Vesper Propers, December 27
Postfestival Day of the Nativity of Our Lord

THE HOLY APOSTLE, FIRST MARTYR, AND ARCHDEACON STEPHEN, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit. First of seven deacons, whom the Apostles chose to be fellow-laborers in the ministry, he was also the first of the disciples of the Lord to pour out his blood at Jerusalem. He provided testimony for Christ Jesus, whom he saw standing in glory at the right hand of the Father. He was covered over by stones while praying for his persecutors.

Our venerable father and confessor Theodore of Apamea in Bithynia, a monk of the laura of St. Sabbas in Palestine, priest and martyr. In Constantinople with his brother St. Theophane (the Hymnographer) he endured much in the defense of the Holy Images. He endured scourging, prisons, exile, and even brands on his forehead, for which reason he was called Graptus. He expired in prison. (845)

Supplement for The Order of Vespers for Sundays After Pentecost, 2006
"O Lord, I have cried" is sung in Tone 4, page 58.

Bring my soul out of this prison
and then I shall praise your name.

Around me the just will assemble
because of your goodness to me.

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord;
Lord, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my pleading.

Cantor: If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt, Lord who would survive?
(on 6) But with you is found forgiveness: for this we revere you.

Stichera of Stephen, the First Martyr - Tone 4 podoben: Jako dobl'ach

Hav ing been en - light - ened by the grace of the Spir-it,

O Ste - phen, in ap - pear - ance you seemed to be an an - gel.
Your body was bright with inner splendor, and you revealed a radiance of soul to the onlookers. Because of that, you also had a vision of the Light; heaven was most gloriously opened up for you, O first of the great martyrs.

Cantor: My soul is longing for the Lord, I count on his word.
Cantor: My soul is longing for the Lord, more than watchman for daybreak.

Your sufferings became the rungs of the ladder into heaven. When you entered, you saw the Lord standing at the right hand of the Father. With his life-bearing right hand He extended to you a well-deserved crown. You are standing near to Him as a brave victor and the first of the martyrs.
Shining brightly with signs, marvels, and teachings,
you surpassed the assembly of the wicked. You suffered death at their hands by stoning. You prayed for their forgiveness in accordance with the example of the Savior. You handed over your spirit into his hands, Holy Stephen.

Cantor: Because with the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

(3) Stichera of the Venerable Father and Confessor Theodore - Tone 4 podoben: Jako dobl'ja

O venerable Theodore, to the wounds of scourging were added the wounds of your exile. The one who unlawfully held the throne, cruelly disdained the teachings of faith, and hurled down the precious icon of the Savior,
was put to shame by you, defender of Christ.

Cantor: Praise the Lord, all you nations; acclaim him, all you peoples!

Psalm 116

O Father Theodore, neither prison, anguish or darkness, neither wounds nor beatings could separate you from the love of God; neither harsh illness nor unbearable pain; neither the scarcity of food nor all you suffered,

O preacher of God. You foresaw the reward for your labors.

Cantor: Strong is the love of the Lord for us; he is faithful forever.

Instead of tribulation and pain, you received rest and joy; instead of darkness, radiance was granted to you. Indeed, O wonderful one,

because of the markings that were carved on your face, you were inscribed
in the Book of Life. You were committed to the church of the first-born in the highest and you have joyfully joined the choir of the angels.

Cantor:  

(Tone 2) Glory…

Doxastikon of the Holy Martyr Stephen - Tone 2

Shining brightly, Stephen comes forth to the King of the universe and the Master born on earth He is not adorned with precious stones, but with garments crimsoned in his own blood. O lovers of the martyrs, come forth.

Let us make a bouquet of our sacred hymns; with heads covered in flowers,

let us sing: O Proto-martyr, you illumined your soul with wisdom and grace.

Ask Christ God to grant each of us peace and great mercy.
Cantor: Now and ever…

Theotokion

A great and glorious miracle was wrought today: the Virgin gives birth without corrupting her virginity; the Word is made flesh without separation from the Father; the angels and shepherds give praise, and we exclaim with them: Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth.

Aposticha

Of the post-feast - Tone 1

The One who shone forth from the Father from all eternity, and who is ever-present with the Father, in these later times is now in the arms of a mother as though seated upon a throne. Let us now sing to him who is adored by the angels, shepherds and Magi.
Before the day-star, like the dew, I have begotten you. The Lord has sworn and he will not repent.

O faith-ful, having come together in Beth-le-hem, we see, lying in a crib, the Cre-a-tor of all. From the land of Chaldea comes an ex-cel-lent tri-ple gift; it is of-fered to him as King and God. For our sake he was al-so dead for three days.

The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand.

You were born of the Vir-gin in a cave; the an-gels were pres-ent and cried out:

Glo-ry to you, O God, in the high-est; for you were born from the womb
of a Virgin and Mother ever pure, in the form of a servant who renewed the world.

Cantor:  

(Tone 6) Glory...

Aposticha Doxastikon of the Holy Martyr Stephen - Tone 6

You showed yourself, O Apostle Stephen, to be the first of the martyrs and of the deacons. You are the glory of the just, and the pride of the faithful.

As one standing before the throne of Christ, the King of all, in behalf of those who celebrate your memory, pray that they may be made worthy of the cleansing of sins and of the heavenly kingdom.

Cantor:  Now and ever...

Theotokion

Angels rejoice in heaven, and people exult today, and all creatures
leap with joy because of the birth of the Lord and Savior in Bethlehem; for all deceit of idolatry has ceased, and Christ reigns forever.

Troparia

Troparian of the Holy Martyr Stephen - Tone 4

First martyr and apostle of Christ, you fought the good fight.

You convicted the tyrants of their wickedness. When you were killed by stoning at the hands of sinners, you received a crown from God's right hand while you cried out: Lord, do not hold this sin against them.

Cantor: (Tone 8) Glory...

Troparian of the Venerable Father and Confessor Theodore - Tone 8

Guide to Orthodoxy, teacher of piety and holiness, luminary for the world, inspired
a dorn-ment of bish - ops, O wise The - o - dore, harp of the
Spir - - - it, you en - light - ened all by your teach - ings;
in - ter - cede with Christ our God to save our souls.

Cantor: (Tone 4) Now and ever...

Troparion of the Nativity - Tone 4

Your birth, O Christ our God, has shed up - on the world the light of
knowl - edge, for through it, those who wor-shipped the stars have learned from
a star to worship you, the Sun of Jus - tice, and to know you, the Dawn
from on high. Glo - ry to you, O Lord!