



LIVING THE GOSPEL

**Third Sunday of Easter
Apr 19, 2026**

Theme: "Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us."

Gathering Prayer

All: May your people exult forever, O God, in renewed youthfulness of spirit,^[LUT]so that, rejoicing now in the restored glory of our adoption, we may look forward in confident hope to the rejoicing of the day of resurrection. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: Luke 24:13-35

¹³ Two of the disciples of Jesus were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and they were talking together about all that had happened. ¹⁵ Now as they talked this over, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side; ¹⁶ but something prevented them from recognizing him. ¹⁷ He said to them, 'What matters are you discussing as you walk along?' They stopped short, their faces downcast.

¹⁸ Then one of them, called Cleopas, answered him, 'You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days.' ¹⁹ 'What things?' he asked. 'All about Jesus of Nazareth' they answered 'who proved he was a great prophet by the things he said and did in the sight of God and of the whole people; ²⁰ and how our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified. ²¹ Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free. And this is not all: two whole days have gone by since it all happened; ²² and some women from our group have astounded us: they went to the tomb in the early morning, ²³ and when they did not find the body, they came back to tell us they had seen a vision of angels who declared he was alive. ²⁴ Some of our friends went to the tomb and found everything exactly as the women had reported, but of him they saw nothing.'

²⁵ Then he said to them, 'You foolish men! So slow to believe the full message of the prophets! ²⁶ Was it not ordained that the Christ should suffer and so enter into his glory?' ²⁷ Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself.

²⁸ When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he made as if to go on; ²⁹ but they pressed him to stay with them. 'It is nearly evening' they said 'and the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ Now while he was with them at table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them.

³¹ And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; but he had vanished from their sight. ³² Then they said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?'

³³ They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven assembled together with their companions, ³⁴ who said to them, 'Yes, it is true. The

Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.’³⁵ Then they told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognized him at the breaking of bread.

Gospel Focus

The story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus mirrors the way that Jesus meets us in the celebration of the Mass. Before gathering at the Eucharistic table, Jesus opens the Scriptures to them, sharing himself in word before offering himself in sacrament. It is the Scriptures that allow the disciples to enter into the mystery of the Eucharist with Jesus. Without knowing him as revealed in the history of God’s chosen community, they could not hope to experience him under the appearance of bread and wine. This is the same reason that our celebration of the Mass begins by sharing the Scriptures together. This communal reading allows us to encounter God in the people of Israel, the life of the early Christian communities, and the ministry of Jesus. We come to know this Jesus that we receive into our bodies, as we are sent into the world with our hearts aflame.

Gospel Reflection

Today’s gospel is a story of how Jesus’ followers moved from expectant wishing to being grounded in true hope. They’d been wishing for someone who would rescue them from bondage, someone who would single handedly transform their situation for them. They probably thought this would happen through a violent wresting of power.

What they got instead was a new story, a new way of seeing and hearts inflamed with hope. The door was opened to a new way of being for them and for us that far transcended anything for which they had wished.

Luke tells narratively about how hope began to burn in their hearts of Jesus’ first followers. While blindly fleeing Jerusalem because things did not turn out well, according to their wishes, the disciples come to see that Jesus’ death is not the end of all their wishful longings nor an isolated act that rescues them but is the culminating point of a whole way of life that embodies hope.

In the breaking of bread, the disciples do not just see a changed Jesus, but they come to see the whole world as changed. Jesus has liberated them from sin and death, but the saving work is not completed until the disciples embrace his way of living eucharistically. Only when Jesus’ followers live in such a way that they risk their own bodies being broken and blood poured out in love for others is hope fanned into flame. Cleopas and his companion are able to choose to return to Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets (Luke 13:34) and could kill them, when their eyes become opened. Sight is transformed not so much in one magical moment but in a lengthy process of praying and studying the Scriptures, of walking with others and struggling to understand from their perspective, of daily taking, blessing, breaking and sharing of bread in Eucharistic gatherings, all the while urging Jesus to “stay with us.” When a transformative moment happens, when we let go of our puny wishes and become aflame with hope, the Jesus we thought we knew vanishes, and the risen Christ remains.

In Jerusalem, Cleopas and his companion rejoin the gathered community who are likewise transformed. Together with the women who had gone to the tomb, and Simon, they see with new eyes and tell a new story, able to lead others in the ongoing journey into hope.

