

***ctkAlive!* Scripture Study**
Easter Season 2020—A Cycle Readings
Session 3—“We had hoped”



[Fritz von Uhde](#)
“The Road to Emmaus” (1891)

Note: For your convenience and to broaden your benefit from this and all sessions in this series, we have added links to books, authors, and other references mentioned in the text.

Caution: Links to the internet are like rabbits dashing across a hunter’s path. Instinct says, “Leave the reflection and chase after that link!” Instead, we suggest waiting until you have followed the entire reflection. Then take all the time you wish to follow these interesting and educational links.

Introduction

Opening Prayer (slowly . . . follow the pause marks (/ //).

Source: [Vanderbilt Divinity School](#), Prayers for 3rd Sunday of Lent, Cycle A (adapted for use here)

Elusive God,
companion on our way,
you walk behind, beside, beyond;
you catch us unawares.

Break through the disillusionment and despair
clouding our vision,
that, with wide-eyed wonder,
we may find our way and journey on
as messengers of your Good News.

Amen.

Overview of the 3rd Sunday of Easter Theme

As we move through the Gospels of the weeks after Easter, we discover development of an unexpected theme. From Easter morning to the day of his

ascension into heaven, Jesus was on a “farewell tour” repeatedly assuring his disciples that he had forgiven them for abandoning him in the Gethsemane garden.

This is certainly the case with the couple* on their way to “safety” in Emmaus, in the 3rd Sunday of Easter’s gospel. A familiar saying (adapted) goes: “You can run but you can’t hide.” The Risen Christ chased after these two shocked and discouraged disciples who had given up and fled for the safer climes of small-town Emmaus.

On September 12, 2010, Fr. Brian Joyce gave a homily in which he gave those in attendance a tool for self-examination of their own capacity for forgiveness in their personal lives and relationships:

“How wide should our circle of mercy and forgiveness be? Let’s try a little test . . .
“Is there forgiveness for Adolph Hitler, who led the Nazi regime in the extermination of millions of innocent people?

“Is there forgiveness for those who operated the Killing Fields of Laos and Cambodia?

“Or in Uganda where Idi Amin piled up thousands of bodies of those he suspected to be his enemies?

“Is there any chance of forgiving Saddam Hussein who ordered the torture and slaughter of untold numbers of men, women and children, let alone and not to mention Osama bin Laden?

“Is there forgiveness for the pair who killed classmates and teachers at Columbine?

“Is there forgiveness for those who continue to persecute the people of Tibet?

“Is there forgiveness for centuries of slave owners?

“Is there forgiveness for slavery, for segregation, for apartheid?

“Is there forgiveness for those who practice immigration laws that separate babies and children from their parents and prevent people from working in order to feed and clothe their families?

“Is there forgiveness for pedophile teachers and pastors who sexually, physically and emotionally abuse children?

“Is there forgiveness for those who knew what was happening on their watch but did nothing about it?

“Is there forgiveness for bishops who want to control rather than to lead?

“Is there forgiveness for those who abort 41 million children each year?

“Is there forgiveness for the mistreatment and neglect of the elderly and the sick?

“Is there forgiveness for all the car bombs and roadside bombs that maim, cripple and kill in so many areas of our troubled world?

“Can there be forgiveness for the horrors resulting from the bombing of Pearl Harbor, or of Hiroshima, or of Nagasaki?

“If we find ourselves uncomfortable and maybe even in disagreement with some of those areas of forgiveness—and I do—it may just be that we have not yet sufficiently absorbed and digested the words of Jesus and the vision of Jesus. The words of Jesus and the vision is held together for us in . . . a song we sing here:

Loving and forgiving are You, oh, Lord. Slow to anger, rich in kindness, loving and forgiving are You."

Composed and performed by [Scott Soper](#) (listen on YouTube).

* *Were these disciples men, women, a couple? Mark 16:12-13 refers to men: "After this he showed himself in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. These men also went back and told the others, but they did not believe them."*

First Reading: From the Acts of the Apostles (2: 14, 22-33)

"Then Peter stood up with the Eleven and, with a loud voice, addressed them, 'Fellow Jews and all foreigners now staying in Jerusalem, listen to what I am going to tell you about Jesus of Nazareth. God accredited him and through him did powerful deeds and wonders and signs in your midst, as you well know. You delivered him to sinners to be crucified and killed, and, in this way, the purpose of God, from all times, was fulfilled. But God raised him to life and released him from the pain of death; because it was impossible for him to be held in the power of death.

