

## **1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35**

**Reverend Giuseppe Mattei (April 19, 2026)**

A Gallup Poll has reported that 76% of church goers think that the sermons teach about Scripture and 75% think that sermons are relevant to life.<sup>1</sup> Are you surprised?

Revelations – “Aha” moments, secrets being told, new understandings, surprises: curiosity and new knowledge help keep a spark of interest in life and boredom at bay.

God keeps surprising us with new revelations also.

In his first letter, Peter tells us that Jesus “was destined before the foundation of the world but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake.” (1 Pt 1:20) Jesus’ birth, life, death, and resurrection was already in God’s plan. Not that God had sealed Jesus’ fate on the cross for our sake but had envisioned to bring his love to the fulness in Jesus: God wanted to show in Jesus what love looks like; God’s love for creation found its revelation in Jesus. Suffering and the cross are what pure and faithful love faces and must go through to give life: true love is wounded love. God willingly went through all that out of love for us in Jesus. And the goal of that was to raise trust and hope in God (v. 21) so that we

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<sup>1</sup> [Sermon Content Is What Appeals Most to Churchgoers](#)

would not hesitate to live by God's standards and learn to love one another from the heart (v. 22).

In Luke's gospel, Jesus himself reveals and is revealed.

It's still the first day of the week, Sunday, the day of the resurrection. Two disciples are making their way to Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They talk about the day's unusual events.

Suddenly, Jesus approaches them, but something prevents them from seeing him - perhaps their grief has clouded their vision: How many of us get stuck in Good Friday of anguish and grief or Holy Saturday of waiting and longing, never making it to Sunday. Earlier they could not *hear* the words of the women, now they cannot *see* Jesus: one could say, they are *blind* to him and his ministry to restore sight to the blind did not end with his death.

Jesus engages them in conversation, prompting them to tell the story. Only one of the two disciples is named, Cleopas. The other one remains anonymous...or leave a blank space for our name to fill: Do we tell his story? What else would we add? What would we stress? What's important to us that others must know about Jesus?

Let us remember that they are "blind" even as they tell the story. One may know *of* Jesus, but does one know Jesus?

They share that they had hopes about Jesus. What had they hoped for? For the political liberation of Israel? For the violent overthrow of Rome? For a return to the Davidic Kingdom (a Kingdom marked by abuses of power and the enslavement of indigenous peoples)? Would they want to make Israel great again, or to make Israel first? Perhaps it was time to reexamine and reorient their hopes.

Jesus did not live up to their hopes: he disappointed them. The fact is, people disappoint people; we disappoint each other; even God disappoints us. The question is: what do we do with that disappointment?

Jesus' response is to open the Scriptures to them: he gives them a Bible study. But even that is not enough. Surely their hearts are on fire as they report later but knowing of Jesus and experiencing him are two different things.

Jesus "interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures." From what he went through he could point out all the passages that spoke about his suffering and death and the manifestation of his glory. It's not that by reading those passages in a linear way one would end up recognizing Jesus: the process moves backward.

It's when Jesus takes, blesses, breaks and give the bread that their eyes are opened. The Eucharist is the physical experience of Jesus after his death and resurrection that

makes him known and available, Luke's parallel to John's Thomas touching Jesus' wounds. It was not in the talking or discussing, but in doing the ministry of Jesus that Jesus was revealed in their midst.

Experiencing the risen Christ does not come at the end of a Bible lesson, no matter how well planned, or even a sermon, no matter how well delivered. It's people's faith beyond logic and the normal ways of knowing that allows people to say: "He is risen." Jewish New Testament scholar, Amy-Jill Levine, writes: "Revelation is connected with the breaking of bread in a fellowship meal; faith comes through revelation, not Bible study or logic or even a vision of Jesus."<sup>2</sup>

At the end of the story, the disciples "hear" Jesus' biblical recollection to the point of experiencing their heart on fire and in the breaking of bread they "see" Jesus. The Eucharist is left to us as a sign of his presence in our midst.

Jesus doesn't just leave, he "disappears" and they are left transformed. His physical presence is not necessary, and it may become a hindrance to faith: our trust in him cannot depend on a constant reassurance of his visible proximity. We have his Word to hear; we have his Flesh and Blood to share; we have his mystical Body called community to be

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<sup>2</sup> Amy-Jill Levine, *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, p. 166

part of and do ministry with. He might have gone out of sight, but we are left to be his presence.

The experience of the resurrection changes our life: it's not about undoing or doing over our life. It's not about a face lift. It's a total change. It's about it taking a new direction.

When that happens, there is renewed energy; there is urgency. Even though the day is almost over, they run back to the disciples "that same hour." (v. 33) When in Jerusalem, they are not fast enough to prevent the other disciples from being the first to tell the story of the resurrection.

But they have more to add: not only is Christ risen, but he is also now present in the community as they partake of his life signified in broken Bread and poured Wine. The sharing of the Eucharistic elements means sharing in his life and in each other's life: we make and become Holy Communion.

From a fear based, desolate and anguished community to a resurrected and joyful one living in the name of Jesus and by his Spirit, the disciples bring a new message to the world: Jesus is risen; he is risen indeed.

The precious blood of Christ has ransomed us from a futile conduct to a new way of life marked by surrender to God and "obedience to the truth." This new birth in God is manifested in "genuine mutual affection," and so Peter encourages all of us: "love one another deeply from the heart" (1 Pt 1:18-22)

May we know Jesus. May we know new life. May we know resurrection. Amen.