

Chapter 6

Easter Sunday (Leader's Guide)

Luke 24:1-53

“The power of His death once confronted our death. In the words of Hosea the prophet: ‘Death, I shall be your death; grave, I shall swallow you up.’ By dying He submitted to the laws of the underworld; by rising again He destroyed them. He did away with the everlasting character of death so as to make death a thing of time, not of eternity. As all die in Adam, so all will be brought to life in Christ.”

Pope St. Leo the Great

- 1 **Read Luke 24:1-11.** What did the women see at the tomb? What was the reaction of the apostles to their news?

The women found the tomb empty and saw two angels who declared that Jesus had been risen. The angels also reminded them that Jesus foretold that this would take place. The apostles did not believe them. Ask: Why do you think the apostles would not believe?

Entering into Christ's Passion:

- 2 Try to put yourself in the Apostles shoes. In light of the last two days, what do you think the Apostles felt when the women shared their news? How do you think you would have felt?

Confused? Skeptical? Angry that they were being fooled? Secretly joyful and desirous for the women to be right? Take your time with this one.

- 3 **Read Luke 24:12.** Peter's response is a little different than the rest. Why do you think he responds differently?

Ask: Do you think Peter's response has anything to do with his betrayal of Jesus two days earlier? Perhaps it was Peter's desire for forgiveness that drove him to run to the tomb? Ask: How anxious are we to run to Jesus to receive His mercy when we have sinned. How often do we go to confession and take advantage of His sacramental forgiveness? Does confession scare us?

- 4 **Read Luke 24:13-32.** Why do you think the disciples fail to recognize Jesus?

After the Resurrection, Jesus' body was glorified. As we see in this passage, the glory of His new body was so powerful that those closest to Him didn't even recognize Him. Ask: The Church teaches that we will all receive glorified bodies in heaven. What does this passage suggest about the nature of our glorified bodies? What do you think the difference will be? What does this suggest about the physical effects of sin in our lives? The Church believes that physical death is a result of original sin. Christ's glorified and resurrected body is a sign of the conquering of sin, and with it, death.

"We firmly believe, and hence we hope that, just as Christ is truly

risen from the dead and lives for ever, so after death the righteous will live for ever with the risen Christ and He will raise them up on the last day. Our resurrection, like His own, will be the work of the Most Holy Trinity.” CCC 989

“‘Resurrection’ does not mean the loss of our bodies, which would be dehumanizing. It does, in some sense, mean the divinization of our bodies, as we come to resemble the risen Christ, who remains God and man.”

☞ **George Weigel, *Witness to Hope***

5 How do the disciples finally come to recognize who is Speaking to them?

The text tells us that the disciples come to recognize Jesus “in the breaking of the bread” (Luke 24:35). **Ask** if the students recognize anything familiar about the structure of this passage. The Church sees this passage as a prefiguring of the Mass. Jesus first explains the scriptures to them as they travel along the road. This represents the readings we hear at Mass and the homily, which attempts to enlighten them. Then Jesus dines with them and they know Him in the “breaking of the bread.” This is a clear reference to the Eucharist. The two parts of this passage perfectly mirror the two main parts of the Mass: the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

“Here, in the story of Emmaus, we have a glimpse of the Mass, the Liturgy of the Word followed by the Liturgy of the Eucharist. At Emmaus, the twin themes of Jesus’ coming and feasting converge when the resurrected Christ ‘comes’ to His disciples in the breaking of bread. And He continues to come to His disciples whenever the Church gathers together to break bread in the Eucharist.”

☞ **Tim Gray, *Mission of the Messiah***

6 **Read Luke 24:36-38.** Why do you think the disciples were frightened when Jesus appeared to them? What would you have been thinking if you were in their place?

Entering into Christ's Passion:

The disciples were frightened because they still didn't understand Jesus' mission. **Read Luke 24:44-45.** Here, Jesus opens the disciple's minds to see who He really is. Only after this, does the disciples fear disappear. Now Jesus, in **verses 48-49** sends His disciples out to be His witnesses to the world.

Ask: Do you think Jesus calls us to be His witnesses just as He did the original disciples? How do we live this?

- 7 Do we treat the Resurrection as though it were an event which happened 2000 years ago, or is it present to us in our everyday lives? How do we live out Jesus' Resurrection in our lives on a daily basis?

Discuss practical ways that we can live in the light of the Resurrection.

Suggestions: Drawing close to Jesus in the sacraments, especially the Mass; not being afraid to stand up for the faith when persecuted; pursuing fellowship and sharing the life of Christ with other Christians; sharing that life with those who don't know Christ; etc. Try to think of some more of your own and encourage the students to do the same.