

DECEMBER 2024 PRAYER SERVICE

Prayer Service for Chapter 4 of “*On the Road to Emmaus*” Study Topic

The Chapter focuses on Luke 24:19-24

By Fr. Eli Lopez, USA-SR Spiritual Counselor

TIME FOR SCRIPTURE:

A complementary scripture passage to **Luke 24:19-24** can be found in **Mark 16:9-11**. In this passage, after the resurrection, Jesus appears first to Mary Magdalene, who had been possessed by seven demons. She goes and tells the disciples, who are mourning and weeping, about her encounter with the Risen Lord. However, they do not believe her report, which resonates with the disbelief expressed by the disciples in **Luke 24:19-24** regarding the resurrection and the reports from the women.

This connection highlights the **theme of doubt** and the **struggle to believe** in the **resurrection**, as both passages illustrate the **disciples' initial skepticism** when confronted with the miraculous news of Jesus' resurrection.

Additionally, **John 20:24-25** provides another relevant passage, where **Thomas**, one of the twelve, expresses his doubt about the resurrection until he sees **Jesus** himself. This further emphasizes the challenge of belief faced by the disciples, paralleling the **sentiments of confusion** and **disappointment** expressed in **Luke 24:19-24**.

These passages underscore the **journey from doubt to faith** that characterizes the early **Christian** experience following Jesus's resurrection. The disciples grapple with the reality of his rising from the dead and its implications for their understanding of him as the **Messiah**.

Mark 16:9-11

When he had risen, early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. She went and told his companions who were mourning and weeping. When they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe.

John 20:24-25

Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nailmarks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

A TIME OF SILENT MEDITATION:

SHARED PRAYER ON SCRIPTURAL TEXT:

The intent is reflection in the form of a prayer, not discussion.

PRAYER INTENTIONS:

- Pass card or cross, so people can pass gracefully and the team knows when the prayer is complete.
- The team should respond at the end of each person's turn, for example, “Lord, hear our prayer”.

LITURGICAL PRAYER:

A Psalm that complements **Luke 24:19-24** is **Psalm 22**. This Psalm is often associated with themes of **suffering, despair, and, ultimately, hope in God's deliverance**. In **Luke 24:19-24**, the disciples express their disappointment and confusion regarding the events surrounding **Jesus' crucifixion** and the reports of his resurrection. They recount their hopes that **Jesus** would redeem Israel, reflecting a deep sense of **loss and bewilderment**.

Psalm 22 begins with the poignant cry, "**My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**" which resonates with the feelings of abandonment and despair that the disciples might have experienced after Jesus' death. The Psalmist goes on to describe **suffering and distress**, yet it ultimately transitions to a tone of **trust in God's faithfulness** and a **proclamation of praise for His deliverance**. This movement from despair to hope mirrors the journey of the disciples as they grapple with their grief and confusion, only to later encounter the **Risen Christ**, who fulfills their hopes.

Furthermore, **Psalm 22:22** states, "**I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation, I will praise you,**" which can be seen as prophetic of the resurrection and the subsequent mission of the disciples to proclaim the good news of **Jesus' victory over death**. This connection emphasizes the continuity between the **suffering of Christ** and the **joy of his resurrection**, providing a rich theological backdrop to the narrative in **Luke 24:19-24**.

Thus, **Psalm 22** profoundly **reflects on the themes of suffering, hope, and the eventual triumph of faith**, aligning well with the **emotional and spiritual journey** depicted in the **Gospel of Luke**.

Psalm 22:2-5, 8, 10-11, 15, 20-23

Response: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Why so far from my call for help, from my cries of anguish?

My God, I call by day, but you do not answer;

by night, but I have no relief.

Response: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;

You are the glory of Israel.

In you our fathers trusted;

they trusted and you rescued them.

Response: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

All who see me mock me;

they curl their lips and jeer;

they shake their heads at me.

Response: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

For you drew me forth from the womb,

made me safe at my mother's breasts.

Upon you I was thrust from the womb;

since my mother bore me you are my God.

Response: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Like water my life drains away;

all my bones are disjointed.

My heart has become like wax,

it melts away within me.

Response: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

But you, Lord, do not stay far off;

my strength, come quickly to help me.

Deliver my soul from the sword,

my life from the grip of the dog.

Response: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Save me from the lion's mouth,

my poor life from the horns of wild bulls.

Then I will proclaim your name to my brethren;

in the assembly I will praise you.

Response: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

CONCLUSION OF PRAYER TIME:

The passages from **Luke 24:19-24**, **John 20:24-25**, and **Psalm 22** can be reflected upon in a manner that highlights ***their interconnected themes of doubt, despair, and the hope of resurrection.***

All: Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of faith. In times of despair, doubt, fear, and uncertainty, may we always live with the hope of resurrection. May we always be faithful to you and never succumb to fear. Trusting that you hear our cries and assure us of your presence and love, even in our darkest moments. We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DEEP POOLING:

This is a time to share on more serious matters or when the input of the group is requested. This will not necessarily happen at all meetings.

SHARING ON THE ENDEAVORS:

We join teams in order to enlist the help of others in growing closer to God. The “endeavors” are practices which we voluntarily assume. They have been found to be a means of drawing us closer as a couple and in furthering our spiritual growth. By sharing on the endeavors at the team meeting we seek help and encouragement from our teammates in our journey.