

APRIL 2025 PRAYER SERVICE

Prayer Service for Chapter 8 of “*On the Road to Emmaus*” Study Topic The Chapter focuses on Luke 24:32-35 By Fr. Eli Lopez, USA-SR Spiritual Counselor

TIME FOR SCRIPTURE:

The passage from **Luke 24:32-35** recounts the experience of the two disciples on the road to **Emmaus** after the **Resurrection**. This passage illustrates a profound encounter with the risen Christ, highlighting the importance of recognizing Him in Scripture and the Eucharist.

Encounter on the Road to Emmaus

The passage begins with the two disciples walking and discussing recent events in Jerusalem, including the crucifixion and the reports of the empty tomb. Jesus Himself approaches and walks alongside them, but they do not recognize Him. He engages them in conversation, asking about their discussion, and they explain their confusion and disappointment that the Messiah, whom they believed would redeem Israel, had been crucified.

Jesus Interprets the Scriptures

Jesus then takes on the role of teacher, interpreting the Scriptures for them, "beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures." This reflects the Catholic understanding of the Old Testament as prefiguring Christ and the New Testament as the fulfillment of those prophecies.

Recognition in the Breaking of the Bread

As they neared Emmaus, the disciples invited Jesus to stay with them. During the meal, he took bread, blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to them. It was in this act of breaking the bread that their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him. This moment is deeply significant in Catholic tradition, as it echoes the Last Supper and foreshadows the Eucharist, where Christ is truly present under the appearance of bread and wine.

Hearts Burning Within

The disciples reflect on their experience, noting, "***Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened the scriptures to us?***" This "**burning heart**" is a symbol of the transformative power of encountering **Christ in the Word and the Eucharist**. It signifies a deep, personal connection with Jesus that ignites faith and understanding.

Sharing the Good News

Immediately after recognizing Jesus, He vanishes from their sight. The disciples, filled with newfound understanding and joy, return to Jerusalem to share their experience with the other apostles. They recount how they recognized Him in the breaking of the bread, confirming the reality of the Resurrection and strengthening the faith of the early Christian community.

Summary

Luke 24:32-35 encapsulates the essence of encountering the risen Christ. It underscores the importance of Scripture, the Eucharist, and the sharing of personal testimonies in fostering and strengthening faith. The disciples' journey from sorrow and confusion to recognition and joyful proclamation serves as a model for all believers.

A scripture passage that complements Luke 24:32-35 is Luke 22:14-20

The account of the **Last Supper** in **Luke 22:14-20** serves as a powerful complement to **Luke 24:32-35**.

In **Luke 22:14-20**, Jesus gathers with His apostles to share a final meal before His Passion. During this meal, He takes bread, gives thanks, breaks it, and gives it to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." Similarly, He takes the cup of wine, gives thanks, and offers it to them, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." This passage establishes the **institution of the Eucharist**, where bread and wine become the **body and blood of Christ**, a **memorial of His sacrifice**.

Complementary Themes

Both passages share significant themes:

- **Recognition in the Breaking of Bread:** In **Luke 24**, the disciples recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread. This echoes the **Last Supper**, where **Jesus Himself** breaks the bread and identifies it as **His body**. Both instances highlight the Eucharist as a moment of **profound recognition** and **encounter with Christ**.
- **Scriptural Interpretation:** In **Luke 24**, Jesus interprets the Scriptures for the disciples, opening their minds to understand His mission. The Last Supper provides the context for understanding Jesus's sacrifice as the fulfillment of the Old Covenant and the establishment of the New Covenant in His blood.
- **Hearts Burning Within:** While not explicitly mentioned in the Last Supper account, the transformative power of the Eucharist, as seen in **Luke 24**, where the disciples' hearts burn within them, is implicit. The Eucharist is not merely a symbolic act but an actual participation in **Christ's sacrifice**, meant to **ignite faith and love** in the hearts of believers.
- **Sharing the Experience:** In **Luke 24**, the disciples return to Jerusalem to share their encounter with the other apostles. **The Last Supper** is also a communal event, shared among the apostles, who are then commissioned to continue this memorial. Both passages emphasize the importance of sharing the experience of Christ with others.

Summary

The account of **The Last Supper** in **Luke 22:14-20** enriches the understanding of **Luke 24:32-35** by providing the foundational context for the Eucharist. While the **Road to Emmaus** story illustrates a personal encounter with the risen Christ through the breaking of bread, the **Last Supper** establishes the meaning of that act as **participation in Christ's sacrifice** and a **memorial of His love**. Together, these passages illuminate the central role of the Eucharist in

the Christian faith as a source of **recognition, understanding, and transformative encounter with Jesus.**

Luke 24:32-35

Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?" 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!" 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.

