theodore died there from his pains and wounds. Theophanes, freed at the time of the Emperors Theodore and Michael, was consecrated Metropolitan of Nicaea by Patriarch Methodius. St. Theodore died in the year 833. These two wonderful brothers suffered for Christ and received a wonderful reward from Him in the Immortal Kingdom of Light.

3. *St. Maximus*, bishop of Alexandria (282)
4. *St. Theodore*, patriarch of Constantinople (686)
5. *St. Luke*, monk, of Tryglia
6. *Uncovering of the relics* (1514) of *St. Therapont*, abbot, of Belozersk and Mozhaisk (1426)
7. *St. Boniface*, founder of the St. Panteleimon Monastery (Kiev) (1871)
8. *St. Barlaam*, metropolitan of Tobolsk and all Siberia (1802)
9. *New Hieromartyrs Tikhon*, archbishop of Voronezh, and with him 160 martyred priests (1919)
10. (Greek cal.: *Martyrs Maurice and his son Photinus, with 70 soldiers*, of Apamea [286-305])

For more information on today's saints or commemorations not provided, see

<https://www.oca.org/saints/lives> (Slavic) and/or <https://www.goarch.org/chapel> (Greek).

# Daily Scriptures

## Slavic and Greek

- **Epistle (Slavic: for the Protomartyr):** Acts 6:8-15; 7:1-5, 47-60

“ <8> And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. <9> Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. <10> And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. <11> Then they secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." <12> And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon him, seized him, and brought him to the council. <13> They also set up false witnesses who said, "This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; <14> for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us." <15> And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel. <1> Then the high priest said, "Are these things so?" <2> And he said, "Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, <3> and said to him, 'Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.' <4> Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell. <5> And God gave him no inheritance in it, not even enough to set his foot on. But even when Abraham had no child, He promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his descendants after him. <47> But Solomon built Him a house. <48> "However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: <49> 'Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the Lord, Or what is the place of My rest? <50> Has My hand not made all these things?' <51> "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. <52> Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, <53> who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it." <54> When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. <55> But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, <56> and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" <57> Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; <58> and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid

down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. <59> And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." <60> Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

- **Gospel (Slavic: for the Protomartyr):** Matthew 21:33-42

“ <33> "Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. <34> Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. <35> And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. <36> Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. <37> Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' <38> But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' <39> So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. <40> "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?" <41> They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons." <42> Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes'?"

## Slavic

- **Epistle (Day):** 2 Timothy 1:1-2, 8-18

“ <1> Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, <2> To Timothy, a beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. <8> Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, <9> who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, <10> but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, <11> to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. <12> For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am

persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day. <13> Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. <14> That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. <15> This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. <16> The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; <17> but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me. <18> The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that Day—and you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus.

- **Gospel (Day):** Mark 12:1-12

“ <1> Then He began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a place for the wine vat and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. <2> Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that he might receive some of the fruit of the vineyard from the vinedressers. <3> And they took him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. <4> Again he sent them another servant, and at him they threw stones, wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully treated. <5> And again he sent another, and him they killed; and many others, beating some and killing some. <6> Therefore still having one son, his beloved, he also sent him to them last, saying, 'They will respect my son.' <7> But those vinedressers said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' <8> So they took him and killed him and cast him out of the vineyard. <9> "Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vinedressers, and give the vineyard to others. <10> Have you not even read this Scripture: 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. <11> This was the Lord's doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes?'" <12> And they sought to lay hands on Him, but feared the multitude, for they knew He had spoken the parable against them. So they left Him and went away.

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