

THE SEVEN SLEEPERS OF EPHEBUS

One of the most amazing of stories that have come to us from the voluminous accounts of the lives of the Saints is that of "The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus." The ancient city of Ephesus was the capital of the Roman province in Asia Minor, a vital trading link, and the site of a pagan temple to the goddess Diana, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The old ruins now lie buried, and much archeological excavating remains to be done in the site in Southern Turkey. St. Paul preached there, and one of his Epistles is addressed to the Ephesians.

The time of our story is the middle of the third century. Persecution of Christians was still rampant in the empire. The cruel Emperor Decius decreed death to all who would not submit to the worship of the pagan gods. It was then that seven young Christians sought out a cave for safety from the cruel soldiers. But the hiding place was found and the entrance was sealed, thus cutting off any hope of survival.

The seven young men apparently fell asleep in the cave, and some 180 years had passed. Christians found the cave, unearthed the entrance, and the seven sleepers emerged, thinking they had simply slept through one night! The sleepers were amazed to learn what had happened, as, indeed, were the Christians of Ephesus. The fame of the seven spread far and wide, throughout the Christian world. Some saw in the event a confirmation of our Church belief in the bodily resurrection of the faithful following death in Christ the Lord.

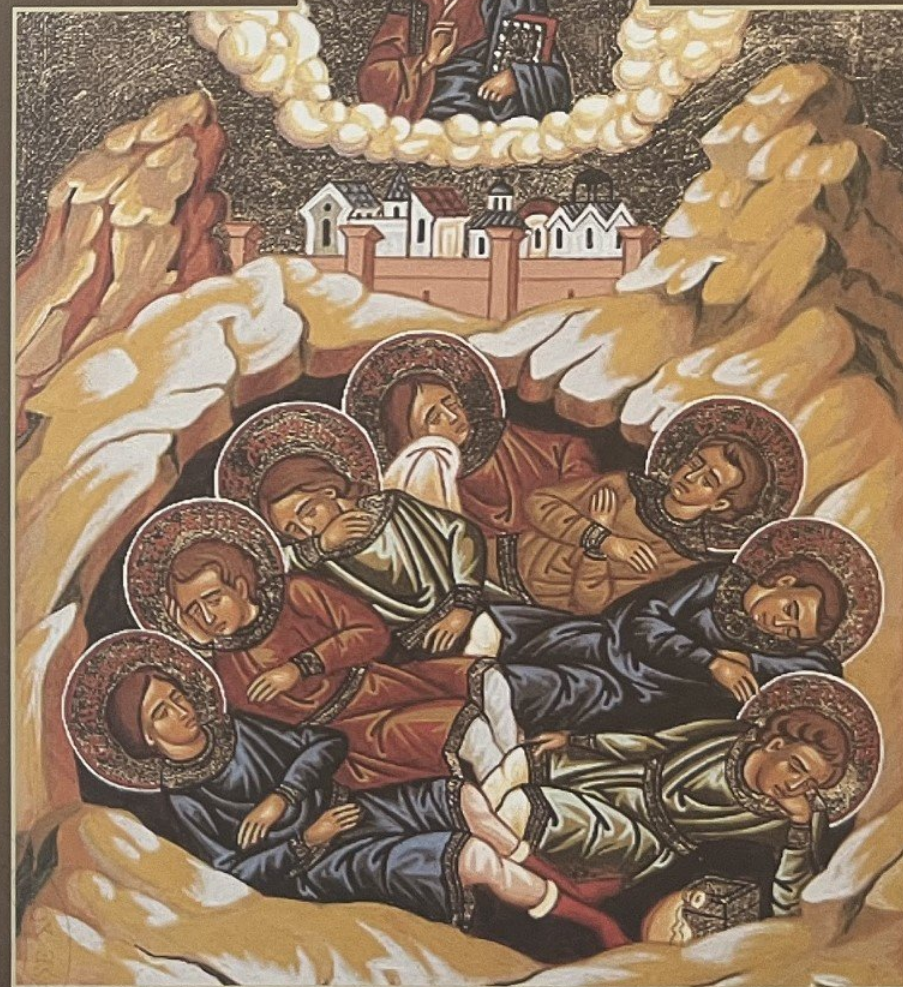
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SEVEN SLEEPERS
OF EPHEBUS

INSTRUMENTS
OF THE LORD



Church Calendar: Check the Link. <http://www.stgeorgevicksburg.org/service.html>

Welcome our Visitors! We invite you to venerate the cross at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy. However, only Orthodox Christians who are in good standing and who have prepared by prayer, fasting, and Confession may receive Holy Communion.

A Gift of Blessing

Visit the Church Gift Shop.

See the Beautiful Icons, Crosses & Home Censers

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SAINT GEORGE ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The Very Rev. Father Gabriel Karam, Pastor

Saturday Great Vespers 6:00 p.m. - Sunday Orthros 9:15 a.m.

Divine Liturgy 10:30 a.m. - Confessions: By Appointment

DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES SUNDAY AUGUST 02, 2026

TONE 8/ EOTHINON 9

RELICS TRANSLATION OF PROTO-MARTYR STEPHEN THE ARCHDEACON

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE EIGHT

From the heights Thou didst descend, O compassionate One, and Thou didst submit to the three-day burial, that Thou might deliver us from passion; Thou art our life and our Resurrection, O Lord, glory to Thee.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. STEPHEN THE ARCHDEACON IN TONE FOUR

*(**Be quick to anticipate**)*

The crown of the Kingdom hath adorned the brow of thy head * because of the contests that thou hast endured for Christ God, thou first of the martyred Saints; * for when thou hadst censured the Jews' madness, thou sawest * Christ thy Savior standing at the right hand of the Father. * O Stephen, ever pray Him for us, that He would save our souls.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. GEORGE IN TONE FOUR

As deliver of Captives: And defender of the Poor, Healer of the Infirm, champion of Kings, Victorious Great Martyr George, Intercede with Christ our God for our souls' salvation.

