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Jesus Dies and Rises Again

Luke 22:1–24:53 · Harvest · Adults

The Passion and Resurrection are the heart of the Gospel, and Luke, whom tradition identifies with the physician Paul mentions (Col 4:14), tells them with an eye for mercy: a healed ear, a forgiving prayer, a pardoned criminal, a look that brings Peter to tears, and a stranger on the road who turns two disciples' despair into joy.

Context: Passover drew huge crowds to Jerusalem, and Roman troops watched for unrest. The high priest's council could condemn but needed the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, to execute. Crucifixion was Rome's punishment for slaves and rebels, meant to humiliate.

The story: at the Passover meal Jesus takes bread and the cup, calls them his body given and his blood of the new covenant, and tells the apostles to do this in his memory. That same night they argue about rank, and Jesus answers that in his kingdom, leading means serving. On the Mount of Olives he prays in anguish and surrenders to his Father's will. Judas, whom Luke describes as gripped by Satan (22:3), betrays him with a kiss; when a disciple strikes a servant, Jesus heals the man's ear. Peter denies him three times and weeps when Jesus looks at him. The council asks whether he is the Son of God, and he does not deny it. Pilate and Herod find no guilt, but Pilate yields to the crowd, frees Barabbas, and hands Jesus over. Jesus is crucified between two criminals, prays for his

executioners, promises paradise to one who asks, and dies entrusting himself to the Father. On the third day women find the tomb empty and hear that he is risen. The risen Christ walks unrecognized beside two discouraged disciples, opens the Scriptures, and they recognize him as he breaks the bread; he appears to the Eleven, eats with them, sends them to all nations, and ascends.

The Church's reading: the Supper is the institution of the Eucharist and the priesthood (CCC 610–611; 1337); Christ is substantially present (CCC 1374), and every Mass makes his one sacrifice present (CCC 1366–1367). Emmaus is the shape of the Mass itself: the Word explained, then the bread broken (CCC 1347). Sin shows all its faces in the Passion, from betrayal and cowardice to cruelty, and in that very hour mercy wins (CCC 1851). Responsibility for Jesus' death can never be laid on the Jewish people as a whole; the Church names all sinners, Christians first (CCC 597–598). The Resurrection is the crowning truth of the faith (CCC 638): a real event and a real body, which the risen Jesus invites the disciples to touch and with which he eats in front of them, now glorified (CCC 639; 645–646; Lk 24:39–43). Easter is the feast of feasts (CCC 1169).

For adult life:

Failure and return. Peter's denial is the worst moment of his life and the start of his real conversion (CCC 1429). In Matthew's account Judas gave up hope (Mt 27:3–5); Peter wept and came back. The Church leaves the judgment of any person to God's justice and mercy (CCC 1861), and no sin, however serious, puts anyone beyond the hope of forgiveness (CCC 982).

Suffering without explanation. Jesus in the garden does not get an answer, only strength. Many adults recognize that prayer.

Discouragement on the road. The Emmaus disciples are walking away, sure it is over. Christ meets them in Scripture and at table, which is where he still meets us.

A Catholic resource: St. Maximilian Kolbe, a Franciscan priest who offered his life in place of a stranger at Auschwitz in 1941 and was canonized in 1982, shows what this kind of love looks like. The Mass and the sacrament of Reconciliation are where this story touches us directly.

A real-life step: go to one weekday Mass this week, and before Communion name one thing you are carrying, as the Emmaus disciples did.

> **Church teaching note**
> Church teaching: the institution of the Eucharist and the priesthood (CCC 610–611, 1337); the Real Presence (CCC 1374); the Mass as the one sacrifice made present (CCC 1366–1367); Emmaus and the structure of the Mass (CCC 1347); sin and mercy in the Passion (CCC 1851); responsibility for Jesus' death (CCC 597–598); the Resurrection as a real, bodily event (CCC 638–639, 645–646); Easter as the feast of feasts (CCC 1169); Peter's conversion (CCC 1429); the judgment of persons left to God and the hope of forgiveness (CCC 1861, 982). Mt 27:3–5 and Col 4:14 are cross-references; Luke's identity as the physician is tradition. Roman crucifixion and the council's need for the governor are historical context. St. Maximilian Kolbe (died 1941, canonized 1982) is offered as a saint, not doctrine.

Talk about it

1. Where do you see yourself in the Passion: Peter, the disciples who fled, the crowd, the criminal who asked, or the women who stayed?
2. The Emmaus disciples recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread. When have you met Christ at Mass?
3. Peter and Judas both failed Jesus. What helps a person return instead of despair?
4. Catholic connection: read CCC 1366–1367. How does the Mass relate to the Cross?

Key verse: Lk 24:34. Look it up in your Bible.