

THE FEAST OF ST STEPHEN THE PROTOMARTYR AT THE PATRIARCHATE, 2016

On Saturday, the 27th of December 2015/9th of January 2016, the Patriarchate observed the memory of St Stephen the Protomartyr and Archdeacon at the Monastery dedicated to his name, between the valley of Gethsemane, on the site where he had been stoned to death.

According to the Acts of the Apostles, St Stephen was one of the seven deacons chosen by the first Church of Jerusalem to distribute food and charitable aid, so that the Apostles may dedicate themselves to the pastoral work of teaching the world about the Crucified and Resurrected Lord. (Acts 6, 8).

Replete with the Holy Spirit, Stephen proved to the Jews that Jesus was indeed Christ according to the Scriptures, which led to his arrest. At his trial, Stephen made a long speech on the history of the Israeli people, the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Exodus from Egypt and arrival at the Promised Land, and the establishment of the Temple of Solomon, saying that the Lord dwells not in manmade constructions. In closing, Stephen revealed he had seen the Son of Man standing on the right of God (Acts 7, 1).

At this point, the Lords of the Jews dragged him violently outside the city where he was stoned to death whilst praying for those committing such sin.

Vespers and the divine Liturgy were led by His Eminence Theodosios, Archbishop of Sebaste. Co-officiating were the hegoumen of St Nicodemus Monastery, Archimandrite Makarios, and deacon Anastasios. Archimandrite Aristovoulos sang, having as participants a pious congregation of locals and pilgrims.

On the conclusion of the divine Liturgy, deesis was made at the adjacent chapel that contains the rock from St Stephen's stoning.

Archimandrite Epiphanius went on to host the Patriarchal Entourage and the congregation to a reception at the hegoumeneion.

From the Secretariat-General

http://youtu.be/EI4hwk_J6-E

