

ST. STEPHEN THE FIRST DEACON AND MARTYR

St. Stephen was the first deacon of the church and first martyr of Christianity. He was the eldest of the seven deacons (Acts 6:1-6), appointed by the Apostles themselves. He was the first Christian martyr, and he suffered for Christ when he was about thirty. In the words of Asterias, he was “the starting point of the martyrs, the instructor of suffering for Christ, the foundation of righteous confession, since Stephen was the first to shed his blood for the Gospel.”

Filled with the Holy Spirit, St. Stephen preached Christianity and defeated Jewish teachers of the Law in debate. He gave a fiery speech, in which he recounted the history of the Jewish nation, and denounced the Jews for persecuting the prophets, and also for executing the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ (Acts 7).

During his speech, St. Stephen suddenly saw the heavens opened and Jesus Christ standing at the right hand of God. The Jews shouted and covered their ears rushing at him. They dragged him out of the city and stoned him, but the holy martyr prayed for his murderers. The body of the holy St. Stephen was secretly taken up by the Jewish teacher Gamaliel and his son Habib, who buried Stephen on his estate. (www.oca.org)

WORDSEARCH

C J U S T I F I E D E L D W F
 F A F I N L E X A L T K O R Z
 T J I R I G H T E O U S X O R
 C C W C A D U L T E R E R S K
 S A O A Z H B C U D S K P V P
 E V I L D O E R S T E M P L E
 C W H O L I V M E C U T M P Y
 T R O B B E R S Z A N V M R F
 H E A V E N C I P E S K E A L
 S U B T H T H T D A I T R Y Y
 I E M P T T H I O J R F C K P
 N W D B W X F A G R F A Y B E
 N F T G L N F Z N C F D B K O
 E Q L A O E T W R K M J D L W
 R E T C X P H A R I S E E W E

TEMPLE	EXALT	TAX	PARABLE	LOOK
JUSTIFIED	HEAVEN	PHARISEE	RIGHTEOUS	HUMBLE
BREAST	COLLECTOR	ROBBERS	THANK	EVILDOERS
MERCY	PRAY	ADULTERERS	CONFIDENT	SINNER

Source: Sermons 4 Kids, Inc.



RAISING SAINTS

SUNDAY BULLETIN FOR YOUTH

True Prayer

Fifth Sunday of Advent | Gospel Reading: Luke 18:9-14

Everyone prays a little differently and that is alright. Sometimes we want to tell God everything and we have long prayers. Other times we want to get straight to the point and say very short prayers. Then there are times when we don't know what to say. We just want to be with God, in silence, so we don't say anything – and that is alright too.

God receives and listens to all types of prayer, but there is one prayer that God does not listen to or accept – the prayer said with pride and arrogance. When we pray, we should never compare ourselves with someone else, especially when we try to tell God that we are better than someone else.

This, in God's eyes and ears, is horrible because we are trying to prove to God that not only that we are better, but we are pointing out someone else's faults and mistakes. We become tattle tales, snitching on others before God when we should be telling God what we have done wrong and asking Him to forgive us for our mistakes.

When we tell God the mistakes we have made, we show humility, accept responsibility, and acknowledge that we are not perfect, but need help, specifically His help. This was the mistake that the Pharisee in today's Gospel reading made. Rather than telling God the mistakes he made and how he needs God in his life, he pointed out all the horrible things that another person did.

The tax-collector, on the other hand, realized the wrong things he had done and was ashamed by them, afraid to even look up to heaven. Jesus says that the tax-collector was justified (made right, forgiven) because, even though the Pharisee followed the rules of God, he was full of pride and that is worse than anything else.

How do you pray? Do you only talk about yourself or do you compare yourself to others?

When you pray, only speak of the wrong things you have done and do not mention someone else's mistakes. When you do this, God will forgive you for your wrong doings, just as He did the tax-collector.

ARMENIAN WORDS TO KNOW FROM HOLY BADARAK

աղօթել => aghotel => to pray

առ դրունս ելէք եւ **աղօթեցէք**:
ar troons yelek yev **aghotetsek**.
go out to the doors and **pray**.

(An example is on page 27 in the Liturgy Book)

FILL IN THE BLANK

Source: Sermons 4 Kids, Inc.

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked _____ on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: "Two men went up to the temple to _____, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The _____ stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other menrobbers, evildoers, adulterersor even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

"But the _____ stood at a distance. He would not even look up to _____, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have _____ on me, a _____.'

"I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be _____, and he who humbles himself will be _____."

Luke 18:9-14 (NIV)

collector	exalted	humbled	Pharisee	sinner
down	heaven	mercy	pray	tax

SPIRITUAL THOUGHT

The servant of Jesus must be sweet, noble, humble and smiling, so that he can direct people to worship God, but he should not be one who directs people to worship him.



"But he beat his chest and said, 'God, have mercy upon me a sinner!'"

Luke 18:13

«Այլ կոծէր զկործս իւր եւ ասէր. Աստուած, քաւեա զիս զճեղատրս:»

Ղուկաս ԺԸ.13