

ASSIGNMENT FOR CLASS #5: PHILIP'S MINISTRY & THE CONVERSION OF SAUL (8:4-9:31): (For discussion November 22-23)

Session #1: Philip's Preaching in Samaria (Acts 8:4-8:25)

- Get to know Philip! Read John 1:44; 6:7; 12:20-22; 14:8-9
- What is so wrong with practicing "magic" (or "New Age") as long as it is with a "good intention" like Simon the Mage?

Session #2: Philip & the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-40)

- The Eunuch was reading Isaiah 53. Read it! It prophesies of Jesus.
- Recall that Eunuchs (or the deformed) were not allowed to fully enter into the temple or the covenant. (See Deut 23:1). But the new law of love in Jesus Christ lifts these restrictions.

Session #3: The Conversion of Saul (Acts 9:1-19)

- Jump ahead and read Acts 22:4-16 & 26:9-18 where Paul retells the story of his conversion. Are there any differences? This must be a very important story to be told 3 times in one book!

Session #4: Saul Begins His Christian Witness (Acts 9:20-31)

- Read Corinthians 2 Cor 11:32-33 about the plot to kill St. Paul
- Where else have we seen Barnabas? See 4:36 & Gal 1:18-19

The Catechism on Superstition and Witchcraft

2111 Superstition is the deviation of religious feeling and of the practices this feeling imposes. It can even affect the worship we offer the true God, e.g., when one attributes an importance in some way magical to certain practices otherwise lawful or necessary. To attribute the efficacy of prayers or of sacramental signs to their mere external performance, apart from the interior dispositions that they demand, is to fall into superstition

2116 All forms of *divination* are to be rejected: recourse to Satan or demons, conjuring up the dead or other practices falsely supposed to "unveil" the future.⁴⁸ Consulting horoscopes, astrology, palm reading, interpretation of omens and lots, the phenomena of clairvoyance, and recourse to mediums all conceal a desire for power over time, history, and, in the last analysis, other human beings, as well as a wish to conciliate hidden powers. They contradict the honor, respect, and loving fear that we owe to God alone.

2117 All practices of *magic* or *sorcery*, by which one attempts to tame occult powers, so as to place them at one's service and have a supernatural power over others - even if this were for the sake of restoring their health - are gravely contrary to the virtue of religion. These practices are even more to be condemned when accompanied by the intention of harming someone, or when they have recourse to the intervention of demons. Wearing charms is also reprehensible. *Spiritism* often implies divination or magical practices; the Church for her part warns the faithful against it. Recourse to so-called traditional cures does not justify either the invocation of evil powers or the exploitation of another's credulity.