

## **August 27: Simeon Bachos, the Ethiopian Eunuch, *Evangelist in Africa***

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 the 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 non-conformist.

Ireneus describes Simeon Bachos’s life after baptism, “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.

### Collects

I Holy One of love, thou didst call thy servant Simeon Bachos to study thy Word and led him to the waters of baptism, making him thy evangelist to Ethiopia: give to us the grace to follow where thou leadest, overcoming the barriers that divide and diminish thy people, that we may behold thee in all thy glory; through our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ, who with thee and the Holy Spirit liveth and reigneth for ever and ever. Amen.

II 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.

### Lessons and Psalm

Acts 8:26-40

Psalm 68:28-29, 31-35

Matthew 19:3-12

*Preface of a Saint (1)*

## September 22: Episcopal Deaconesses

The Episcopal deaconess movement describes a ministry of women who were set apart for service by their bishops, beginning in 1857 and ending with the ordination of women as deacons, authorized by General Convention in 1970.

Episcopal deaconesses joined a wider, multi-denominational movement that began in Europe in the 19th century. Deaconesses ministered as nurses, teachers, chaplains, caregivers, administrators, fundraisers and missionaries; both within the U.S. and around the world. Episcopal deaconesses ministered both as individuals and as communities. They often served under difficult conditions, with little compensation, and always under gendered definitions. They ministered in times of peace and in times of war.

The bishop of Maryland set apart the first six deaconesses in the Episcopal Church on September 21, 1857. Four of their names are known: Adeline Blanchard Tyler, Evaline Black, Carrie Guild, and Catherine Minard. Other bishops soon followed suit. Thirty-two years later, the General Convention recognized the ministry of deaconesses canonically thanks to the efforts of Mary Abbot Emery Twing and William Reed Huntington.

Notable deaconesses over the 113-year timespan include Rebecca Hewitt, a caregiver, administrator and leader of deaconesses in Alabama during the Civil War; Jessie Carryl Smith, a World War I nurse in France and later missionary in Alaska; Jane Harris Hall, advocate for women in the New York theater industry in the early 20th century; Susan Trevor Knapp, dean of the New York Training School for Deaconesses and missionary in pre-World War II Japan; and the original staff of the Appleton Church Home in Georgia, Margaret Jennings and Sophjenlife Petterson, each a caregiver, formation leader, and head deaconess of the Appleton Church Home, and Mary Frances Gould, teacher, leader and facilitator of mission work throughout the Diocese of Georgia. (See also the individual commemorations for deaconesses Harriet Bedell on January 8, and Anna Alexander on September 24.)

With the establishment of formation programs in several states, and communities for their life and work, the number of deaconesses in the Episcopal Church grew, peaking in 1922 with 226 living deaconesses. When in 1970 women were admitted to ordination as deacons, the Church's deaconesses, perpetual deacons and transitional deacons were joined in a single order of deacons; and women were thus counted among clergy for the first time. As of September 2020, Priscilla Jean Wright is the last woman deacon living who was originally made a deaconess. She was set apart as a deaconess on June 18, 1964 in the Diocese of Los Angeles.

Some 500 Episcopal deaconesses blessed the Church and the world with their diverse ministries, and provided an example of courageous faithfulness that challenged later generations to recognize God's call to women.

### Collects

I O God of love, we bless thee for calling and equipping the deaconesses of the Episcopal Church, who served thy people at risk or in need, at home and throughout the world. With grateful hearts we honor their hard work, perseverance, and leadership in following Jesus into places of suffering or hardship, injustice or un-championed hope. May we, like them, bear the

light of Christ to all people with humility and grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

II O God of love, we bless you for calling and equipping the deaconesses of the Episcopal Church, who served your people at risk or in need, at home and throughout the world. With grateful hearts we honor their hard work, perseverance, and leadership in following Jesus into places of suffering or hardship, injustice or un-championed hope. May we, like them, bear the light of Christ to all people with humility and grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Lessons and Psalm

1 Corinthians 12:1-13

Psalm 34:1-8

Mark 9:33-41

*Preface of a Saint (1)*

## **December 11: Frederick Howden, Jr, *Priest and Chaplain of the Armed Forces***

Episcopal military chaplains care for their flock of men, women and children stationed in countries around the world, as well as bases in the US. In times of battle, chaplains often accompany their unit – only without any weapons – in order to provide pastoral care, sacramental rites and the comfort of prayer under extreme stress. They ably administer rites and logistical assistance in field hospitals and Veterans centers, National Guard postings, and frequently a parish at home. More than \_\_\_\_\_ Episcopal chaplains currently serve our Armed Forces.

The ministry of The Rev. Frederick “Ted” Howden, Jr, stands out among many heroic chaplaincies. He was twelve years old when his father was consecrated Bishop of the Missionary District of New Mexico and Southwest Texas, and the family moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico. His father ordained him Deacon at St. Clement’s Church in El Paso, Texas on June 10, 1928 and Priest, also at St. Clement’s, on January 13, 1929. Ted Howden immediately began to serve several congregations in New Mexico, traveling great distances between them.

When World War II broke out Fr. Howden held the rank of Captain in the New Mexico State Guard, a unit predominantly made up of Hispanic, Latino and Native American soldiers. He was the Chaplain to the 200th Coast Artillery when it was federalized and sent to the Philippines in September 1941. He walked across the hills, from battery to battery, holding open-air services and distributing candy, soap, and cigarettes he had foraged for the troops.

At the Fall of Bataan and Corregidor to Japanese forces in April 1942, Fr. Howden and his fellow soldiers were made prisoners of war and were forced to endure the Bataan Death March, during which some 18,000 died. During imprisonment in several prison camps, his heroism and faith were always apparent through the care he provided. Howden often gave his own portion of food to others whom he insisted needed it more. He died of dysentery and starvation-induced pellagra on December 11, 1942, and was buried by his men in a small cemetery in the shadow of the Mindanao jungle, about a mile from the camp. His family would not learn of his fate until June 1943. After the war, in 1948, his remains were reinterred in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Fr. Ted Howden has been commemorated in the Diocese of the Rio Grande, particularly by veterans of the armed forces and their families, who have faced physical, spiritual and emotional harm, disabling injuries, and death itself, while in the service of our country. Recalling his self-sacrifice, the Church honors all who answer our Lord’s call to chaplaincy in the world’s most dangerous places.

### Collects

I Almighty God, our sure defense: We give thee thanks for thy servant<sup>[s]</sup> Frederick Howden, <sup>[N.\_\_\_\_]</sup> and all military chaplains who provided comfort and inspiration in time of battle; and, following the example of Jesus the Good Shepherd, laid down their lives in the service of others. Inspire and strengthen us, also, for the duties of life still before us, that we may be faithful to the end; through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

II Almighty God, our sure defense: We give you thanks for your servant<sup>[s]</sup> Frederick Howden, <sup>[N.\_\_\_\_]</sup> and all military chaplains who provided comfort and inspiration in time of battle; and, following the example of Jesus the Good Shepherd, laid down their lives in the service of others.

Inspire and strengthen us, also, for the duties of life still before us, that we may be faithful to the end; through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Lessons and Psalm

1 Corinthians

Psalm 18:1-6,18-20

John 10:11-18

*Preface of a Saint (2)*