

17 May 2020 - Homily
Acts 8:5-8, 14-17 John 14:15-21
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In the Acts of the Apostles we come across Philip who was earlier chosen from one of the seven. He is one of the first ordained priests by the Apostles in the early church. As all priests, he was sent out to evangelize by teaching, preaching and sanctifying. He goes to Samaria which in the Old Testament is known as Sychar. Samaria was a city where some people already accepted Jesus as the Christ. Philip preached and taught that the resurrection was the crowning proof that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Philip cures many people from possessions, paralysis and lame. An interesting detail that is recorded is that the unclean spirits come out in a great cry or loud shriek. This great cry or loud shriek can be seen in Mark 1:26 and Luke 4:33, is partly due to agony and partly of exultation at deliverance. We learn that the people in Samaria have not been baptized yet and did not receive the holy spirit. This is why Philip was performing exorcisms because it is meant for people that have not been baptized yet. After baptism the way to get rid of evil spirits and sin from a person is by confession and absolution.

The Apostles heard that Samaria has accepted Christ as the messiah so Peter and John go to the city in order to baptize them and bring them the Holy Spirit by laying their hands on them through confirmation. What is interesting is that earlier in Luke 9:54, during Jesus' ministry the Samaritans rejected Jesus and James and John wanted to ask God to destroy the city with fire. Now John is giving them the sacrament of baptism and confirmation. Samaria which once rejected Christ now qualified for the higher gift as well as for admission into the kingdom.

Jesus in the gospel of John 14:15-21 states that he will ask God the Father to send the disciples another Advocate. The word "another" should be observed as implying the advocacy of the second Person in the Trinity, as well as that of the third. Jesus knows that a separation will happen between Him and the disciples after His death and resurrection. However, Jesus will come again to them in the person of the Paraclete, whom He would send to them and this spiritual presence will remain with them for ever.

Praying for all of you.
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