

# **Gospel Reading Group**

## **Third Sunday of Easter (Year A)**

### **Luke 24:13-35**

#### **About today:**

*In this Easter season, our readings continue to reveal the risen Christ and the new life made possible through him.*

*From the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:14, 22–33), we hear Peter’s powerful proclamation on the day of Pentecost where he interprets Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection as the fulfilment of God’s promises. Peter invites his listeners to see the resurrection not as a distant rumour but as God’s saving action in their midst.*

*In the Gospel (Luke 24:13–35), we walk with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Disheartened and confused, they fail to recognise the risen Lord until he opens the Scriptures and breaks bread with them. This beloved Easter narrative shows how Christ continues to make himself known through Word and Sacrament – especially so in the celebration of the Eucharist.*

*Together, these readings invite us to open our eyes and hearts to the risen Lord, present among us, shaping our hope, and renewing our discipleship.*

## Gospel Reading

*Read the whole passage slowly a few times, keeping one or two minutes of silence between each time.*

<sup>24:13</sup> Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem,

<sup>14</sup> and talking with each other about all these things that had happened.

<sup>15</sup> While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them,

<sup>16</sup> but their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

<sup>17</sup> And he said to them, “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?” They stood still, looking sad.

<sup>18</sup> Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?”

<sup>19</sup> He asked them, “What things?” They replied, “The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,

<sup>20</sup> and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him.

<sup>21</sup> But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place.

<sup>22</sup> Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning,

<sup>23</sup> and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive.

<sup>24</sup> Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.”

<sup>25</sup> Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared!

<sup>26</sup> Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?”

<sup>27</sup> Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

<sup>28</sup> As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on.

<sup>29</sup> But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them.

<sup>30</sup> When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

<sup>31</sup> Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.

<sup>32</sup> They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?”

<sup>33</sup> That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together.

<sup>34</sup> They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!”

<sup>35</sup> Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

**Broader Picture:** Within Luke's Gospel, this passage sits between the discovery of the empty tomb (24:1–12) and Jesus' appearance to the disciples in Jerusalem (24:36–49). It acts as a bridge: moving from confusion and disbelief to recognition and mission. The two disciples embody the experience of the wider community: they are bewildered by the Easter events, yet slowly, patiently brought to faith.

A distinctive Lukan emphasis is the imagery of journey. Throughout the Gospel, discipleship is portrayed as a journey (most notably Jesus' long journey to Jerusalem in chapters 9–19). Here, that theme continues: the risen Christ meets his followers as they are walking in the wrong direction: away from Jerusalem, away from hope.

The disciples do not recognise Jesus at first. Instead, recognition unfolds in two key moments:

1. The opening of the Scriptures. Jesus interprets the Law and the Prophets, showing how they point to the Messiah's suffering and glory.
2. The breaking of the bread. The eyes of the disciples are opened as Jesus breaks bread with them as he did at (with the other disciples?) at the Last Supper.

This pattern is profoundly important for Luke's theology and for the church: the risen Christ is made known through Word and Sacrament, a rhythm that reflects the life of the early Church and continues in Christian worship.

## **Interpretation Notes:**

**v.13:** “*That same day...*” This is still Easter Day. The disciples walk away from Jerusalem even though astonishing news about Jesus were brought to them early in the morning. They clearly do not want to investigate further with the other disciples. This can be interpreted as them having lost hope and faith – they do not want to linger in a place that has brought them so much disappointment. Indeed, for Saint Augustine of Hippo, this outward journey mirrors an inward turning away: they are leaving not just a city, but hope itself.

**v.13:** “*...walking to the village of Emmaus...*” Emmaus is the Greek variant of the Hebrew word and place-name for hot springs, *hammat*, and is therefore not unique to one location, which makes the identification of the New Testament site more difficult. The identification is complicated by the fact that gospel manuscripts list at least three different distances between Jerusalem and Emmaus. The oldest identification that is currently known is Imwas, a Palestinian village razed by Israeli forces in 1967, known in Roman antiquity as Nicopolis.

**v.14-15:** “*...Jesus himself came up and walked along with them...*” Jesus meets the two disciples where they are, on their way. He walks alongside them despite them having turned their backs on hope. There is something quite remarkable being affirmed between the lines about our faith: the risen Lord accompanies even those who are disoriented, disappointed, and walking the wrong way.

