

Sunday 26th December @ 10am (On-line Service Only)

Readings

2 Chronicles 24 20-22

Acts 7 51-end

Matthew 10 17-22

Collect for Stephen the first martyr

Gracious Father, who gave the first martyr Stephen grace to pray for those who took up stones against him grant that in all our sufferings for the truth we may learn to love even our enemies and to seek forgiveness for those who desire our hurt, looking up to heaven to him who was crucified for us, Jesus Christ, our mediator and advocate.

Thought for the Week Stephen's Defence

St Paul had no inkling of what was in store, as he (as Saul) watched Stephan, the first martyr, die (Acts 7 58).

Stephen's sermon (Acts 7 2-53) was a masterpiece of theology, courage, understanding and love. That it failed to convince his listeners was no fault of his. Their judgement was as wrong as it had been at Jesus' own trial.

But Stephen's words have outlived his persecutors, even as the words of Jesus outlived Caiaphas and Pilate.