" 'David spoke of him when he said: *I saw the Lord before me at all times; he is by my side, that I may not be shaken. Therefore, my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced; my body, too, will live in hope. Because you will not forsake me in the abode of the dead, nor allow your Holy One to experience corruption. You have made known to me the paths of life, and your presence will fill me with joy* [Psalm 16: 8-11].

" 'Friends, I don't need to prove that the patriarch David died and was buried; his tomb is with us to this day. But he knew that God had sworn to him, that one of his descendants would sit upon his throne and, as he was a prophet, he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah. So, he said that he would not be left in the region of the dead, nor would his body experience corruption.

" 'This Messiah is Jesus; and we are all witnesses that God raised him to life. He has been exalted at God's right side; and the Father has entrusted the Holy Spirit to him; this Spirit, he has just poured upon us, as you now see and hear.' "

Personal Reflection

St. Luke, the author of Acts, describes those first idyllic weeks and months of the Jesus People communities (Acts 2: 42-40). We might call that the "honeymoon period" of Christian history. As we know from our own experience, our "honeymoons" give way to the everyday realities of life—work, school, family; the list goes on and on (including even periodic pandemics). For the small band of Jesus' followers, reality included running battles with the Temple leadership, as we see in this first reading.

— *When have I experienced that same feeling of the "honeymoon being over"? What was it like? How well did I handle it at the time?*

— *More to the point, how well am I handling this current period of enforced “social distancing”? Am I just waiting for the “good old days” to come back? When I look back at this period from the distance of “restored normality,” how might I realize that some good things came out of my forced enclosure? What might they be?*

— *When I am free to move about openly again, will I resume community participation at weekly Mass, receiving the Eucharist, and actively participating in the life of our parish? Or, have I concluded, “You know? I found out I don’t need that anymore”?* (Write about this when journaling later in the session.)

Antiphonal Psalm 16: 1-2, 5, 7-11

Keep me safe, O God, for in you I take refuge.
I say to Yahweh, “You are my Lord, my only good.”

O Yahweh, my inheritance and my cup,
my chosen portion—hold secure my lot.
The best part has been allotted to me.
Delightful indeed is my inheritance!

I praise Yahweh who counsels me;
even at night, my inmost self instructs me.
I keep Yahweh always before me;
for with him at my right hand,
I will never be shaken.

Personal Reflection

Take another minute to read the above verses, slowly and aloud to hear the spoken words of the psalmist.

— *Which phrase or sentence rises easily from my heart and rolls off my tongue?*

— *Which part betrays a need for further deepening of my daily awareness of God’s guiding prompts within me and/or in my daily environment?*

Second Reading: From the First Letter of St. Peter (1: 17-21)

“You call upon a Father who makes no distinction between persons, but judges, according to each one’s deeds; take seriously, then, these years which you spend in a strange land. Remember, that you were freed from the useless way of life of your ancestors, not with gold and silver, but with the precious blood of the Lamb without

spot or blemish. God, who has known Christ before the world began, revealed him to you in the last days. Through him, you have faith in God, who raised him from the dead, and glorified him, in order that you might put all your faith and hope in God.”

Personal Reflection

— *How do I interpret Peter’s statement, “God makes no distinction between persons”? How does that play out in my own daily life, in my relationships, even perhaps in my personal biases and prejudices?*

— *What might this “strange land” be that the early Jewish converts find themselves inhabiting? What do I think Peter is referring to? To what extent might that “strange land” have meaning for me as I live out my faith in the midst of a “who needs it?” society?*

Gospel Proclamation from the Gospel of St. Luke (24: 13-35)

“That same day, two followers of Jesus were going to Emmaus, a village seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking to each other about all the things that had happened. While they were talking and debating these things, Jesus himself approached and began to accompany them, but their eyes were not able to recognize him.

“He asked, ‘What is it you are talking about?’”

“The two stood still, looking sad. Then the one named Cleophas answered, ‘Why, it seems you are the only traveler to Jerusalem who doesn’t know what has happened there these past few days.’

“And he asked, ‘What is it?’

“They replied, ‘It is about Jesus of Nazareth. He was a prophet, you know, mighty in word and deed before God and the people. But the chief priests and our rulers sentenced him to death. They handed him over to be crucified. We had hoped that he would redeem Israel. It is now the third day since all this took place. It is also true that some women of our group have disturbed us. When they went to the tomb at dawn, they did not find his body; and they came and told us that they had had a vision of angels, who said that Jesus was alive. Some of our people went to the tomb and found everything just as the women had said, but they did not find a body in the tomb.’

