

The Election of the Seven

The book of Acts is the book related to the beginnings of the Church; it is a book that tells about the work of the Holy Spirit that was transmitted to the universe after the resurrection of the Lord. The passage that was read from this book today tells us that Hellenistic Christians complained about Hebraic Christians because their widows were overlooked in the daily service which is the distribution of subventions and food to those women. Hellenistic Christians are Christians that speak Greek and live in Jerusalem and they were Jews that migrated from Palestine and lived in places where people spoke Greek such as Alexandria. After their conversion to Christianity, they willed to keep Christ's memory by living in Jerusalem. As for those who were named as Hebraic by the Book, they were from Jewish origins and converted and stayed where they were, i.e. Palestine.

The apostles thought that they should leave "the wait on tables" because this took a lot of their time and their priority which was preaching. They thought that they could delegate seven believers to fulfill the service on tables. They got them by an election, and they believed that the distribution of material is not enough and that they should be "full of the Spirit and wisdom". Any service in Church requires virtues: dealing with people, treating them without authority, having tranquility and peace in the soul, in addition to be just with people in the distribution of money or food... Also there is the removal of barriers between two different people or races such as the Hellenistic and Hebraic.

The Divine Book named those seven and said about Stephen who was one of them that he is full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and we shall see in the Book of Acts his theological knowledge and his martyrdom.

Did these seven have a position or a rank? The common opinion is that they were deacons: The first deacons in Church. However, St. John Chrysostom didn't agree with this opinion. The common thing in the early Church is that deacons used to be responsible for the social work in addition to their ritual service. The seven did have a kind of consecration because hands were laid on them, which is a sign for an ordination. Any consecration, whether for a reader or a bishop, needs the laying of hands. The seven weren't deacons in the common modern sense, but they did have an official position even if it was temporal. Becoming a monk, which isn't considered as a sacrament by most of scholars today, was considered a sacrament by ancient scholars because the bishop or abbot lays his hand. A sacrament is anything that contains dedication for God through a tangible sign accompanied by a descent of grace. Priesthood is the election of the grace for a specified service. This isn't a privilege for anyone but a free divine delegation. Immediately after this, Luke (The author of the Book of Acts) says: "So the word of God spread (through preaching). The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased

rapidly”. And when he says that “a large number of priests became obedient to the faith”, he means the priests of the Temple that joined the Church.

Then, generations converted into Christianity, and they had great struggles in faith.

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