On Easter morning, Jesus encountered two disciples on the Road to Emmaus. Although they are aware of the resurrection, they have a limited understanding of what the prophets foretold. As they walk together, Jesus breaks open the Scripture for them. “Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures” (Luke 24:27). We all need help in understanding God’s unfathomable plan for our salvation.

In the Act of the Apostles, Luke’s account of a man seeking to learn more about the Scriptures shares some common touchpoints with Luke’s account of the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus. An Ethiopian eunuch is traveling in the Holy Land and he is curious about the writings of the Prophet Isaiah. He needs someone to help break open the Scriptures for him.

Why would this foreigner even be reading the Prophet Isaiah? In the book of Deuteronomy, and Leviticus there were prohibitions against eunuchs and foreigners participating in religion. However, with the return of the exiled Israelite community to the Holy Land, new religious norms were established. The Prophet Isaiah gives instruction for those who wish to live according to God’s word and covenant.

To the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths, who choose what pleases me, and who hold fast to my covenant, I will give them, in my house and within my walls, a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; an eternal name, which shall not be cut off, will I give them... For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. (56: 4-5,7) For Isaiah’s original listeners, the promise of salvation and redemption is based on living according to God’s word and covenant. As times change and the faith grows, even foreigners and eunuchs can be part of the chosen people if they live in accord with God’s word and covenant.

In light of the life of Jesus and his resurrection, the prophecies of Isaiah take on a new understanding. In accord with God’s plan, Christianity is spreading outside the confines of Judaism. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendant, heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:28-29)

The Ethiopian needs help understanding the Scriptures, and the Lord has a plan to meet his needs. Philip, one of the Deacons, is sent by the angel of the Lord to do just that. Not knowing all the details, Philip trusts the angel and gets further instruction along the way. The Holy Spirit said to Philip, “Go and join up with the chariot.” Just as Jesus helped Cleopas and the other disciple on the Road to Emmaus, Philip now has the guidance of the Holy Spirit in order to break open the teachings of the Prophet Isaiah that are so puzzling for the Ethiopian.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Need</th>
<th>The Explanation</th>
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<td>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 (Isaiah 53:7-8)</td>
<td>Jesus is silent before the high priest. (Mt 26:63) Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. “Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb” (from the prayers at Mass).</td>
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On the Road to Emmaus, the disciple’s hearts were burning while Jesus spoke to them. The Ethiopian has a similar reaction and requests to be baptized. Jesus vanished from the sight of two disciples right after they received bread from him. And right after Philip baptizes the Ethiopian, the Spirit whisks Philip away. The eunuch is left alone but filled with joy.

Jesus wants to encounter every human on the journey of life. On the Road to Emmaus, Jesus came to the two disciples and spent hours with them even though they did not recognize...
Philip and the Ethiopian

him. On the path between Jerusalem and Gaza, the Holy Spirit overcomes all obstacles so Philip can be in the right time at the right place to help a man burning with a desire to know about Jesus and salvation.

Where are you in your spiritual journey? Do you recognize Jesus in disguise as he tries to reach out to you? Do you recognize how and when the Holy Spirit is sending people into your life to help you with the questions that call us into deeper relationship with our loving God. It is truly amazing what God is willing to do to help us along the way. This same message is echoed in today’s Gospel. “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him, and I will raise him on the last day” (Jn 6:44).