

Commemoration of St. Stephen the Protomartyr and the first martyr

St. Stephen is one of the most beloved saints of the Universal Church, the first person martyred for the sake of Christ's doctrine of love.

According to the hagiographical sources he was from the royal dynasty of Judas and was the son of law-abiding parents. Still a young man he was the servant of the chief priest Kayipaya. According to the same sources when the Lord was taken to home, Stephen took off the cloth from his head and spread it under the Lord's feet thus expressing his true and sincere love. This naturally annoyed the chief priest and he turned Stephen out. Stephen witnessed the death and burial of the Lord but rejoiced with the apostles for the Glorious Resurrection of Christ. According to St. Gregory of Tatev he went to the apostles Peter and John and was baptized. At the moment of baptism an aureole (crown) appeared on the water. After that miraculous event he was called "Stephen" meaning (crowned). From the Acts of the Apostles it is known that after the Pentecost apostles served the tables and gave subsidies to the poor. From day to day increased the number of those who believed in Christ. As the apostles were unable to meet the needs of everybody, asked their disciples to choose 7 persons of good reputation for serving the tables. According to St. Luke the Evangelist one of them was St. Stephen, "... a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6:5). By the power received from Christ apostles ordained him deacon. Thanks to his God-granted virtues and power Stephen worked wonders. Many people tried to argue with him, but no one was as wise as Stephen. So, some ill-willing persons persuaded some people to say that Stephen scolded God and the Prophet Moses. Inciting the people, the priests and the lawyers they took Stephen to the court. In his speech in his defense Stephen proved that Jesus was the promised Messiah, and reproached the Jews for their cruelty. He was stoned out of the city and his cloths were put before a man whose name was Saul and who later became the Apostle Peter. In the beginning he persecuted Christians but later he knew the true God – Jesus Christ, and became the most zealous preacher of the Gospel. St. Stephen was the first person martyred for the sake of Christ and that's why he is called Protomartyr.

According to the tradition Gamaliel, the teacher of the Apostle Peter, and Nicodemus, his brother, who were secrete disciples of Jesus, buried the saint's body in their farm. Soon a priest named Lukianus discovered the relics. And Pontiff Hovhan of Jerusalem put them in St. Sion. In the V century Princess Juliane found the saint's tabernacle in Jerusalem and took it to Constantinople, and later – to Venice and buried it in the Church of St. George (St. Gevorg)

island.

When is celebrated

25.12.2008
26.12.2009
25.12.2010
26.12.2011
25.12.2012
24.12.2013
25.12.2014
26.12.2015
26.12.2016
25.12.2017
25.12.2018
24.12.2019
26.12.2020
25.12.2021
26.12.2022
25.12.2023
24.12.2024
25.12.2025
26.12.2026
25.12.2027
25.12.2028
25.12.2029
24.12.2030