Old and New Testament links

First Reading — Acts 2:14, 22-33

¹⁴ On the day of Pentecost Peter stood up with the Eleven and addressed the crowd in a

loud voice:

²² 'Men of Israel, listen to what I am going to say: Jesus the Nazarene was a man commended to you by God by the miracles and portents and signs that God worked through him when he was among you, as you all know. ²³ This man, who was put into your power by the deliberate intention and foreknowledge of God, you took and had crucified by men outside the Law. You killed him, ²⁴ but God raised him to life, freeing him from the pangs of Hades; for it was impossible for him to be held in its power since, ²⁵ as David says of him:

*I saw the Lord before me always,
for with him at my right hand nothing can shake me.*

²⁶ *So my heart was glad
and my tongue cried out with joy;
my body, too, will rest in the hope
²⁷ that you will not abandon my soul to Hades
nor allow your holy one to experience corruption.*

²⁸ *You have made known the way of life to me,
you will fill me with gladness through your presence.*

²⁹ 'Brothers, no one can deny that the patriarch David himself is dead and buried: his tomb is still with us. ³⁰ But since he was a prophet, and knew that God *had sworn him an oath to make one of his descendants succeed him on the throne,* ³¹ what he foresaw and spoke about was the resurrection of the Christ: he is the one who was *not abandoned to Hades,* and whose body did not *experience corruption.* ³² God raised this man Jesus to life, and all of us are witnesses to that. ³³ Now raised to the heights by God's right hand, he has received from the Father the Holy Spirit, who was promised, and what you see and hear is the outpouring of that Spirit.'

Responsorial Reading — Psalm 16:1-2, 5, 7-11

R: Show us, Lord, the path of life.

Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you. I say to the Lord: 'You are my God.
O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup; it is you yourself who are my prize.' **(R)**

I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel, who even at night directs my heart.
I keep the Lord ever in my sight: since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm. **(R)**

And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad; even my body shall rest in safety.
For you will not leave my soul among the dead, nor let your beloved know decay. **(R)**

You will show me the path of life, the fullness of joy in your presence,
at your right hand happiness for ever. **(R)**

Second Reading — 1 Peter 1:17-21

¹⁷ If you are acknowledging as your Father one who has no favourites and judges everyone according to what he has done, you must be scrupulously careful as long as you are living away from your home. ¹⁸ Remember, the ransom that was *paid to free you* from the useless way of life your ancestors handed down was not paid in anything corruptible, neither in silver nor gold, ¹⁹ but in the precious blood of a lamb without spot or stain, namely Christ; ²⁰ who, though known since before the world was made, has been revealed only in our time, the end of the ages, for your sake. ²¹ Through him you

now have faith in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory for that very reason – so that you would have faith and hope in God.

Catechism of The Catholic Church

112. *Be especially attentive "to the content and unity of the whole Scripture".* Different as the books which compose it may be, Scripture is a unity by reason of the unity of God's plan, of which Christ Jesus is the center and heart, open since his Passover.(Cf. Lk 24:25-27,44-46)

The phrase "heart of Christ" can refer to Sacred Scripture, which makes known his heart, closed before the Passion, as the Scripture was obscure. But the Scripture has been opened since the Passion; since those who from then on have understood it, consider and discern in what way the prophecies must be interpreted.(St. Thomas Aquinas, *Expos. in Ps. 21,11*; cf. Ps 22:14)

601. The Scriptures had foretold this divine plan of salvation through the putting to death of "the righteous one, my Servant" as a mystery of universal redemption, that is, as the ransom that would free men from the slavery of sin.(Isa 53:11; cf. 53:12; Jn 8:34-36; Acts 3:14) Citing a confession of faith that he himself had "received", St. Paul professes that "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures."(1 Cor 15:3; cf. also Acts 3:18; 7:52; 13:29; 26:22-23) In particular Jesus' redemptive death fulfills Isaiah's prophecy of the suffering Servant.(Cf. Isa 53:7-8 and Acts 8:32-35) Indeed Jesus himself explained the meaning of his life and death in the light of God's suffering Servant.(Cf. Mt 20:28) After his Resurrection he gave this interpretation of the Scriptures to the disciples at Emmaus, and then to the apostles.(Cf. Lk 24:25-27, 44-45)

