

Thoughts on the Daily Word

Christmas Octave. Thursday 26th December. St. Stephen. Readings: Acts 6:8-10,7:54-59; Psalm: 30; Gospel: Matthew 10:17-22.

It seems strange that this story of the first Christian martyr should follow that of the birth of Jesus. To put it in context, apart from the danger that this family were in, not the sweet celebration that we are used to, the early Church knew that to recognise Jesus as Lord was to put themselves in danger of sudden death. The first martyr witnesses to the experience of many Christians in the early centuries of the Church. To me, however, Stephen has another witness, that of being one of the first deacons, witnessing by his preaching and the power of the charity and care of the needy in this first community of Christians. It helps us to recognise immediately that our ministry, clerical or lay, follows immediately after the Incarnation. They go together and tell us a lot. Happy Christmas!