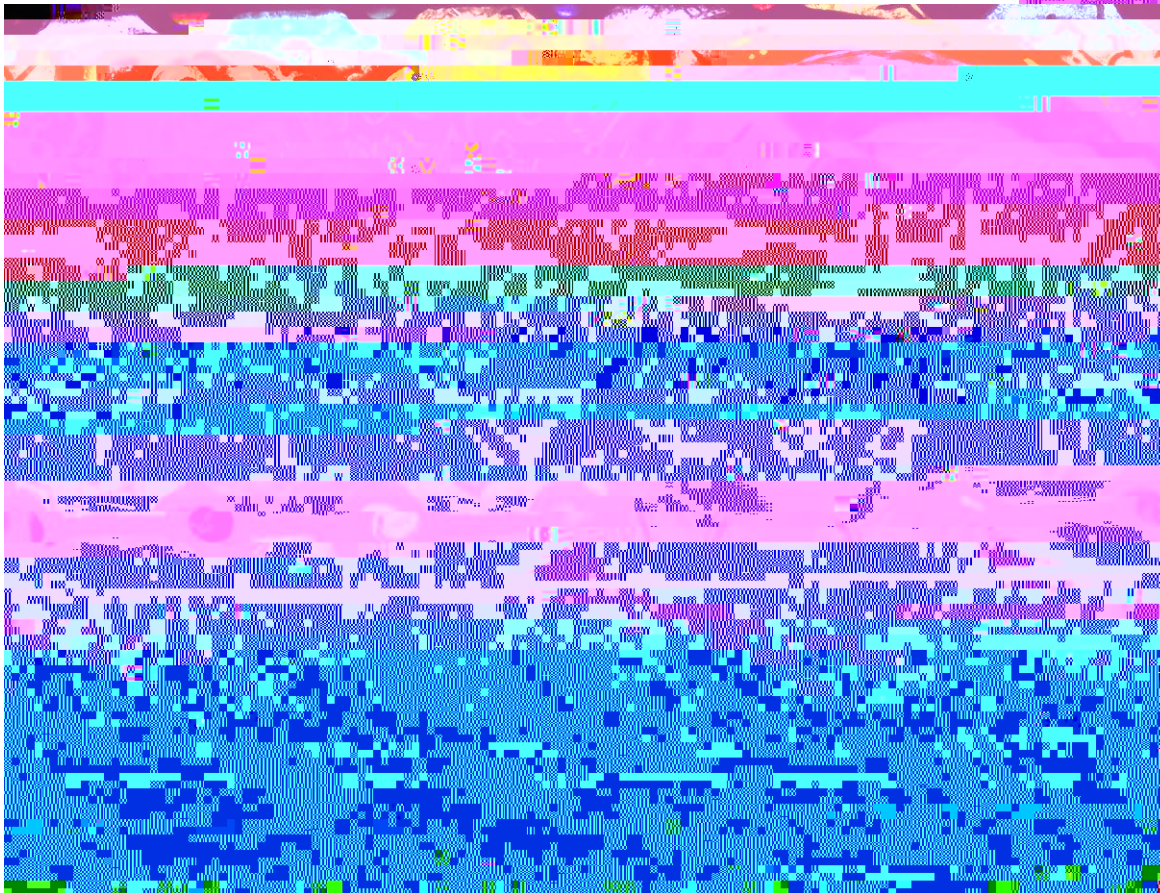




The image in the lunette above Stephen's head is precisely the crown with martyr's palm, explained by the definition of his name. Below, a hand appears offering a crown. The narrative panel shows the moment of that martyrdom. Stephen is outside the walls of Jerusalem, on his knees, praying while beams of light shine down from heaven. In the background Saul, later to experience a dramatic conversion and receive the name of Paul, is looking over the executioners' cloaks, which have been laid at his feet.

The borders contain symbols of Stephen's additional roles. A scapular, symbolic of a yoke or a burden, represents Stephen's response to Christ's injunction: "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart" (Matthew 11:29).



Other symbols appear to have several meanings, references to generic virtues and also to specific liturgical practice for deacons. The aspergill, or holy water sprinkler, is a symbol of purification and of Stephen's role in the entrance rite of the Mass. During the time when the windows were designed, it was customary for the priest to approach the altar through the congregation before the principal Mass on Sunday, sprinkling them and the altar with holy water. The incense container, chalice, candle, and the pitchers for the water and wine of the Mass refer to other liturgical rituals often tended to by a deacon.