

The Fathers on Luke 24

Luke 24:1-8 *The Angels' Announcement to the Women*

JESUS IS NOT IN THE TOMB BECAUSE HE IS LIFE. Cyril of Alexandria: The women came to the sepulcher, and when they could not find the body of Christ – for he had risen – they were quite perplexed. And what followed? For the sake of their love and zeal for Christ, they were counted worthy of seeing holy angels who then told them the joyful news as the heralds of the resurrection, saying. “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen!” The Word of God ever lives and by his own nature is life. Yet, when he humbled and emptied himself, submitting to be made like us, he tasted death; But this proved to be the death of death, for he rose from the dead to be the way by which not so much he himself but rather we could return to incorruption. Let no one seek among the dead him who ever lives. But if he is not here, with mortality and in the tomb, where then is he? Obviously, in heaven and in godlike glory. COMMENTARY ON LUKE, Chapter 24.

THE ANGELS RETELL THE DIVINE PLAN OF GOD. The Venerable Bede. God's Son saw fit to become Son of man to make those of us who believe in him sons (and daughters) of God. He was delivered into the hands of sinful human beings to separate us from the company of sinful human beings and at the same time to free us from the power of malignant spirits. He was crucified and rose on the third day, so that he might grant us the virtue of suffering for him and the hope of rising and living with him. HOMILIES ON THE GOSPELS 11:10.

24:9-11 *The Women's Report to the Apostles*

HUMANITY NOW RESTORED THROUGH A WOMAN. St. Augustine. So in this fact we have to reflect on the goodness of the Lord's arrangements, because this, of course, was the doing of the Lord Jesus Christ that it should be the female sex which would be the first to report that he had risen again. Humanity fell through the female sex: humankind was restored through the female sex. A virgin gave birth to Christ; a woman proclaimed that he had risen again. Through a woman death, through a woman life. But the disciples didn't believe what the women had said. They thought they were raving; when in fact they were reporting the truth. SERMON 232.2.

24:13-16 *Conversing on the Road to Emmaus*

JESUS IS TO BE RECOGNIZED IN THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD. St. Augustine: Ah yes, brothers and sisters, but where did the Lord wish to be recognized? In the breaking of bread. We're all right, nothing to worry about – we break bread and we recognize the Lord. It was for our sake that he didn't want to be recognized anywhere but there, because we weren't going to see him in the flesh, and yet we were going to eat his flesh. So if you're a believer, any of you, if you're not called a Christian for nothing, if you don't come to church pointlessly, if you listen to the Word of God in fear and hope, you may take comfort in the breaking of the bread. The Lord's absence is not an absence. Have faith, and the one you cannot see is with you. Those two, even when the Lord was talking to them, did not have faith, because they didn't believe he had risen. Nor did they have any hope that he could rise again. They had lost faith, lost hope. They were walking along, dead, with Christ alive. They were walking along, dead, with life itself. Life was walking along with them, but in their hearts life had not yet been restored. SERMONS 235.2-3

24: 25-27 *The Kerygma of the Catechetical Lectures*

JESUS INTERPRETS THE OLD TESTAMENT. St. Cyril of Alexandria: For nothing which comes from God is without its use, but all have their appointed place and service. In their due place servants were sent to make ready for the presence of the Master. They brought in beforehand prophecy as the necessary preparative for faith, so that, like some royal treasure, what had been foretold might in due season be brought forward from the concealment of its former obscurity, unveiled and made plain by the clearness of the interpretation. COMMENTARY ON LUKE, CHAPTER 24.

EVERYTHING IN SCRIPTURE SPEAKS OF CHRIST. St. Augustine: All that we read in holy Scripture for our instruction and salvation demands an attentive ear. You have heard how the eyes of those two were kept from recognizing him. He found them in despair of the redemption that was in Christ, supposing him now to have

suffered and died as a man, not imagining him to live forever as the Son of God. So he opened to them the Scriptures and showed them that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and for all things to be fulfilled that were written concerning him in

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the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms – in short, the whole of the Old Testament. Everything in those Scriptures speaks of Christ, but only to him who has

ears. He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. And so let us pray that he will open our own. HOMILY 2.1 on JOHN.

24:28-30 *The Breaking of the Bread at Emmaus*

JESUS REVEALS HIMSELF IN THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD. St. Augustine: Remember, though dearly beloved, how the Lord Jesus desired to be recognized in the breaking of the bread, by those whose eyes had been kept till then from recognizing him. The faithful know what I am talking about. They know Christ in the breaking of bread. It isn't every loaf of bread, you see, but the one that receives Christ's blessing and becomes the body of Christ. That's where they recognized him. They were overjoyed and went straight to the others. They found whom they already knew. By telling what they had seen, they added to the Gospel. It was all said, all done, all written down. And it has reached us. SERMONS 234.2.

