

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Apr 17th 2013

Today's readings from Acts, Chapter 8, and John's Gospel are about important foundational steps to the Christian faith. In Acts, we learned about the church being persecuted by Saul and others, and about the miracles Philip is able to bring about in the name of Jesus.

But John 6: 35-40 is one of the passages in Scripture on which, so to speak, to hang our hats. Jesus' words are so rich and so deep that each sentence has been the inspiration for countless number of prayers, reflections, homilies, books, songs, theories, and other works and actions throughout the ages.

"I am the bread of life," the passage begins, and it ends with the quote, "For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise him on the last day."

In this passage, Jesus reveals who he is to his disciples and to us. He begins to teach about the Eucharist. He lays out the fact that our souls will never be hungry or thirsty if we but come to him. The rest of the chapter explains even further how Jesus is "living bread" and how his flesh is real food and his blood is real drink. As Catholics, we believe these words of Jesus instituted the Eucharist and we demonstrate our belief each time we receive the body and blood of Christ in Holy Communion. As followers of Jesus, it would be a good idea for us all to read and reread these passages as often as possible.

This Lent and Easter season I watched a couple of the many Bible-centered movies that were broadcast on television, including portions of "The Bible" series on the History Channel. I was particularly struck by the different ways each director or actor in each movie chose to enact the words of Jesus as he foretold his passion and death and instituted the Eucharist. It made me realize how the Holy Spirit works with and through each individual to reveal truth, just as the Spirit individually inspired each New Testament writer in the early days of Christianity.

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