

16 April 2024 -- Tuesday of the 3rd week of Easter

[Acts 7:51-8:1a; John 6:30-35](#)

Homily

The first reading from the Acts of the Apostles continues to describe the beginnings of the Church in Jerusalem. Yesterday we saw how the deacon Stephen, full of God's grace and power, performed signs and wonders, and how his opponents were no match for the divine wisdom with which he was filled. Today we have a description of his violent death. Stephen is not only the first martyr in the history of the Church, but the model par excellence of constancy and strength in the supreme witness even unto death. He surrendered his soul to Jesus just as Jesus had surrendered his spirit to the Father and, in this supreme movement of surrender, his eyes were opened and even before he gave up his soul he saw the glory of God.

In yesterday's Gospel, taken from John chapter 6 on the Bread of Life, Jesus reproached the crowd who had joined him on the other side of the lake for following him, not because they had seen signs but because they had eaten bread to their heart's content. Today, the same people are asking him for a sign, even though they did not understand the sign of the multiplication of the loaves. And Jesus answers that the true sign is the true bread that came down from heaven, which the Father gives them. This true bread is himself.

This bread satisfies every hunger and thirst. Whoever comes to Jesus, that is, whoever believes in him, will never hunger or thirst again.

To receive the Eucharist is therefore first and foremost to make an act of faith in Jesus and to recognize him as both our teacher and our food. The fact that we have the grace of celebrating the Eucharist every day perhaps accustoms us to this mystery to the point where we no longer always perceive its full richness. It's not impossible that our participation in the Eucharist is often a simple ritual gesture. Let's ask God to rekindle our faith so that every Eucharist is truly an act of faith that engages our whole existence.

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