

DECEMBER 26, 2025 DEACON ROBERT KINGHORN

Well, today we celebrate the great Feast of Saint Stephen.

And each time I talk about a saint at these Masses, I always want to say, "What is it that reminds us of who we should be?"

And today, as Stephen being a martyr, and also being a deacon, we say, "What does that mean for us in our lives at this time?"

You know, an interesting thing is the Acts of the Apostles, where we heard about Stephen being stoned, was written by Saint Luke. And he was a student of Paul. Remember a part in that stoning that said, Paul or Saul was the one who was right there, saying, yes, he approved of this, and guarding the coats of the people.

So we don't hide the history in the Church, and even Paul would be proud of it, saying, "See, it was Jesus that did this all for me. I used to be someone approving of a stoning, and yet now I am a preacher of God. Jesus changed me when I met him."

Today in the Psalm response is one of my favourite prayers. "Into your hands I commend my spirit." I think it's when—very often, when we're weary, when we're hurting in life, and so many of you understand that feeling.

Maybe you get up in the morning, and I know, for me, very often, the first thing I say is: "Lord, into your hand I commend my spirit." I think it's one of the great prayers of our Church. That we can commend our spirit, our very being, to the Lord. We're there, and we know the Lord will always get us through all the difficulties of life.

Just as with Stephen, who was faithful to him, that he, as he lost his life, was still able to say, "Lord, into your hands I commend my spirit."

So, many of you who are celebrating, as I say, can understand this. And in many ways, that is what a martyr is, really. We talk about martyrdom. Martyrdom is a witness. A witness that no matter what is happening to us in our life, we turn to the Lord, and say: "Into your hands I commend my spirit. Look after me today."

So many of you, as I say, understand this feeling. But today we realize that it's in the daily life that we are martyrs in many ways. When things come into our life, but we have trouble understanding, we still continue trusting in the Lord Jesus.

We're also, in many ways, when we hear, "Into your hands I commend my spirit—" we also realize that this is what Stephen said as a deacon. Stephen was the one who was sent out to the poorest people, the widows and the orphans, and that's what the deacon was. He would lay down his life for people, as well. And because of that, this is why they killed him.

But we are called to be martyrs in a smaller way, in many ways. Not doing these great things, but in the daily tribulations of life, we continue to trust in the Lord, and call upon the Lord.

When we said the—about Eucharist, today. Well we receive the Eucharist every time we come to that Eucharist. The Lord says to us, he reaches out with his body, and he says: "Into your hands I commend my body." And we receive the Eucharist at that time.

Just as Saint Stephen received the Lord, and Saint Paul received the Lord. They welcomed the Lord into their lives. No matter what was coming, they knew the Lord would take care of them.

And today, for anyone who's coming to receive the Eucharist at this great celebration of the Mass, as we come forward, we turn to the Lord,

and we say: "Into your hands, O Lord, I commend your spirit. Come to me, be with me."

I know in my life the Lord is always there, just as he was always with all of the great saints, who celebrate his presence just now, in heaven.

So we come forward with our hands, and we say, "Lord, I accept you. I accept you through everything that's happening in my life. Please be with me."

And then at the end of the Eucharist, the end of the Mass, we hear the dismissal for all of us. "The Mass is ended. Go into the world, and proclaim the Gospel of the Lord. Proclaim it by your very life."

So again, we are sent out, as Stephen was, as a deacon, to show people what the Lord is like to them. We represent the presence of Jesus, and bring that to people in our life.

So today I remind you that we are all deacons, and deaconesses. We are deacons and deaconesses by our baptism. By our confirmation. That's precisely what we are. Called to be the followers of Jesus, reaching out to the poorest and least among us, and bring them the presence of the Lord in their life.