“He said to them, ‘How dull you are, how slow of understanding! Is the message of the prophets too difficult for you to understand? Is it not written that the Christ should suffer all this, and then enter his glory?’

“Then starting with Moses, and going through the prophets, he explained to them everything in the Scriptures concerning himself. As they drew near the village they were heading for, Jesus made as if to go farther. But they prevailed upon him, ‘Stay

with us, for night comes quickly. The day is now almost over.’ So he went in to stay with them.

“When they were at table, he took the bread, said a blessing, broke it, and gave each a piece. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; but he vanished out of their sight. And they said to one another, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us when he was talking to us on the road and explaining the Scriptures?’ They immediately set out and returned to Jerusalem.

“There, they found the Eleven and their companions gathered together. They were greeted by these words: ‘Yes, it is true, the Lord is risen! He has appeared to Simon!’

“Then the two told what had happened on the road to Emmaus, and how Jesus had made himself known, when he broke bread with them.”

Personal Reflection

“We had hoped . . .” These have to be among the most poignant and deeply human admissions in all the New Testament. *“We had . . . hoped.”* These three little words (ten letters) are packed with pain and discouragement. . . . In his reply, Jesus can seem to be scolding and insensitive to his disciples’ pain: “How dull you are, how slow of understanding! Is the message of the prophets too difficult for you to understand?”

— *How else might I look at the Lord’s response, “tone of voice”? Try saying Jesus’ words aloud as if to a family member. How do they sound? Scolding? Pleading? Frustrated? Can I find another way to say them?*

— *Can I recall an “I had hoped” moment in my own life—a time when some dream or expectation did not turn out the way I “had hoped.” How did I feel at that moment? How was I able to recover, regain equanimity in my life?*

— *What remnants of that past time or occasion still creep up on me—suddenly, “out of the blue”? How do I deal with those memories and their accompanying feelings?*

If someone close to me ever shared a painful, “I had hoped” moment:

— *How did I counsel or console that person? Or, did I dismiss him/her as making too much of the situation?*

Journaling Prompts

Take some time to write about the insights you’ve gained from reflecting on the 3rd Sunday of Easter readings.

- *What is the first thought that comes to mind?*
- *How do I respond to what I've discovered in today's Scriptures?*

Questions

Feel free to send any questions or comments you might have to ctkAlive@ctkph.org

Preview of Next Session 4th Sunday of Easter Season

Acts of the Apostles 2: 14, 36-41 “Those who accepted (Peter’s) word were baptized; some 3,000 persons were added to their number that day.”

Psalms 23 “The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.”

1 Peter 2: 20-25 “You were like stray sheep, but you have come back to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.”

John 10: 1-10 “I have come that they may have life, life in all its fullness.”

Recommended Reading:

[*The Passion and the Cross*](#) * by [Ronald Rolheiser](#), OMI

“If you think this is a predictable and usual commentary on the passion accounts of Jesus, be ready for a grateful surprise! Here you will find years of reflection, prayer, and a life in deep union with the mystery of death, suffering, and the resurrection that comes with it. The course of Jesus’s journey is the course of fulfilled humanity, and it seems to surely be the course of Rolheiser’s journey.”

— [Richard Rohr](#), O.F.M., author, [*Eager to Love: The Alternate Way of St. Francis of Assisi*](#)

** I have not finished reading this book, but Richard Rohr, OFM’s endorsement is a strong one.*

A Book about St. Peter

I have not read this book by Catholic author Tim Gray, but it has a 5 star rating on Amazon reviews. Check it out for yourself. (Available in both paperback and ebook formats.)

[*Peter: Keys to Following Jesus*](#) by [Tim Gray](#)

For Viewing

40—The Temptation of Christ

(new film directed by Douglas James Vail, with the boy Jesus being played by [Mateo Rey](#). Until very recently Mateo and his parents, Christopher and Sarah Garcia were CTK parishioners. The film was set to be released in theaters this week. Instead it will be available this during this Easter Season on many streaming channels (including Amazon Prime and iTunes). We had a private showing here at CTK last summer. The film is very good. Watch it if you can.)

Closing Prayer

Source: [Vanderbilt Divinity School](#), Prayers for 3rd Sunday of Lent, Cycle A

Creator of the universe,
you made the world in beauty,
and restore all things in glory
through the victory of Jesus Christ.

We pray that, wherever your image is still disfigured
by poverty, sickness, selfishness, war, and greed,
the new creation in Jesus Christ may appear in justice, love, and peace,
to the glory of your name.

Amen.

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[Christian Community Bible: Catholic Pastoral Edition](#)
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Bishop Myriel: In His Own Words
(follow the link)