

15 April 2024 -- Monday of the 3rd week of Easter

[Acts 6, 8-15; John 6, 22-29](#)

Homily

Throughout the week that begins, the first reading of the Mass will take us back to the beginnings of evangelization, with the death of the first martyr, Stephen, the persecution that was unleashed against the Church in Jerusalem and Judea and, at the same time, the extension of preaching to the Gentiles.

The first chapters of the Acts of the Apostles have already shown us the beginnings of the organization of the first Church in Jerusalem. They tell us how the Apostles, in order to have more time for prayer and the service of the Word, instituted deacons for the other services, in particular table service. In fact, the deacons devoted themselves to the Word right from the start, because they were immediately called to bear witness to their faith. The first and most famous was Stephen, who became the first to die for the name of Jesus. Acts tells us that he was full of the grace and power of God and that he performed wonders and brilliant signs. Those who tried to argue with him could not stand up to him, because it was the wisdom of the Holy Spirit that inspired his words. It was precisely because of this wisdom and divine power that a brutal persecution arose against him and led to his death.

Throughout this week, we will also be reading the second part of chapter 6 of Saint John's Gospel, on the Bread of Life. We will see that it was by constantly remembering Jesus and nourishing themselves with the Bread of Life that the first Christians found the strength not only to live the Gospel but also to bear witness to their faith, even to the point of martyrdom in many cases. The first part of this chapter, which we read last week, recounted the multiplication of the loaves, after which Jesus withdrew to the mountain to pray before joining his disciples on the lake as they crossed towards Capernaum.

Today it is the crowd that joins Jesus and his disciples on the other shore. Jesus immediately calls on them to purify their intentions. He reproaches them for not paying attention to the signs he performs, which are manifestations of divine power, but for following him simply because they have eaten well and want more. He invites them to seek the food that is preserved and transformed into eternal life. This food is faith in him whom God has sent. In fact, the whole of chapter 6 of Saint John on the Bread of Life is about faith as much as it is about the Eucharist.

Document extrait du [site de l'abbaye Notre-Dame de Scourmont](#), qui se trouve sur le territoire de Forges, à sept kilomètres au sud de la ville de Chimay, en Belgique. Notre-Dame de Scourmont est une abbaye de l'Ordre Cistercien de la Stricte Observance.

May we draw from this Eucharistic celebration the faith that will enable us to accomplish the "works of God".

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