**The Universal Prayer**

# **St Stephen, the First Christian Martyr**

**The Octave of Christmas**

**Thursday 26th December 2024**

Celebrant: Friends, as we honour St Stephen, the first Christian martyr,

we will continue to rejoice in the gift of Jesus Christ,

whose birth brought the gift of eternal life

for all who are faithful.

1. That the courage of St Stephen may inspire everyone who is persecuted

or ridiculed for their Christian faith.

Let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

1. That when we come to die, we may do so with our eyes fixed on Jesus Christ, entrusting our spirit confidently into his care.

Let us pray to the Lord.

1. That those who agree to or commit terrible crimes, may repent of their actions, and be converted to the love of Christ, as was St Paul.

Let us pray to the Lord.

1. That the Christians in the Holy Land, Lebanon and Syria,

Ukraine and Russia, will draw strength from St Stephen and cling to

Jesus as a strong witness to faith in him.

Let us pray to the Lord.

1. That those who honour St Stephen as patron saint: the people of Saddleworth, deacons of the Church, bricklayers and those in the building trades, may be blessed on this day.

Let us pray to the Lord.

1. That on this 20th anniversary of the Tsunami, which swept across Asia

killing an quarter of million people and injuring even more, and destroying homes and villages, will be a day to pray for all affected.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Celebrant: Lord our God, we place all our trust in you,

so that we can, no matter the circumstances of our lives,

be blessed with peace of heart.

Through Christ our Lord.

#### **The Universal Prayer**

**St John, Apostle and Evangelist**

**The Octave of Christmas**

#### **Friday 27th December 2024**

Celebrant: Dear friends, St John, the beloved disciple

brings us close to Jesus Christ

through the power and beauty of his writings.

1. That the Word of God, Jesus Christ,

may always be our life.

Let us pray to the Lord.

1. That what we have seen and watched and touched in faith,

Jesus Christ, may influence every thought, action and word of ours.

Let us pray to the Lord.

1. That all in the Church may experience a sense of

unity through our shared faith in Jesus Christ.

Let us pray to the Lord.

1. That those who honour St John as Patron Saint: the people of Goolwa,

the students and staff of St John the Apostle School at Christies Beach, and the people of Asiatic Turkey, may know and love Jesus Christ.

Let us pray to the Lord.

1. That those who work with hazardous substances may be protected through the intercession of St John, who is invoked as the protector from poisoning.

Let us pray to the Lord.

1. That fire fighters giving of themselves to contain and extinguish

bushfires through the Australian summer may be protected from personal injury.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Celebrant: God and King, through the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ you have transformed our world and all human society. Increase our faith and make fruitful our love.

Through Christ our Lord.

#### **The Universal Prayer**

# **The Holy Innocents**

**The Octave of Christmas**

#### **Saturday 28th December 2024**

Celebrant: Dear friends, traditionally in this Archdiocese

we pray of the feast of the Holy Innocents

for a greater awareness of the sanctity of human life.

1. That the Church may always be a strong voice in the defense

of human life from the moment of conception to its natural death.

Let us pray to the Lord.

1. That Governments may offer the moral, emotional and financial support to women facing an unplanned or unwanted pregnancy, so that they will find it easier to choose life for their unborn child.

Let us pray to the Lord.

1. That our Australian society will strengthen its appreciation for life,

value the right to life of every conceived child, stand by the disabled

and provide palliative care for all who are approaching death.

Let us pray to the Lord.

1. That babies who have the Holy Innocents as their patron

may be loved, protected and nurtured.

Let us pray to the Lord.

1. That parents who mourn the death of a child may know

the comfort of the Christ Child, who himself faced danger in his infancy.

Let us pray to the Lord.

1. That children left as orphans across the Holy Land, Lebanon, Syria, Ukraine and Russian will be given safe shelter and care by people of integrity.

Let us pray to the Lord.

Celebrant: God, you are light,

in you there is no darkness.

Illuminate our minds and hearts

so that we can see the loving face of your Son, Jesus

on every human face today.

Through Christ our Lord.