

Saint Study Podcast

Podcast # 114

- **Hello everyone and welcome to Saint Study Episode 114 – “St. Stephen”**
 - *Thank you for joining us – maybe we can all learn enough today that by the end of the program we will say, “I didn’t know that” (But now I do!)*
 - *What is a saint? A Canonized Saint is someone recognized by the Church as having led a life of great charity & heroic virtue. Their example of how to conquer any sin imaginable is so important that it was worth recognizing these men & women in a significant way. Anyone (canonized or not) whose soul was cleansed in Purgatory and now resides in Heaven is a Saint. It is every Christian’s goal to become a saint.*
- We always begin our learning by inviting the Holy Spirit to be with us...
 - *In the Name Of The Father, Son & Holy Spirit. Amen.*
 - *Dear Heavenly Father we ask you to be with us as we hear about the lives of your Saints. We ask that our minds be open and that you may fill us with the knowledge that was so loved by the men and women who lived lives of heroic virtue and great charity. Allow us to understand and emulate these Saints who we now know are in your company. In your name we pray, Amen.*
- **Let’s look at The Saint for this week - St. Stephen**
 - Saints Birth, Life-Bio, Death, Feast Day,
 - All we know about St. Stephen comes from the Acts of the Apostles.
 - Acts 6:1-15 & 7:51-60
 - We know St. Stephen was a Hellenist. That is a Jew from another land whose native tongue was Greek
 - There was an increasing number of people following the Apostles in those early days of Christianity
 - An early problem that became evident was how the alms were being distributed. Alms is a word for charity. The widows were not being properly cared for.
 - This problem was presented to the apostles and it was thought that another ministry should be created. That new ministry was called the Deaconate.
 - The Apostles decided that 7 men who were filled with the “Holy Spirit & Wisdom” should be selected from those early disciples. (Followers of Christ – Not the Apostles)
 - St. Stephen was one of these men chosen for the Deaconate
 - St. Stephen was said to have been a very good orator and his words had “Unimpeachable Logic that no one was able to resist.”

- St. Stephen was unable however to change the minds of the reluctant.
- There were those who did not want to hear about Christianity.
- They looked at it as a heresy against Judaism.
- St. Stephen used his wisdom and understanding to preach the word of God and this was to lead to his being the first Christian Martyr
- There was a group called the cavilers of the synagogues of the Libertines, and of the Cyreneans.
- After a dispute with Stephen, they were completely discomfited (or tongue – tied) and pride so inflamed and offended that they suborned false witnesses to testify against St. Stephen that "they had heard him speak words of blasphemy against Moses and against God"
- St. Stephen was arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin. (Jewish judicial council of the time)
- During St. Stephens’s defense he gave a summery of the Jewish faith since Abraham.
- Stephen concluded that even during those times when God revealed His word through the prophets that because the words they said, these prophets were persecuted as well because they thought they were blaspheming against the laws of their ancestors.
- Stephen Concluded in verse 53 by saying, “You received the law transmitted by the Angels and did not observe it.”
- This statement infuriated the people.
- Stephen must have sensed that his life would be demanded from him so he looked into the Heavens and was filled with the Holy Spirit.
- Stephen told the people “Behold I have seen the Heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”
- This proclamation is said to have caused the people to cry aloud and cover their ears
- It was then that Stephen was taken out of the city and stoned.
- It is important to note that this was probably not done in an unorganized and “mob action”
- Those who took Stephen likely thought they were carrying out their interpretation of ancient law (Leviticus 24:14) which deals with blaspheming.
- The stoning began after they laid their cloaks at the feet of a certain young man of interest named **Saul**.
- As he was dying St. Stephen spoke out, “Lord Jesus receive my spirit”

- Falling to his knees Stephens’s last words were, “Lord do not hold their sins against them” and he died.
- On that day in Jerusalem there began a terrible persecution of the church
- The young man named Saul began going house to house dragging out Christians and handing them over to authorities for imprisonment
- Keep in mind that many were deeply rooted in the traditions passed down by their ancestors.
- Think of St. Simon whom Jesus picked to be an apostle. St. Simon as we recall was called Simon the Zealot because of his Zeal for Jewish law.
- Jesus picked these men because it would show the others who have a similar eagerness for their Jewish faith that it was possible to follow Christianity and that it did NOT contradict the Old Testament.
- For years St. Stephens’s tomb was unknown. The bodies of those stoned to death were appointed to a place of burial by the Sanhedrin
- In 451 AD (Or C.E. – Common Era - as some now want to call it) A priest by the name of Lucian was given a revelation as to where St. Stephens tomb was located (Capher Gamal – North of Jerusalem)
- St. Stephens relics were transferred to the Church of Mount Sion
- Later around 460 AD they were moved to the place of the stoning where a basilica was erected
- St. Stephen’s Feast day is December 26th.

- Patronage

- **is the patron saint for**

Acoma Indian Pueblo	against headaches	casket makers
Cetona, Italy	coffin makers	deacons
horses	Kessel, Germany	masons
Owensboro, Kentucky, diocese of	Passau, Germany	Prato, Italy
stone masons	Toulouse, France, archdiocese of	

- Conclusions – Interesting notes about their life or sainthood
 - AD33 – The clues given tell us that the word of God had spread beyond Jerusalem. St. Stephen was a foreign born Jew who made the transition from Judaism to the new Christianity.
 - Also St. Stephen showed us by his example that in order to follow Jesus you must not be vengeful and unforgiving. (Remember the meek & humble Jesus)

- Homework
 - Vocabulary Words for the Day...
 - Sanhedrin – Jewish Judicial Council
 - Alms – Charity (done in private)
 - Hellenist – Foreign born Jew – Usually Greek speaking
 - Blasphemy – contrary to the respect due God and His holy name. It is a grave sin.
- Preview of next episode
- References, Plugs & Web Sites
 - www.ewtn.com – Best reference site
 - <http://www.usccb.org> The US Conference of Catholic Bishops
 - www.Saints.sqpn.com
 - Catechism of the Catholic Church

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C.C.C. 2474 – The Church painstakingly collected the records of those who persevered to the end in witnessing to their faith. These are the acts of the Martyrs. They form the archives of truth in letters of blood.

**May The Peace of our Lord
Be always with you...Have a good day!**