



Simeon Bachos (left) with Philip the Deacon
detail from the Menologion of Basil II
Byzantine, circa 985
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**ST. MARY'S
SERVICE OF HOLY EUCHARIST**

Including a reflection on the life and witness of

**SIMEON BACHOS,
THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH**

Wednesday, August 26, 2026

<https://godsvie.w.oom.us/j/81608666258>

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Celebrant: God be with you

People: ***And also with you.***

Celebrant: Let us pray.

Holy One of love, you called your servant Simeon Bachos to study your word and led him to the waters of baptism, making him your evangelist to Ethiopia: give us the grace to follow where you lead, overcoming the barriers that divide and diminish your people, that we may behold you in all your glory; through our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

PSALM 68:28-35

The St. Helena Psalter

Send forth your strength, O God;
establish, O God, what you have wrought for us.

Rulers shall bring gifts to you,
for your temple's sake at Jerusalem.

Rebuke the wild beast of the reeds,
and the peoples, a herd of wild bulls with its calves.

Trample down those who lust after silver;
scatter the peoples that delight in war.

Let tribute be brought out of Egypt;
let Ethiopia stretch out its hands to you.

Sing to God, O nations of the earth;
sing praises to the Holy One,

Who rides in the heavens, the ancient heavens,
who sends forth a voice, a mighty voice.

Ascribe power to God,
whose majesty is over Israel, whose strength is in the skies.

THE HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 19:3-12

Some Pharisees came to him, and to test him they asked, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause?' He answered, 'Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning "made them male and female", and said, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh"? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.' They said to him, 'Why then did Moses command us to give a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her?' He said to them, 'It was because you were so hard-hearted that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but at the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another commits adultery.'

His disciples said to him, 'If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.' But he said to them, 'Not everyone can accept this teaching, but only those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let anyone accept this who can.'

The Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God.

REMEMBERING SIMEON BACHOS

In the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we find the story of Philip and the baptism of an unnamed Ethiopian eunuch. In the second century, the bishop and theologian Irenaeus of Lyons referred to him as Simeon Bachos; this is the name by which this unidentified figure is known in many parts of the Eastern church, including in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church.

According to Acts, he was familiar with the Hebrew scriptures, and his encounter with Philip took place as he traveled from Jerusalem, where he had worshipped at the temple. Some suggest that he was a Jewish convert, while others contend that he was a "Godfearer."

Regardless of his previous religious affiliation, scripture records him as the first African person to be baptized.

Simeon Bachos was a person of great prestige, serving the Candace, or Queen, as both chamberlain and treasurer. His status as a eunuch indicates that he was a member of a sexual minority, either a castrated male, a deliberately celibate male, or a gender nonconformist.

Irenaeus describes Simeon Bachos' life after baptism, saying, "This man was also sent into the regions of Ethiopia, to preach what he had himself believed." In the fourth century, the historian Eusebius wrote that "the Eunuch became an apostle for his people." The tenth century Synaxarion of Constantinople designates August 27 as the commemoration of Simeon Bachos.

As a person of a different race, ethnicity, and gender identification, Simeon Bachos stands at the intersection of multiple marginalized groups. His identity shows that the early church was able to transcend social categories in its evangelizing work and that the gospel's message would spread to the ends of the earth and to every person. Simeon Bachos calls Christians to be fully inclusive and welcoming of all people, empowering them for ministry and leadership.

PRAYERS

Prayers may be offered, silently or aloud.

HOLY EUCHARIST

Form A (*Enriching Our Worship*, p. 65)

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People ***And also with you.***

Celebrant Lift up your hearts.

People ***We lift them to the Lord.***

Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People ***It is right to give God thanks and praise.***

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth, for the wonderful grace and virtue declared in all your saints, who have been the chosen vessels of your grace, and the lights of the world in their generations.

And so we join the saints and angels in proclaiming your glory, as we say,

Celebrant and People

***Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.***

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

And so, Loving God, we who have been redeemed by Christ, and made a new people by water and the Spirit, now bring before you these gifts. Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ our Lord.

At the following words concerning the bread, the Celebrant is to hold it, or lay a hand upon it; and at the words concerning the cup, to hold or place a hand upon the cup and any other vessel containing wine to be consecrated.

On the night before he died for us, our Savior Jesus Christ took bread, and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his friends, and said: "Take, eat: This is my Body which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said: "Drink this, all of you: This is my blood of the new Covenant, which is poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

The Celebrant then continues

We now celebrate, O God, the memorial of Christ our Savior. By means of this holy bread and cup, we show forth the sacrifice of Christ's death, and proclaim the resurrection, until Christ comes in glory. Gather us by this Holy Communion into one body in the Risen One, and make us a living sacrifice of praise. Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to you be honor, glory, and praise, for ever and ever. **AMEN.**

And now, in the words Christ taught us, we are bold to pray, saying,

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

Eternal and Life-Giving God, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

BLESSING

THE PEACE