

CHAPTER 8

Today's passage to ponder comes from Acts 8:26-39, the story of Philip accompanying the Ethiopian on the road to Gaza.

Then the angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, "Get up and head south on the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza, the desert route." So he got up and set out. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, that is, the queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury, who had come to Jerusalem to worship, and was returning home. Seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. The Spirit said to Philip, "Go and join up with that chariot." Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He replied, "How can I, unless someone instructs me?" So he invited Philip to get in and sit with him. This was the scripture passage he was reading:

*"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,
and as a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so he opened not his mouth.
In (his) humiliation justice was denied him.
Who will tell of his posterity?
For his life is taken from the earth."*

Then the eunuch said to Philip in reply, "I beg you, about whom is the prophet saying this? About himself, or about someone else?" Then Philip opened his mouth and, beginning with this scripture passage, he proclaimed Jesus to him. As they traveled along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Look, there is water. What is to prevent my being baptized?" Then he ordered the chariot to stop, and Philip and the eunuch both went down into the water, and he baptized him. When they came out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, but continued on his way rejoicing.

1. As you read this passage slowly and carefully, consider how this encounter mirrors the accompaniment between Jesus and the men on the road to Emmaus (see Luke 24:13-35).

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2. Write down the names of people who have mentored or accompanied you. Which of these people had the greatest role in forming who you are today? Give thanks to God for all the ways these people have nurtured you.
3. Think about a time you experienced a transition in leadership roles (either within or outside of ministry). What were some practices that helped the transition? How might practical mentorship have aided the transition?

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4. Are there people currently in your community to whom you could be a practical mentor? List them. Now select one person and consider how you

- seek opportunities to provide practical mentorship to that person,
- hear the person asking for mentorship,
- are present for that person,
- work with a team to offer mentorship,
- create continuity files and pass them on,
- facilitate transitions in ministry for this person,
- give true mentorship without manipulating, and
- keep your eye on discipleship.

5. Think about someone with whom you share an accompanying relationship. Consider how you

- seek continuous formation to be a good accompanier,
- draw near to each other,
- ask questions and listen patiently,
- balance catechesis and correction with respect for an individual's freedom, and
- serve each other joyfully.