Luke 22:14-20

When the hour came, he took his place at table with the apostles. He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for, I tell you, I shall not eat it [again] until there is fulfillment in the kingdom of God." Then he took a cup,* gave thanks, and said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; for I tell you [that] from this time on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me." And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.*

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 24:32-35** is **Psalm 16**, resonating with themes of recognizing **God's presence, experiencing joy in His fellowship, and trusting in His guidance.**

In **Psalm 16**, the psalmist expresses deep trust in God and finds joy in His presence. The psalmist declares, "***I say to the Lord, 'You are my Lord; I have no good thing apart from you.'***" This reflects a profound recognition of God as the source of all goodness and the ultimate object of devotion. The psalmist also finds delight in the company of the saints, saying, "As for the saints who are in the land, they are the noble, in whom is all my delight." This speaks to the joy of Christian fellowship and the importance of community in the spiritual life.

Complementary Themes

- Recognition of God's Presence: In **Luke 24**, the disciples recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread. Similarly, **Psalm 16** expresses a profound awareness of God's presence and guidance: "I keep the Lord always before me; because He is at my right

hand, I shall not be moved." Both passages highlight the importance of recognizing and acknowledging God's presence in one's life.

- Joy in Fellowship: The disciples, after recognizing Jesus, return to share their experience with the other apostles. Psalm 16 echoes this theme of fellowship, expressing delight in the company of the saints. Both passages underscore the importance of community and sharing one's faith with others.
- Trust and Guidance: The psalmist expresses unwavering trust in God's guidance: "You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore." This resonates with the disciples' journey on the road to Emmaus, where Jesus guides them through the Scriptures and opens their **minds to** understand His mission. Both passages emphasize the importance of trusting in God's plan and seeking His guidance in life.
- Transformative Experience: While **Psalm 16** does not explicitly mention a "**burning heart**," it speaks to the transformative power of knowing God and experiencing His presence. The psalmist finds "**fullness of joy**" and "**pleasures forevermore**" in God's presence, suggesting a profound and life-altering encounter with the divine. This aligns with the disciples' experience of having their hearts burn within them as Jesus explained the Scriptures to them.

Summary

Psalm 16 complements **Luke 24:32-35** by expressing the joy of knowing God, the importance of Christian fellowship, and the transformative power of experiencing God's presence. While the road to **Emmaus** story illustrates the personal encounter with the risen Christ, **Psalm 16** provides a lyrical expression of the inner experience of recognizing God's presence and finding joy and guidance in His fellowship. Together, these passages illuminate the path to a deeper relationship with God through recognition, fellowship, and trust.

Psalm 16

Response: You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.

*I say to the LORD, you are my Lord,
you are my only good.
As for the holy ones who are in the land,
they are noble, in whom is all my delight.*

Response: You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.

*They multiply their sorrows who court other gods.
Blood libations to them I will not pour out,
nor will I take their names upon my lips.
LORD, my allotted portion and my cup,
you have made my destiny secure.*

Response: You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.

*I bless the LORD who counsels me;
even at night my heart exhorts me.
I keep the LORD always before me;*

with him at my right hand, I shall never be shaken.

Response: *You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.*

*Therefore my heart is glad, my soul rejoices;
my body also dwells secure,
For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol,
nor let your devout one see the pit.*

Response: *You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.*

*You will show me the path to life,
abounding joy in your presence,
the delights at your right hand forever.*

Response: *You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.*

CONCLUSION OF PRAYER TIME:

A prayer that reflects the themes found in **Luke 24:32-35**, **Luke 22:14-20**, and **Psalm 16**.

All: *O Lord Jesus Christ,*

As you walked with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, open our eyes to recognize you in the breaking of the bread and the scriptures. Kindle in our hearts the fire of your love, that we may be moved to share the good news with all we meet.

As you shared the Last Supper with your apostles, grant us a deeper understanding of the Eucharist, that we may receive your Body and Blood with reverence and gratitude. May this sacred meal nourish our souls and unite us more closely to you and one another.

Like the psalmist, we declare, "You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you." Keep us ever mindful of your presence, that we may find joy and delight in your fellowship. Guide us on the path of life, that we may trust in your wisdom and find our ultimate fulfillment in your love.

Grant us the grace to see Your hand in all things, to trust in Your guidance, and to experience the transformative power of Your love. May we always walk in your light, sharing your peace and joy with the world.

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.