

St Stephen

Stephen was prepared to die rather than give up his belief in Christ. He is considered to be the first martyr in history of the Christian Church.

After the death of Jesus in Jerusalem, the apostles chose seven men as deacons, who would devote their lives to caring for the poor. One of these men was Stephen. He soon attracted much attention. He announced the Gospel so powerfully that the people were fascinated by him. Crowds came to see him and listened as he spread the good news about Jesus. They witnessed his many miracles and admired him more and more. As his enemies watched, they became aware of how popular he had become. They became envious of him and plotted to rid of him.

They invented false charges against Stephen and he was dragged before the court. They said they had heard him speak words of blasphemy against Moses and God. This charge angered the rowdy mob. As Stephen knelt down to pray, he was pelted with heavy stones. This continued until he was dead. Even as he was dying, Stephen shamed his enemies. He looked up to heaven and prayed. 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' He had already forgiven his murderers. Now he was asking God to forgive them as well.

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