



Daily Reflections

December 26, 2018

Scripture

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

Stephen, filled with grace and power,
was working great wonders and signs among the people.
Certain members of the so-called Synagogue of Freedmen,
Cyrenians, and Alexandrians,
and people from Cilicia and Asia,
came forward and debated with Stephen,
but they could not withstand the wisdom and the spirit with which he spoke.
When they heard this, they were infuriated,
and they ground their teeth at him.
But he, filled with the Holy Spirit,
looked up intently to heaven
and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God,
and he said,
"Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man
standing at the right hand of God."
But they cried out in a loud voice, covered their ears,
and rushed upon him together.
They threw him out of the city, and began to stone him.
The witnesses laid down their cloaks
at the feet of a young man named Saul.
As they were stoning Stephen, he called out
"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Our Scripture Reflection

It has been a long-standing tradition in the Church that the day after Christmas we commemorate the death of the Church's first martyr, St. Stephen. Why.....why change the mood from joy and festivity to somberness? Perhaps the Church is trying to remind us that if one dares acknowledge the newborn King as our Lord and Savior, then what happened to St. Stephen could be our lot as well. On the other hand, we are actually celebrating two "births" back to back: Jesus is born into this life and Stephen through his glorious martyrdom is born into eternal life. That makes for a wonderful celebration!

Food for your Journey

Between a tyrant and a martyr there is of course an enormous difference, although they both have one thing in common: the power to compel. The tyrant, himself ambitious to dominate, compels people through his power; the martyr, himself unconditionally obedient to God, compels others through his suffering. The tyrant dies and his rule is over, the martyr dies and his rule begins.

--Søren Kierkegaard, *The Soul of Kierkegaard: Selections from His Journals* (Courier Corporation, 2012), 151.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, Fill my heart with Your love so that this day and every day I may reveal to all people my faith and trust in You. Amen