24:31-34 *The Recognition and Return to Jerusalem*

THE FLAMES OF DIVINE SCRIPTURE. St. Ambrose: God then is love, having wings of burning fire, that flies through the breasts and hearts of the saints and consumes whatever is material and earthly but tests whatever is pure and with its fire makes better whatever it has touched. This fire the Lord Jesus has set upon earth (Lk. 12:49). Faith shone bright, devotion was enkindled, love was illuminated, and justice was resplendent. With this fire he enflamed the heart of his apostles, as Cleophas bears witness, saying, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" Therefore the wings of fire are the flames of the divine Scriptures. ISAAC, OR THE SOUL 8.77.

BURNING HEARTS FROM THE FIRE OF CHARITY. St. Augustine: Be on fire with the fervor of charity, in order to differentiate yourself from the demons. This fervor whirls you upward, takes you upward, lifts you up to heaven. What vexations you

suffer on earth, however much the enemy may humiliate Christian hearts and press them downward, the fervor of love seeks the heights. SERMONS. 234.3.

24:36-43 *Table Fellowship*

JESUS BRINGS PEACE FROM HIS BIRTH TO HIS DEATH. The Venerable Bede: Certainly the entirely arranged divine plan of our Redeemer's coming in the flesh is the reconciliation of the world. For this purpose, he became incarnate, suffered and was raised from the dead. He did this to lead us, who had incurred God's anger by sinning, back to God's peace by his act of reconciliation. The prophet correctly gave him the names "Father of the world to come" and "Prince of Peace." (Is. 9:6) The apostle also wrote about him to those from among the nations that believed. He said, "Coming, he brought the good news of peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near, since through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father." (Eph. 2:17-18) HOMILIES ON THE GOSPEL 2.9.

THE DISCIPLES DESPISED DEATH. St. Ignatius of Antioch: I myself am convinced and believe that he was in the flesh even after the resurrection. When he came to Peter and Paul and his friends, he said to them, "Take hold of me. Touch me and see that I am not a bodiless ghost." They immediately touched him. They were convinced, clutching his body and his very breath. For this reason, they despised death itself and proved its victors. After the resurrection, he also ate and drank with them as a real human being, although in spirit he was united with the Father. EPISTLE TO THE SMYRNAEANS 3. 1-2.

JESUS PUTS ASIDE ALL PASSIONS. St. John of Damascus: After his resurrection from the dead, he put aside all the passions: ruin, hunger and thirst; sleep and

fatigue, and the like. Although he did taste food after his resurrection, it was not in any obedience to any law of nature. He did not feel hunger, but at the appointed time, he confirmed the truth of the resurrection by showing that the flesh which had suffered and that which had risen were the same. ORTHODOX FAITH 4.1.

24:44-49 *Preaching Christ's Death and Resurrection*

THE NECESSARY SEQUENCE. The Venerable Bede: "It was necessary for the Christ to suffer and rise from the dead on the third day," he said, and for you to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins in his name among the nations." There was certainly a necessary sequence. First, Christ had to shed his blood for the redemption of the world. Then, through his resurrection and ascension, he opened to human being the gates of the heavenly kingdom. Last, he sent those who would preach to all nations throughout the world the word of life and administer the sacraments of faith. By these sacraments, they could be saved and arrive at the joys of the heavenly fatherland, with the human being Jesus Christ. He is the very mediator between God and human beings (I Tim. 2:5) working with them. He lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen. HOMILIES ON THE GOSPELS 11.9.

24:50-53 *Worshiping in the Temple with Great Joy*

CREATING A NEW PATHWAY FOR US. St. Cyril of Alexandria: Having blessed them and gone ahead a little, he was carried up into the heavens so that he might share the Father's throne even with the flesh that was united to him. The word made this new pathway for us when he appeared in human form. After this, and in due time, he will come again in the glory of his Father, with the angels and will take us up to be with him.

Being God the Word, he became man for our sakes. He suffered willingly in the flesh, rose from the dead and abolished corruption. He was taken up, and he will come with great glory to judge the living and the dead, to give to every one according to his deeds. COMMENTARY ON LUKE, CHAPTER 24.

THE JOY OF ENTERING HEAVEN THROUGH THE FLESH OF JESUS. St. Leo the Great: The ascension of Christ is our elevation. Hope for the body is also invited where the glory of the Head preceded us. Let us exalt, dearly beloved, with worthy joy and be glad with a holy thanksgiving. Today we not only are established as possessors of paradise, but we have even penetrated the heights of the heavens in Christ. The indescribable grace of Christ, which we lost through the “ill will of the devil,”

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prepared us more fully for that glory. Incorporated within himself, the Son of God placed those whom the violent enemy threw down from the happiness of our first dwelling at the right hand of the Father. The Son of God lives and reigns with God the Father almighty and with the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen. SERMON 73.3-4.

The Acts of the Apostles

THE GOSPELS AND ACTS. St. John Chrysostom: The Gospels ... are a history of what Christ did and said; but the Acts, of what that “other comforter” said and did. HOMILIES ON ACTS 1.