KONTAKION OF THE TRANSFIGURATION IN TONE SEVEN

Thou wast transfigured on the mount, and Thy Disciples, in so far as they were able, beheld Thy glory, O Christ our God; so that, when they should see Thee crucified, they would remember that all Thy suffering was voluntary, and could declare to all the world that Thou art truly the effulgent Splendor of the Father.

We Celebrate Today

On August 2 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate the recovery of the sacred relics of the holy **Proto-martyr and Archdeacon Stephen**.

Verses

A great many strange and divine things hast thou, O Zion:

So give Constantine's city the dead body of Stephen.

On the second Stephen's corpse was removed.

When the wicked Jews stoned Stephen to death, they left his body for the dogs to eat. After two nights Gamaliel, Paul's teacher and a secret follower of Christ, came and took his body to Caphargamala, and buried it in a cave. Eventually, Gamaliel's friend Nicodemus, his nephew Abibos and he were laid to rest in the same cave. The graves were forgotten, but in 415, in the time of Patriarch John of Jerusalem, Gamaliel appeared three times in a dream to the Priest Lucian, in Caphargamala, and told him the exact location of the burial place. With the Patriarch's blessing,

Lucian and others dug up the graves. A strong and fragrant odor from the relics of these saints filled the cave. Stephen's relics were solemnly translated to Zion and there buried with ceremony, and the relics of the others were taken to a hill above the cave and laid to rest in a church there. Later, Stephen's healing relics were translated to Constantinople.

On this day, we also commemorate the **Venerable Photeini** the wonderworker of Carpasia in Cyprus; and **Blessed Basil the fool-for-Christ**, wonderworker of Moscow. By the intercessions of Thy saints, O Christ God, have mercy on us. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

+Healing & Recovery Bishop Nicholas, Fr. Paul Yerger, Dea. Terry, Kh. Janet Henderson, Joy Logue, Dolores Nosser, Rick Collins, George Michael Nasif, Lynne Abraham, Pam Smith, Irene Tzotzolas, Michael Farris, Athena, Georgia, Andrea Simon, Chuck Abraham, Carla Leese, Rex Whiteaker, Drew Anderton, Robert Taylor, Michael Lekas.

+Birthdays & Anniversaries, August Zachary Dallaire, Angela Angelo, Shelley Nosser (1), Ben & Paula Saw (7), Madison Leigh Ramsey (6), Ross Henley, Elizabeth Abraham (9),

+Keep in your prayers. Our Catechumens, Cole Gary, Who is preparing himself for the Holy Sacrament of Chrismation.

+Today Back to School Prayer for Teachers, Children and Teens going back for a new school & college year 2025-2026.

+Upcoming. Feast of the Transfiguration on August 6. (Seafood allowed)

Wednesday Aug. 5 Orthros & Divine Liturgy start @5:30pm. Bring your grapes to be blessed.

+Dormition Lent. A strict lent, abstaining from meat, seafood and any dairy product started on Saturday August 1 till Friday the 14. Paraklesis Service on Every week day @ 5:30 pm.

+The Term Paraklesis (Greek: παράκλησις, parakl̥sis) literally means "a call to one close besides," and refers to a personal exhortation, encouragement, or supplication. It can convey comfort, urging, or intercessory appeal, often in times of distress, danger, or spiritual need (Acts 15:31; 2 Corinthians 8:16-17) In the Orthodox Church, the Paraklesis is a **service of supplication for the living**, asking God to grant protection, guidance, healing, and wellbeing, often through the intercessions of the Theotokos or saints.

+Parish Council Meeting. Tuesday August 11 @ 6:30 Pm.

The Church Fathers Teach

Every Christian should find for himself the imperative and incentive to become holy. If you live without struggle and without hope of becoming holy, then you are Christians only in name and not in essence. But without holiness, no one shall see the Lord, that is to say they will not attain eternal blessedness. It is a trustworthy saying that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners (I Tim. 1:15). But we deceive ourselves if we think that we are saved while remaining sinners. Christ saves those sinners by giving them the means to become saints.

—(St. Philaret of Moscow, Sermon of September 23, 1847)

DIVINE LITURGY AUGUST 02, 2026

“DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM”

RELICS TRANSLATION OF PROTO-MARTYR STEPHEN THE ARCHDEACON

THE EPISTLE

(For the Ninth Sunday after Pentecost)

*Make your vows and pay them to the Lord our God.
God is known in Judaea; His Name is great in Israel.*

The Reading from the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. (3:9-17)

Brethren, we are God's fellow workers; you are God's husbandry, God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise architect I laid a foundation, and another builds upon it. Let each one take heed how he builds upon it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; everyone's work will become manifest; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire itself will test each one's work of what sort it is. If anyone's work which was built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, yet so as by fire. Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone corrupts the temple of God, God will corrupt him. For the temple of God is holy, whose temple you are.

The GOSPEL

((For the Ninth Sunday of Matthew))

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (14:22-34)

At that time, Jesus made the Disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He dismissed the crowds. And after He had dismissed the crowds, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone, but the Disciples' boat by this time was many furlongs distant from the land, beaten by the waves; for the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night, He came to them, walking on the sea. But when the Disciples saw Jesus walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. But immediately He spoke to them, saying, "Take heart, it is I; have no fear." And Peter answered Him, "Lord, if it is Thee, bid me come to Thee on the water." He said, "Come." So, Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus; but when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus immediately reached out His hand and caught him, saying to him, "O man of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "Truly, Thou art the Son of God." And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret.