

18 April 2024 -- Thursday of the 3rd week of Easter

[Acts 8:25-40; John 6:44-51](#)

Homily

We are continuing our reading of Chapter 6 of Saint John. In the sections we have read over the last few days, Jesus has told us once again that he is the Bread of Life, and that anyone who comes to him in faith will have eternal life. Today he establishes the link between faith and the sacrament of the Eucharist. The bread he will give to those who come to him is His flesh, already given up for the life of the world. In these few words, the link is established not only between faith and the sacramental gesture, but also between faith, the sacrament and the event of the Cross.

The same link is established in the first reading, which continues to tell us about the progress of evangelization beyond the territory of Israel, following the first persecution. The blood of the first martyr is already a source of Christians. And this time, there is also the link between the two elements of the sacrament: the word and the deed.

Every year, many Jews came from the Diaspora to celebrate the Passover feast in Jerusalem. Some of them were Jews by birth, living in exile; others were pagans who had converted to Judaism. One of the great diasporas at the time was that of the eastern part of Africa - what is now Egypt and Ethiopia. This is where the Ethiopian, an official of Candace, Queen of Ethiopia, comes from. He was reading a text from the Old Testament, taken from the prophet Isaiah. The deacon Philip catechized him and explained that the text foretold the sufferings of Jesus, the Messiah. The Ethiopian received the gift of faith and believed in this message. He expressed his faith sacramentally by receiving baptism. Here we have all the aspects of the sacramental life of the Church.

This Ethiopian was one of those who came to Jerusalem and returned to their country with the Gospel message, which explains the presence of the Church in this part of Africa from the first Christian generation. The end of the story shows us the complementary aspect of evangelization: the deacon Philip continuing his journey to take the Gospel to Caesarea, beyond the borders of Judea, Galilee and Samaria.

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