

**April 18, 2021**  
**3rd Sunday of Easter**  
**Luke 24:35-48**



35 Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread. 36 While they were still speaking about this, he stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." 37 But they were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost. 38 Then he said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do questions arise in your hearts? 39 Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have." 40 And as he said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. 41 While they were still incredulous for joy and were amazed, he asked them, "Have you anything here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of baked fish; 43 he took it and ate it in front of them. 44 He said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. 46 And he said to them, "Thus it is written that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day 47 and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things."

### **Background**

Last week's gospel was taken from John's account of Jesus' appearance to the disciples after the resurrection. In that gospel, Jesus appeared to the disciples twice. The first time, Thomas was not present. The second time, Thomas was present with the others.

The use of this gospel text from Luke does not follow the traditional pattern of using Mark's gospel throughout the liturgical year, and supplementing Mark's rather short gospel with texts from John's gospel during the Lenten and Easter seasons. The Emmaus story from Luke is read on the third Sunday of Easter during the A cycle. Today's gospel text completes the Emmaus story. (Luke 24:13-32). In the Emmaus story, Luke states that the two disciples encountered Jesus on "that very day," the day that the women, Peter, and the beloved disciple had been to the tomb and found it empty. The first line in today's gospel refers to those two disciples telling the others of their experience of Jesus on the road and in the breaking of the bread.

The text describes Jesus' appearance to a rather sizable gathering of disciples. In verses 33-34, not part of the text for today, Luke states, "So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, 'The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!'"

Here Jesus greets them with the customary greeting of the day, "Peace be with you." They are startled and terrified, even thinking that Jesus might be a ghost. Jesus first tries to assure them that he is a real flesh-and-blood person by inviting them to touch him, and then he does it further by eating fish. Having assured them of his corporeal reality, Jesus reassures them that he is truly the promised one. He refers to passages in the Law, the Prophets, and Psalms that point to his suffering and death. Their minds are opened to the profound meaning of their religious tradition. Luke does not tell the reader which passages Jesus referred to that day. After Jesus greets them with "Peace be with you," his reaction to their fear and lack of faith is to demonstrate his physical presence and show them that he is the same person who was betrayed, condemned, and crucified.

He also reminds them of his instructions to them. Then Jesus also makes clear to them that they are to be his witnesses. This commission to witness has been fulfilled already by the fact that two of them had returned from Emmaus with the news of what had taken place.

### Reflection Questions

1. Do you recall a time when your emotions have been all over the place? (For example, startled, terrified, filled with doubt and questions, joyful, and amazed, all in short order.)
2. How does having questions or being troubled affect your relationship with those close to you? Is that also true for your relationship with God?
3. Can you recall some scripture passages that have brought meaning or comfort to you in difficult times?
4. Can you imagine what it must have been like for these disciples who just a few days before had witnessed Jesus being handed over and crucified, to first hear that the tomb was empty, and then experience him standing before them?
5. What would have been some of the possible emotions and reactions of those gathered as the two disciples told of their experience on the road to Emmaus?
6. Jesus invites those present to see and touch the wounds of the crucifixion. Why is it important that Jesus' risen body still carries the wounds of the crucifixion?
7. What have you discovered about yourself and your relationships in times of difficulty and suffering?
8. At the end of the gospel text, Jesus tells them, "You are witnesses of these things." How do you respond to these words of Jesus?
9. Can you take some time today to talk with God about this gospel text, about Jesus' desire to show the disciples that he is real, about his statement that they are his witnesses, or about some other aspect of your relationship with God that arises from this text?

The gospel background and reflection questions are written by Fr. Paul Gallagher, OFM.  
They are edited by Sister Anne Marie Lom, OSF and Joe Thiel. <https://fscs-calledtobe.org/>