**v.16:** “*...they were kept from recognising him...*” A number of Bible translations say, “*God kept them from recognising him*”, but that is just a wilful (and bad) interpretation on the part of the translators, not an actual translation. So, what was keeping the disciples from recognising Jesus? Was it grief? Hopelessness? Lack of spiritual insight?

Saint Gregory the Great suggests that Christ is present to the disciples in a way proportionate to their capacity for understanding: he is seen outwardly as they perceive inwardly. According to this, the following verses, where the Lord opens the Scriptures for them, represent Jesus' efforts in opening their eyes to recognising him.

**v.19:** "...He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed..." The disciples call Jesus "a prophet." True, but incomplete. They possess a partial Christology: reverent, but insufficient.

**v.21:** "...we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel." This phrase is crucial. Hope is now framed in the past tense. Their expectation of redemption was too narrow, bound to political restoration rather than the mystery of the Cross. Saint Cyril of Alexandria notes that they stumble over the scandal of suffering: they cannot yet see that the Passion is not a contradiction of redemption, but its means.

**v.22:** "...some of our women amazed us." The report of the women and of few other disciples about the empty tomb is received but not integrated in the words Jesus said before the Cross. Evidence of astonishing events, like the empty tomb, without interpretation leads to bewilderment rather than faith.

**vv.25-28:** "...How foolish you are..." "Foolish" here is not an insult, but a diagnosis: the disciples lack spiritual perception (so much so that they can't recognise Jesus). What follows is an exhaustive explanation of the Hebrews Scriptures as texts speaking about Jesus. St Augustine notes that Christ does not simply add information; he reorders their entire understanding of Scripture around the necessity of suffering.

These few verses become foundational for Christian exegesis: the Scriptures are not merely fulfilled in Christ, they are about Christ.

**v.29:** “...they urged him strongly, ‘Stay with us’...” The disciples’ plea, is one of the most important prayers in the Scriptures. For St Augustine, it represents the soul’s yearning for abiding communion with Jesus.

The reference to evening carries symbolic weight: the light is fading, both literally and spiritually, yet Christ is invited into that darkness.

**v.30:** “When he was at the table with them...” The fourfold action – take, bless, break, give – echoes both the feeding of the five thousand and the Last Supper.

This moment has always stood at the heart of Eucharistic theology: Christ is truly known in the mystery of the breaking of the bread. The explanation of the Scriptures prepared the disciples for this moment when Christ is recognised in the sacramental act.

**v.31:** “Then their eyes were opened...” This is an echo and a redemption of Genesis 3 where the eyes of Adam and Eve were opened after eating of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Where the first opening brought alienation, this brings recognition and communion.

**v.32:** “...Did not our hearts burn within us...” This verse reveals that divine revelation is not purely external; it involves an inner transformation, where understanding and desire are united. Thus, the Christian life is shaped by this double movement: illumination of the mind and enkindling of the heart.

**v.33:** “They got up and returned at once...” The two disciples are moved to return to the “apostolic body” of the Church immediately, leaving all care behind and in the middle of the night. A genuine encounter with Christ dispels weariness and compels movement toward the Church.

**vv.33-35:** “...recognised by them when he broke the bread...” The disciples’ testimony centres on “the breaking of the bread,” indicating that Eucharistic experience is not private but shared by the whole Church, and that it stands at the source of the Church’s proclamation of faith.

## Questions for this week:

- *On the road to Emmaus*  
Where might I be “walking away from Jerusalem” in my own life, moving away from hope, trust, or calling?
- *The disciples say, “Stay with us.”*  
How often do I consciously invite Christ to remain with me—in prayer, in daily life, in moments of uncertainty?
- *“Then their eyes were opened and they recognised him.”*  
Do I approach the Eucharist as a place of recognition, expecting to encounter the living Christ?
- *From Presence to Transformation*  
In what ways has the Eucharist opened my eyes – to the Lord Jesus, to others, to myself?



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Interpretation Notes by Father Diego Galanzino for the *Gospel Reading Group* – A discipleship group of the Parish of All Saints’ Houghton Regis, April 2026. [allsaintshr.co.uk/learning](http://allsaintshr.co.uk/learning)