645. By means of touch and the sharing of a meal, the risen Jesus establishes direct contact with his disciples. He invites them in this way to recognize that he is not a ghost and above all to verify that the risen body in which he appears to them is the same body that had been tortured and crucified, for it still bears the traces of his Passion.(Cf. Lk 24:30,39-40, 41-43; Jn 20:20, 27; 21:9,13-15) Yet at the same time this authentic, real body possesses the new properties of a glorious body: not limited by space and time but able to be present how and when he wills; for Christ's humanity can no longer be confined to earth, and belongs henceforth only to the Father's divine realm.(Cf. Mt 28:9, 16-17; Lk 24:15, 36; Jn 20:14, 17, 19, 26; 21:4) For this reason too the risen Jesus enjoys the sovereign freedom of appearing as he wishes: in the guise of a gardener or in other forms familiar to his disciples, precisely to awaken their faith.(Cf. Mk 16:12; Jn 20:14-16; 21:4, 7)

659. "So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God."(Mk 16:19) Christ's body was glorified at the moment of his Resurrection, as proved by the new and supernatural properties it subsequently and permanently enjoys.(Cf. Lk 24:31; Jn 20:19, 26) But during the forty days when he eats and drinks familiarly with his disciples and teaches them about the kingdom, his glory remains veiled under the appearance of ordinary humanity.(Cf. Acts 1:3; 10:41; Mk 16:12; Lk 24:15; Jn 20:14-15; 21:4) Jesus' final apparition ends with the irreversible entry of his humanity into divine glory, symbolized by the cloud and by heaven, where he is seated from that time forward at God's right hand.(Cf. Acts 1:9; 2:33; 7:56; Lk 9:34-35; 24:51; Ex 13:22; Mk 16:19; Ps 110:1) Only in a wholly exceptional and unique way would Jesus show himself to Paul "as to one untimely born", in a last apparition that established him as an apostle.(1 Cor 15:8; cf. 9:1; Gal 1:16)

1166. "By a tradition handed down from the apostles which took its origin from the very day of Christ's Resurrection, the Church celebrates the Paschal mystery every seventh day, which day is appropriately called the Lord's Day or Sunday."(SC 106) The day of Christ's Resurrection is both the first day of the week, the memorial of the first day of creation, and the "eighth day," on which Christ after his "rest" on the great sabbath inaugurates the "day that the Lord has made," the "day that knows no evening."(Byzantine liturgy) The Lord's Supper is its center, for there the whole community of the faithful encounters the risen Lord who invites them to his banquet(Cf. Jn 21:12; Lk 24:30)

The Lord's day, the day of Resurrection, the day of Christians, is our day. It is called the Lord's day because on it the Lord rose victorious to the Father. If pagans call it the "day of the sun," we willingly agree, for today the light of the world is raised, today is revealed the sun of justice with healing in his rays.(St. Jerome, Pasch.: CCL 78, 550)

1329. The Lord's Supper, because of its connection with the supper which the Lord took with his disciples on the eve of his Passion and because it anticipates the wedding feast of the Lamb in the heavenly Jerusalem.(Cf. 1 Cor 11:20; Rev 19:9) *Breaking of Bread*, because Jesus used this rite, part of a Jewish meal when as master of the table he blessed and distributed the bread,(Cf. Mt 14:19; 15:36; Mk 8:6, 19) above all at the Last Supper.(Cf. Mt 26:26; 1 Cor 11:24) It is by this action that his disciples will recognize him after his Resurrection,(Cf. Lk 24:13-35) and it is this expression that the first Christians will use to designate their Eucharistic assemblies;(Cf. Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7,11) by doing so they signified that all who eat the one broken bread, Christ, enter into communion with him and form but one body in him.(Cf. 1 Cor 10:16-17)

Sharing and Discussion

1. Where has God shown you the path of life? What did this path look like?
2. In the 2nd reading, Peter encourages us to "conduct yourselves with reverence during the time of your sojourning" What might reverence be for you at this point of time?
3. In the gospel reading, the disciples recognize that Jesus was in their presence only after he vanished from their sight. Have you ever had a similar, after-the-fact realization of God's presence?

Closing Prayer

Facilitator: Loving God, just as you heard the disciples, we know you hear us when we raised our voices to you. Hear these prayers, as well as the ones we hold in the silence of our hearts and answer them according to your will. We ask this through that same Son, Jesus Christ the Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen