

TODAY

A Catholic Journey Through the Gospel of Luke

SESSION 14

Did Not Our Hearts Burn

Luke 22:39–24:53

The Passion, the fifth today, the road to Emmaus, and the Gospel's last verse

Leader Preparation Guide

SESSION OVERVIEW

Discovery Aim: Participants hear the study's title word spoken for the last time from the cross (truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise), discover on the Emmaus road that Luke has written the Mass into his resurrection narrative and reversed Genesis 3:7 in a single clause (their eyes were opened), and close the Gospel where it opened, in the temple, blessing God: every thread of fourteen weeks resolved.

Catholic Touchstone: The Passion as the exodus the mountain announced; the good thief and baptism of desire, handled with a careful steelman (CCC 1258–1260); Emmaus as the structure of the Mass, the Catechism's own reading (CCC 1347); and the Ascension as the passage of what was visible in our Redeemer into the sacraments (St. Leo).

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Gethsemane in Luke (22:39–46) is the physician's account: Jesus kneels (Luke alone), prays Father, if you are willing, remove this chalice from me; nevertheless not my will, but yours, be done, and being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down upon the ground. Luke alone records the strengthening angel and the sweat like blood, and the disciples, as on the Transfiguration mountain, are sleeping, for sorrow. The arrest comes with a kiss; the sword takes an ear that Jesus, in his last free act before binding, heals; and Luke gives the terrible sentence to the arresting party: this is your hour, and the power of darkness. The opportune time is fully open.

Peter's denial (22:54–62) ends with a detail found only in Luke, and it should be read in complete silence: and the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Between the third denial and the rooster's echo, across a courtyard, the prayed-for man meets the eyes of the one who prayed for him, and Peter went out and wept bitterly. It is the look that made when you have turned again possible: not contempt, or Peter would have gone the way of Judas; the Lord's glance carried last night's intercession in it. The trials pass Jesus between Sanhedrin, Pilate, and Herod (Luke alone reports the Herod audience, and notes acidly that Herod and Pilate became friends that day, enemies reconciled over the condemnation of God); Pilate three times declares him innocent, Luke drumming the verdict the centurion will repeat, and releases Barabbas, a murderer, in exchange, the first sinner whose place Christ literally takes. On the way of the cross, Simon of Cyrene carries the beam behind Jesus, an accidental icon of 9:23, and Jesus turns to the wailing daughters of Jerusalem with the lament's last echo: weep not for me, but for yourselves and for your children, the green wood and the dry.

Luke's crucifixion scene (23:32–49) is built of prayers. The first word from the cross is intercession for the executioners: Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do, Isaiah 53:12 (he made intercession for the transgressors) performed while the nails are still warm. Then, between two criminals, the study's final thread resolves. One thief rails; the other rebukes him with the Gospel's most unexpected act of faith: due reward of our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong, and then, to a dying man wearing a mocking placard, Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom, addressing a crucified rabbi as a king with a kingdom on the far side of death. The answer is the last

sēmeron of the Gospel, and the fifth in the study's chain of salvation-todays: Truly, I say to you, TODAY you will be with me in Paradise. Born this day (2:11); today this scripture is fulfilled (4:21); I must stay at your house today (19:5); today salvation has come (19:9); and now, from the cross, to a thief, the word's last and greatest landing: salvation in Luke was never a someday, and its final beneficiary in this Gospel is an outsider with a criminal record and no time left to reform, the blessed-outsiders thread crowned. Luke uses the word elsewhere in passing (5:26; 12:28; 13:32-33; 22:34, 61); these five are the ones that announce salvation, which is why the study counts them. Tonight's steelman lives here and must be handled with precision: the thief was never baptized, never received a sacrament, and went straight to Paradise, therefore (the argument runs) baptism and sacraments are unnecessary and deathbed faith alone suffices. Prepare the honest answer: the Church herself teaches that God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments (CCC 1257), and the Church teaches baptism of desire (CCC 1258-1260), and Catholic tradition has long held up the thief as its living illustration; the Catechism itself does not name him, so present the connection as the tradition's reading of the scene; also, Christian baptism as the Church practices it flows from the completed Paschal mystery the thief was dying inside of. What the thief proves is God's freedom and the sufficiency of Christ's mercy; what he does not prove is that the ordinary means Christ instituted are optional for those who can receive them, any more than one battlefield field-promotion abolishes the academy. Jesus dies with Psalm 31:5 on his lips, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit, a verse Jewish tradition took into its night prayers, prayed at the end as at day's end; the centurion, a Gentile, pronounces the Gospel's verdict, certainly this man was innocent; and the sword Simeon promised (2:35) has fallen: Luke does not place Mary at Calvary by name as John does, so say honestly that her Golgotha station comes to us from John, but Luke shows us the sword's aftermath: she is with the praying Church in the upper room at Acts 1:14, the pondering heart still keeping, now, the whole Paschal mystery.

Easter morning (24:1-12) belongs to the women of 8:1-3, named again: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James; they find the stone rolled, the body gone, and two men in dazzling apparel asking the question of the age: why do you seek the living among the dead? Their testimony strikes the apostles as an idle tale, Luke's honesty about his own heroes, but Peter runs. Then Emmaus (24:13-35), Luke's masterpiece and tonight's summit. Two disciples walk away from Jerusalem inside their broken hope (we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel), and the risen Jesus, unrecognized (their eyes were kept from recognizing him), walks them through the whole Old Testament: beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself, and their hearts burn. At table, the guest becomes host: the four verbs return one last time, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them, and their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight. Two discoveries live here. First, the Catechism's own: Luke has written the Mass, Scripture opened on the road, then the breaking of the bread at table, Liturgy of the Word and Liturgy of the Eucharist, the shape of every Sunday since (CCC 1347), and the vanishing teaches the lesson gently: he withdraws his familiar appearance at the exact moment the Church learns where he will now be found, in the breaking of the bread, their own name for the Eucharist (24:35, Acts 2:42). Second, the Genesis reversal: their eyes were opened echoes Genesis 3:7 nearly word for word (the same verb, the same opened eyes, in the Greek of both), the eating that opened Adam and Eve's eyes to shame answered by the eating that opens the disciples' eyes to the risen Christ; the first meal broke the world and this meal begins its mending. In Jerusalem, he appears to the gathered Church (a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have; he eats broiled fish, the meals thread's last course), opens their minds to understand the scriptures, repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all

nations, beginning from Jerusalem, and leads them out to Bethany. The Ascension (24:50–53) closes both the Gospel and the study's oldest thread: lifting up his hands he blessed them, the priestly blessing Zechariah could not give in chapter 1, a reading the Church's commentators have loved: the mute priest's unfinished liturgy completed by the eternal High Priest, and while he blessed them, he parted from them. And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God. The Gospel that opened with a priest at the incense altar closes with the Church in the temple, blessing God: the bookends meet, and Luke's second volume waits one page away.

OLD TESTAMENT ROOTS AND FULFILLMENT

Isa 53:12 He made intercession for the transgressors – **Lk 23:34**

Ps 22:18 with Ps 69:21 They divided his garments; vinegar to drink – **Lk 23:34–36**

Ps 31:5 Into your hands I commit my spirit – **Lk 23:46**

Gen 3:7 Their eyes were opened: Eden's wound, reversed at a table – **Lk 24:31** **Isa 50:7** echoed **The face set like flint (Lk 9:51)**, **the journey now arrived at its Jerusalem** – **Lk 9:51 with 23:33**

Sir 50:20–21 with Num 6:24–26 The high priest lifting his hands over the people in blessing – **Lk 24:50**

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

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St. John Chrysostom (*Sermon on the Cross and the Thief (De cruce et latrone)*)

Chrysostom never tired of the thief: a robber, he preaches, broke into Paradise before apostle or martyr, stealing heaven with a single sentence of faith, confessing as King a man nailed beside him whom the world had just voted worthless. No merit preceded him and no time remained to him; mercy asked only that he ask. Let no sinner despair, Chrysostom concludes, when the first canonization was performed from a cross, by the condemned, for the condemned.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Augustine of Hippo (*Sermon 235, on Emmaus*)

Augustine presses the Easter mystery of the inn: the disciples knew the scriptures and did not know their companion, and only when he broke the bread were their eyes opened. So it is with us, he preaches: if you would recognize the Lord now that he has ascended, you know where to seek him; he allowed himself to be known in the breaking of the bread, and whoever receives that bread with faith recognizes what the travelers recognized. They walked with him unseeing; we, unseeing, hold him.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Leo the Great (*Sermon 74, on the Ascension*)

Leo gives the Ascension its Catholic grammar: what was visible in our Redeemer has passed over into the sacraments. The Lord withdrew his bodily presence not to be absent but to be present in a

new mode, so that faith, nobler than sight, might find him where he promised to remain: in his word, in his Church, at his altar. The Ascension, Leo insists, did not end the Emmaus road; it made every altar its inn.

CATECHISM CONNECTION

CCC 1347 Emmaus as the Mass: the risen Jesus opening the Scriptures, then taking, blessing, breaking, giving; the Church's two-table liturgy.

CCC 1257–1260 God bound salvation to Baptism but is not bound by his sacraments; baptism of desire, which tradition has long illustrated with the good thief.

CCC 2605 The prayers of the dying Christ: forgiveness for executioners, Paradise for the thief, the psalm of committal.

CCC 641–643 The women first at the tomb; the apostles' testimony founded on encounters with the Risen One.

CCC 659–660 The Ascension: Christ's humanity entering divine glory, hidden now from our eyes.

CCC 1115 St. Leo's principle: what was visible in our Redeemer has passed over into the sacraments; the mysteries of Christ's life dispensed now in the Church's sacraments.

THREAD WATCH

Sēmeron (RESOLVES TONIGHT): 23:43 is the last today in the Gospel, the fifth of the study's salvation-todays. Have the group recite the tally before reading it: 2:11, 4:21, 19:5, 19:9, and now, from the cross. The title of the study lands here.

Temple bookends (RESOLVES TONIGHT): 24:53 ends the Gospel in the temple, blessing God, where 1:9 began it. Let the group discover the symmetry at Q6; it is the study's final gift.

Exodos (RESOLVES TONIGHT): The departure the mountain announced (9:31) is accomplished at Jerusalem: cross, resurrection, ascension, the new and greater Exodus.

Meals with sinners (RESOLVES TONIGHT): Emmaus and the broiled fish are the table thread's last courses, and the Church is left holding the breaking of the bread as his abiding address.

Blessed outsiders (RESOLVES TONIGHT): The tally's final entry: a crucified thief, first into Paradise. Read the whole list aloud at Q3: Zarephath's widow, Naaman, the centurion, the Samaritans, the tenth leper, Zacchaeus, the thief.

The sword (RESOLVES TONIGHT, with honesty): Simeon's sword (2:35) falls in the Passion. Note honestly: Mary's station at the cross is John's account (Jn 19:25–27); Luke shows her after, with the praying Church (Acts 1:14), the pondering heart keeping the whole mystery.

SESSION GOALS

1. Walk the Passion by its prayers: the cup, the look, Father forgive them, and Psalm 31 at the end.
2. Resolve the sēmeron thread at 23:43 with the full tally, and give the thief steelman a precise, charitable answer from CCC 1257–1260.

3. Run the Emmaus discovery twice over: the Mass's structure (CCC 1347) and the Genesis 3:7 reversal at 24:31.
4. Hear the Ascension with St. Leo: the visible passing into the sacraments, and the priestly blessing completing Zechariah's mute liturgy.
5. Close the temple bookends at 24:53 and send the group out with Luke's own commission: witnesses of these things.

Time Note (75–90 minutes)

The final session must not run out of road before Emmaus. If pressed, take the trials (22:63–23:25) in two minutes of leader framing, fold the burial and the empty tomb's details into Q4's setup, and trust the group's fourteen weeks: they can move fast now. Never cut Q2-Q3 (the cross and the thief), Q4-Q5 (Emmaus), or Q6 (Ascension and bookends). Consider ending fifteen minutes early and walking together to your parish's tabernacle; after tonight's texts, no closing activity says it better.

Discussion Guide

OPENING PRAYER

Leader: *Father, into your hands we commit this last evening together. Walk with us on the road as you walked to Emmaus; open the Scriptures until our hearts burn, and open our eyes in the breaking of the bread. Remember each of us, Lord Jesus, now that you have come into your kingdom. Amen.*

WIN: OPENING QUESTIONS (10 MIN)

W1. Fourteen weeks ago you wrote a sealed guess and answered who is Jesus in one sentence. Tonight, before we finish: what has this Gospel changed in how you would answer, or in how you pray?

W2. Have you ever recognized someone's identity or significance only at the last moment, or just after they left? What finally opened your eyes?

BUILD: INTO THE TEXT (50–60 MIN)

HOW TO LEAD THIS SECTION

Tonight is harvest: nearly every question resolves a thread the group planted themselves. Read the Passion texts slowly and resist commentary during them; Luke's restraint is the sermon. Save real energy for Emmaus, and end the evening on 24:50–53 with the study's first session open beside it.

1. Read Luke 22:39–46 and 22:54–62. Luke the physician gives us two details no one else records: the sweat like drops of blood, and, after the third denial, the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Sit with both. What does the agony tell us about what the cup cost, and what must have been in that look, given what Jesus prayed in 22:32?

Leader: *Luke writes a simile, sweat like great drops of blood, not a diagnosis; some readers see hematidrosis, a rare stress phenomenon, but the text's point is the measurable weight of the agony, told with a physician's precision of image. The look: not contempt (Peter weeps and returns; Judas despairs). The look carried the intercession of 22:32: I have prayed for you.*

ANSWER: SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

Luke's clinical detail measures the cup: being in an agony he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood. The dread is real; the obedience is realer: not my will, but yours, be done, the Garden of Eden's not your will but mine finally reversed in a garden at night, by the new Adam, kneeling. And the courtyard's silent climax: at the third denial, with the cock crowing, the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Everything hangs on what was in that look, and 22:32 tells us: the man being denied had already prayed for the denier's faith not to fail, and had already scheduled the restoration, when you have turned again. So the look was the prayer, arriving through the eyes; it broke Peter into bitter weeping rather than despair, which is precisely the difference between Peter and Judas: both fell that night, but only one believed he was still being looked at with love. Some fourteen weeks ago we learned Luke's word for what Mary did with mysteries: kept them in her heart. Tonight we learn what the Lord keeps in his: us, mid-denial.

2. Read Luke 23:32–46. Luke builds Calvary out of prayers: find all three from Jesus' lips. What does the first accomplish while the nails are still new (check Isaiah 53:12)? And identify the third (check Psalm 31:5): what kind of prayer is it, and what does praying it here mean?

***Leader:** Father forgive them (Isa 53:12: intercession for transgressors, performed); the word to the thief (held for Q3); Father, into your hands I commit my spirit (Ps 31:5, a verse long associated in Jewish tradition with nighttime entrustment to God): he dies praying a night psalm, entrusting, not despairing.*

ANSWER: SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

Luke's crucifixion is a liturgy of three prayers. The first is intercession from inside the pain: Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do, Isaiah 53:12 (he made intercession for the transgressors) enacted at the moment of transgression, and the charter for Stephen's dying prayer in Luke's second volume and for every martyr since. The second, to the thief, is the next question's treasure. The third is Psalm 31:5, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit, a verse later Jewish tradition prayed at bedtime, and the choice tells everything: he does not die screaming into the void but entrusting himself to a Father whose hands he knows, the loud voice of a Son going home. Luke frames the three with the innocence verdicts piling up, Pilate's three acquittals, the thief's this man has done nothing wrong, the centurion's certainly this man was innocent, so that the reader cannot miss it: the sinless one is dying the death of the guilty, on the day the true Passover Lamb, without blemish, is given for you. The exodus of 9:31 is being accomplished at Jerusalem, exactly as Moses and Elijah said.

3. Read Luke 23:39–43 slowly. First the tally: recite the study's four todays. Then the thief's act of faith: list everything he confesses and asks, given his circumstances. Then the fifth today. **Steelman chain:** the strong argument from this text: the thief received no baptism and no sacrament and was promised Paradise on faith alone, therefore sacraments are unnecessary and deathbed faith suffices. Give it full force, then answer with precision: what does the Church actually teach about God and his sacraments (CCC 1257–1260), and what does the thief prove and not prove?

***Leader:** Tally: 2:11, 4:21, 19:5, 19:9. The thief: confesses his guilt, Jesus' innocence, and, to a dying man, a coming kingdom: staggering faith. Then TODAY, the last in the Gospel, the fifth of the study's chain. Steelman answer: God bound salvation to Baptism but is not bound by his sacraments (CCC 1257); the thief is the icon of baptism of desire; he also died before Christian baptism's promulgation, inside the very Paschal mystery baptism applies. He proves God's freedom and mercy's sufficiency, not the optionality of the means Christ commanded for those who can receive them.*

ANSWER: SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

The tally first, out loud: unto you is born *this day* a Savior (2:11); *today* this scripture has been fulfilled (4:21); I must stay at your house *today* (19:5); *today* salvation has come to this house (19:9). Now weigh the thief's faith: pinned to his own cross, he confesses his guilt (we justly; the tax collector's posture), Christ's innocence (this man has done nothing wrong), and, most staggering, a kingdom on the far side of a Roman execution, addressing its dying King by name: Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. St. John Chrysostom marveled that a robber broke into Paradise ahead of the apostles, stealing heaven with one sentence. And the answer is the study's title spoken for the last time: Truly, I say to you, **today** you will be with me in Paradise. Salvation in

Luke was never a someday, and its last recipient in this Gospel is the outsiders' thread crowned: a criminal with no time left to reform, canonized from the cross. Now the steelman, honestly: he had no baptism, no Eucharist, no church membership, and Paradise was promised him, and the Church's answer begins with agreement, because it is her own doctrine: God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, **but he himself is not bound by his sacraments** (CCC 1257), and Catholic tradition has long seen in the thief an illustration of what the Catechism teaches as baptism of desire (CCC 1258-1260): the explicit longing for Christ, with repentance and charity, assures what the water assures, when the water cannot be had. Note too that he died before Pentecost, inside the unrepeatable hour whose grace all baptism afterward applies. So the thief proves the two things the Church preaches at every deathbed: that mercy is sufficient and God is free, and that no one, ever, is out of time while breath remains. What he does not prove is that the means Christ instituted and commanded (go, baptize, do this) are optional for those who can receive them: one field-commission on a battlefield does not close the academy; it reveals the General's heart. Preach the thief to the despairing, never to the procrastinating, and preach him constantly: the first canonized saint was a thief, and the ceremony was one sentence long.

4. Read Luke 24:13–27. Two disciples walking the wrong direction, inside a dead hope: we had hoped. The stranger's response is not sympathy but a Bible study: beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. Why the Scriptures first, before the unveiling? And what does verse 32 say that walk felt like from inside?

Leader: He rebuilds their hope on the necessity (was it not necessary, dei) written across the whole canon, so that recognition, when it comes, lands on foundations. Hearts burning: Scripture read with Christ as key ignites.

ANSWER: SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

The risen Lord's first catechesis is a seven-mile Old Testament survey, and the order is deliberate: before he shows them his face, he shows them the pattern, O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not **necessary** (*dei*, the divine must of 2:49 and 9:22) that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he re-reads them their own Bible with himself as the key, everything this study has practiced for fourteen weeks, the lamb, the exodus, the servant, the rejected stone, until the cross stops looking like the death of their hope and starts looking like its grammar. Recognition built on emotion alone evaporates; recognition built on the Scriptures survives his vanishing, which he knows is coming. And verse 32 reports the interior weather of such reading: did not our hearts **burn** within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures? That burn is not nostalgia; it is the ordinary flame of the Word rightly opened, available every time the Church reads Moses and the prophets with Christ as the key, which she does, aloud, at every single Mass. Which is exactly where this scene is headed.

5. **Live discovery, twofold:** Read Luke 24:28–35. At the table, the guest becomes host: watch the four verbs one final time. First: assemble the whole Emmaus episode's structure, road then table, and name what weekly Catholic experience has exactly this shape (CCC 1347 agrees). Second: the clause their eyes

were opened is a quotation. Find Genesis 3:7. What is Luke telling us one meal has begun to undo? And why does he vanish at the moment of recognition?

***Leader:** First find: Scriptures opened on the road + breaking of the bread at table = Liturgy of the Word + Liturgy of the Eucharist: the Mass. Second find: Gen 3:7, and the eyes of both were opened, the fall's eating reversed by this eating. The vanishing: his familiar form withdraws as the Church learns his new address: the breaking of the bread (24:35).*

ANSWER: SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

At table the stranger takes over the host's role, and Luke writes the four verbs for the last time: he **took** the bread and **blessed**, and **broke** it, and **gave** it to them. First discovery: step back and look at the episode's architecture, an assembly of downcast disciples; the Scriptures opened and interpreted with Christ as their center, hearts burning; then the table, and the taking, blessing, breaking, giving in which he is known. That is the Mass, part for part, Liturgy of the Word then Liturgy of the Eucharist, and the Catechism says so in as many words: the Sunday Eucharist keeps the very shape of the risen Lord's Easter meal (CCC 1347). Luke has written the Church's liturgy into his resurrection narrative because that is where the risen Christ intended to be met. Second discovery: their eyes were opened is an unmistakable, nearly word-for-word echo of Genesis 3:7, then the eyes of both were opened, the sentence that reported the fall's first fruit, shame from forbidden eating. Luke answers Eden's meal with Emmaus's: the eating that closed man's eyes to God is reversed by the eating that opens them to the risen Christ; the first table broke the world, this table begins its mending. And the vanishing, at the exact instant of recognition, is not abandonment but forwarding address: he withdraws the familiar appearance precisely as the Church learns the new mode of his presence, and the two disciples name it on arrival in Jerusalem: he was known to them **in the breaking of the bread** (24:35), the infant Church's own name for the Eucharist (Acts 2:42). St. Augustine drew the conclusion for every generation since: they walked with him unseeing; we, unseeing, hold him.

6. Read Luke 24:36–53, and then, one last time, Luke 1:8–10 and 1:21–22 from Session 1. Gather the finale: what does the risen Lord insist about his body (24:39–43), what commission does he give (24:46–49), and what is he doing with his hands as he ascends (24:50, with Sirach 50:20 and Numbers 6:24–26 in view)? Then set the Gospel's last verse beside its first scene. What has Luke done, and what unfinished thing from chapter 1 does the Ascension finish?

***Leader:** Flesh and bones, broiled fish: bodily resurrection, the meals thread's last course. The commission: repentance and forgiveness to all nations, you are witnesses, the promise of the Father. The hands: the priestly blessing (Sir 50:20; Num 6), which Zechariah, struck mute, could not have given in chapter 1. Then the bookends: 1:9, the temple, an interrupted liturgy; 24:53, the temple, the Church blessing God. The mute priest's blessing is completed by the eternal High Priest; the Gospel ends where it began, with the liturgy now unbreakable.*

ANSWER: SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION

The Jerusalem appearance nails the resurrection into matter: see my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit has not **flesh and bones** as you see that I have, and then, the meals thread's final course, he ate broiled fish before them: the Gospel that ate its way from Levi's house to Emmaus ends with the risen Lord at table one more time, because the resurrection is

not a metaphor and grace has never despised food. The commission scales the study's whole map: repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name **to all nations**, beginning from Jerusalem, Simeon's light to the Gentiles and the seventy's math cashed out; you are witnesses; and stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high, the Spirit whose book begins on Luke's next page. Then Bethany, and the detail that closes a fourteen-week circle: **lifting up his hands he blessed them**, the high-priestly gesture of Sirach 50 and Numbers 6, and while he blessed them, he parted from them, ascending mid-blessing, a blessing therefore never concluded and so never ended. Now open Session 1 beside it. This Gospel began in the temple with a priest, Zechariah, whose liturgy was interrupted: struck mute at the incense altar, he came out to the waiting people unable to speak (1:22); a mute priest could not pronounce the blessing that customarily closed the incense liturgy (Sir 50:20-21), and Luke, though he never says so outright, seems to have built his ending to answer that silence. Luke's last scene supplies the suspended blessing: the eternal High Priest raises his hands and blesses his people as he passes through the true veil, and they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, **and were continually in the temple blessing God** (24:53). The Gospel opens at 1:9 in the temple with an incomplete liturgy and one mute priest; it closes at 24:53 in the temple with the whole Church blessing God and nothing mute at all. The bookends meet; the interrupted worship of the old covenant has become the unending worship of the new; and St. Leo names what fills the space between the raised hands and our own day: what was visible in our Redeemer has passed over into the sacraments. He is not gone.

He changed address, and you have it: the word opened, the bread broken, today.

DIG DEEPER: THE SWORD, AND THE WOMAN WHO KEPT ON KEEPING

Simeon told Mary a sword would pierce her own soul also (2:35), and the Passion is where it fell. Honesty about our sources: it is John, not Luke, who places her by name at the cross (Jn 19:25-27); Luke, her Gospel's great portraitist, shows us instead the aftermath: when his second volume opens, she is there, with the Eleven, devoting herself to prayer with the infant Church (Acts 1:14). The one who kept all these things, pondering them in her heart, is keeping, now, the greatest of all these things, and her last recorded posture in Scripture is the one Luke gave her first: in the middle of God's people, saying yes. The study's first discovery was that she is the Ark; its quiet last one is that the Ark abides in the Church.

SEND: TAKING IT OUT (10 MIN)

S1. The Emmaus disciples returned that same hour, seven miles in the dark, because good news outruns fatigue. Fourteen weeks of this Gospel is a lot of burning heart: who, concretely and by name, needs you to walk back and tell them?

S2. The study ends; the breaking of the bread does not. What is one permanent change, in your Mass, your prayer, your table, your mercy toward outsiders, that you will carry from this Gospel? Say it aloud; let the group be your witnesses.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

- This Sunday, live Emmaus consciously: let your heart be set on fire at the Liturgy of the Word, and recognize him in the breaking of the bread. Then, like the two, go tell someone what happened.
- Pray Psalm 31:5 tonight and every night this week, Into your hands I commit my spirit, a bedtime entrustment, prayed once by a dying God, available to you at every bedtime.
- Keep reading: Luke wrote a sequel. Open the Acts of the Apostles this month and watch everything this Gospel planted (the Spirit, the witnesses, the nations, the breaking of the bread) grow into the Church you stand in.

Scripture memory: **Luke 24:32**, *Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?* (RSV2CE)

CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: *Lord Jesus, you walked with us these fourteen weeks as you walked to Emmaus, and our hearts burned. Stay with us, for it is toward evening. Be known to us always in the breaking of the bread; remember each of us, now that you have come into your kingdom; and keep us continually blessing God, until the today you spoke from the cross is spoken over us. Amen.*

Leader Reference Card: Session 14

Every passage used tonight, in order of appearance. Genesis 3:7 stays hidden until the Emmaus table; Session 1's temple texts return at the end.

Passage Used for

Luke 22:39–46 Q1: the agony; the sweat like blood

Luke 22:54–62 Q1: the denial and the look

Luke 23:32–46 Q2: the three prayers of Calvary

Isaiah 53:12 Q2: intercession for transgressors

Psalms 31:5 Q2: into your hands

Luke 23:39–43 Q3: the thief; the last sēmeron

Luke 24:1–12 Framing: the women and the empty tomb

Luke 24:13–27 Q4: the road; Moses and all the prophets

Luke 24:28–35 Q5: the table; the four verbs; eyes opened

Genesis 3:7 Q5 live discovery: Eden's eyes, reversed

Luke 24:36–53 Q6: flesh and bones; the commission; the blessing

Luke 1:8–10, 21–22 Q6: the bookend; the mute priest's unfinished blessing

Sirach 50:20–21; Numbers 6:24–26 Q6: the high-priestly blessing

CCC 1347, 1257–1260, 2605, 641– 643, 659–660, 1115 Catechism Connection

After the study: Consider a fifteenth gathering that is not a session: Mass together, and a meal after, with no discussion guide at all. The Gospel of Luke ends at a table and in the temple; so should its study. And when the group asks what to read next, the answer is on Luke's next page: Acts.