Spirituality
Pencil Preaching



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"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draw him" (John 6:44).

Acts 8:26-40; *Jn 6:44-51*

The moving story of the Ethiopian eunuch and the Apostle Philip on the road to Gaza is a perfect example of the way faith is inspired and develops.

The eunuch, a trusted official in the court of Candace, Queen of Ethiopia, is riding in his chariot while he reads from the book of the Prophet Isaiah. When he gets to the part about the suffering servant who went like a sheep to the slaughter and a lamb silent before its shearer, the injustice and humiliation of his own castration lights up the text. Who was this silent victim and why is Isaiah praising him?

Philip suddenly appears beside the chariot and joins the eunuch. Philip explains to him that the suffering servant in the text foreshadowed the person of Jesus, who surrendered his life on a cross to save the world from sin and death. The eunuch is so moved that he asks Philip to baptize him at the next roadside pool of water.

A mysterious grace and the coincidence of Philip's presence draw the eunuch to Jesus, whose suffering had illuminated his suffering, filling his life with new meaning and a profound joy. For Jesus, too, was a victim who revealed God's compassion for all victims of violence and injustice.

The suffering of Jesus has drawn many to the mystery of God. No victim of violence and injustice can say that God does not know human suffering, for God was revealed in Jesus. No suffering is meaningless when united to the power of Jesus' redemptive love. No victim is ever alone because God is always with them.

We remember today the victims of child sexual abuse, sex trafficking, domestic abuse, gender-based discrimination and injustice, sexual harassment, forced servitude and humiliation. Jesus knew every sort of human suffering, including those that can crush the human spirit and strip people of their dignity. In their suffering, these victims have God's preferential love, and anyone who reaches out to defend them and demand justice for them has God's most poignant and powerful blessing.