

“When the disciples met Jesus on the road to Emmaus, he not only explained to them salvation history but also gave them—and us—the essential way to understand all of Scripture. In *The Emmaus Paradigm*, Scott Hahn breaks open Jesus’s own understanding of the Scriptures. And as Hahn immerses us in Luke 24, we see that the road to Emmaus, the road of Scripture, is a journey to the encounter with Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.”

MOST REV. ANDREW H. COZZENS
Bishop of Crookston, Minnesota

“Scott Hahn breaks open his favorite passage of Sacred Scripture in this profound reading of the Emmaus story, which becomes an interpretive key to understanding the Gospels, Jesus, the Church, the Holy Eucharist, and one’s role as a disciple. Prepare to have your eyes opened and your heart burning with the desire to know, love, and serve the Lord, to walk with Jesus as an Easter companion, and to implore him to ‘stay with us!’”

MOST REV. DANIEL E. THOMAS
Bishop of Toledo, Ohio

“Scott Hahn’s analysis of the familiar road to Emmaus narrative will leave your heart burning within you. He beautifully reveals how Jesus is the connective tissue between the Old and New Testaments, which transforms the way we read the Bible, experience the Mass, and get on the road ourselves to share the Good News with others.”

CHRIS STEFANICK
Founder and President of Real Life Catholic

"The Emmaus Paradigm is a powerful and accessible guide to reading all of Scripture as a unified, living story. Scott Hahn masterfully translates rich theological truths into clear, compelling insights for everyday readers. As I read, this book rekindled for me wonder in the Bible. It's the perfect catalyst for a daily Scripture habit."

LISA BRENNINKMEYER

Founder and CEO of Walking with Purpose

"In The Emmaus Paradigm, Hahn does what he does best: highlights typology, the insight of the Church Fathers, and the Scripture itself. This is a must-read for both the beginner and the advanced reader of Scripture, as there is something in *The Emmaus Paradigm* for everyone."

CHARBEL RAISH

Director of Parousia Media and Author of
How Islam Led Me Back to Christ

"Allow this book to 'open your eyes' to the Real Presence of the One who turned the gloom of Cleopas and his companion into an ardent, supernatural joy that could not be contained. Hahn both explains and personally embodies the truth that a heart set on fire by the Risen Eucharistic Lord cannot but spread its flame to others!"

FR. SEAN DAVIDSON

Author of *Prophet of Fire: The Witness of St. John the Baptist*

the
EMMAUS
PARADIGM

An Interpretive Key to the Scriptures

SCOTT HAHN



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Foreword

When I was a seminarian at the Pontifical North American College in the Vatican in the late 1990s, Scott Hahn came to Rome to give some lectures at one of the pontifical universities. Several other Americans and I made sure not to miss.

Speaking with him after one of his talks, I asked whether he had tickets to the papal liturgy with Pope John Paul II the following day. He lamented he didn't but said he would love to go. I happily informed him I had an extra pass, and we made plans to attend.

During Mass, as the saintly Polish successor of St. Peter was about to give a characteristically polyglot homily, I asked Scott and the other English speakers surrounding us whether they would like me to translate. This was something I enjoyed doing at papal Masses, general audiences, and other events, putting to good use the language studies I had done in high school, college, and

seminary, as well as during programs and extended stays in France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Austria.

Scott, by this point, was a huge hero of mine. During my university years, as I was discerning a call to the priesthood, I would listen to recordings of his talks on the long car rides back and forth from Boston to Washington, DC, and many places in between: talks about his dramatic conversion story, salvation history, the sacraments, the Letter to the Romans, the “Fourth Cup,” and whatever other cassettes I could get my hands on.

I learned from him far more than biblical interpretation and theological insights. His passion—for God, for Sacred Scripture, for the Church, and for the sacramental encounters by which God seeks to give us life to the full—simply lit me on fire. As a disciple, I wanted to love God like Scott did. If God were indeed calling me to be a priest, I yearned to be able to preach and teach the faith with a heart and tongue of fire like the blowtorch that came from Scott’s life and lips.

So it was an incredible honor to be able to translate that homily for Scott and the others seated with us in the southern transept of the basilica, close to the relics of the Apostles SS. Simon and Jude, on whose feast Scott was born in 1957. For me, it was a chance to give something back to someone through whom God had given me so much.

I still remember Scott at the edge of his seat, leaning in, ravenous to hear every softly spoken syllable—smiling, occasionally whispering, “Yes,” and frequently nodding his head in appreciation of various papal insights.

He thanked me several times later that day for what I did. He honestly hasn’t stopped thanking me since. Without the translation of the non-English parts of the homily, he told me, he would not have understood what the 264th Peter was saying. Just like the returned exiles to Jerusalem needed Ezra to translate the rediscovered scrolls from Hebrew into the language people understood (Neh 8:1–12), just like the Christian people needed St. Jerome to translate the Bible from the original Hebrew and Greek into the everyday Latin of the people, so all of us occasionally need translators, not just for some basic interpersonal communication but also to hear the message God seeks to impart.

For the past four decades, Scott has been an extraordinary “translator” of the meaning of God’s revelation to Catholics. In this short but profound book, we learn where he learned to exercise that art of translation.

Scott teaches us how to sit at the feet of the same Master at whose feet he sat—or better, how to get up on our feet and journey with that Master—as that Teacher seeks to interpret for us “all the Scriptures” and “the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27).

This is a book about how Jesus himself translated and translates the entirety of the Hebrew Bible and the meaning of his own messianic life and saving mission. It's a work about Scott's favorite passage in Sacred Scripture, the lens through which he reads the whole Bible, and what he calls the interpretative key to his own life and ours.

Scott believes that getting us to understand and enter into Jesus's interaction with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus is the most important lesson he could teach us and the greatest treasure he could bequeath to his kids and grandkids. That's why this book—his fifty-somethingth and counting, short, unapologetically simple, and intentionally non-scholarly—may prove to be his most important of all.

Everyone who has ever benefited from Scott's books, articles, videos, podcasts, audio series, interviews, missions, keynotes, lectures, question-and-answer sessions, and personal interactions should read this book—more than once.

Scott brings us into the drama of how Jesus spent Easter afternoon and early evening. He entered into the conversation of two of his disciples—Cleopas and another anonymous disciple, who perhaps represent each of us—as they journeyed crestfallen and confused away

from Jerusalem and all it symbolized, heading downhill into darkness.

In his risen body, although still bearing the wounds of his Crucifixion, Jesus somehow looked and sounded considerably different than two days before, and for that reason they had no idea who their itinerant Interloper was.

They had placed their hopes in Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah, whom they anticipated would restore the kingdom of David and evict the Romans, only to have their religious leaders and pagan occupiers conspire to execute him in the most sadistic and humiliating way. The disciples were trying to make some sense out of it, only to become more disoriented when hysterical women returning from the tomb—almost certainly hallucinating out of grief, they must have thought—said they had seen a vision of angels announcing that Jesus was alive.

For the Wayfarer to ask what they were discussing as they made their seven-mile journey would have been akin to asking Americans a similar question the day after Pearl Harbor or 9/11. They expressed astonishment, as if he were the only pilgrim to Jerusalem oblivious to the events of Jesus's betrayal, arrest, sham trial, conviction, and execution.

He got their attention by calling them fools—the worst insult a faithful Jew could hurl, since the greatest

compliment was to know and live by God's wisdom—and said that they were “slow of heart,” not slow of mind, “to believe all that the prophets have spoken,” especially about how it was “necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory” (Luke 24:25–26).

Just like the Apostles—to whom Jesus had mentioned at least three times that he would be betrayed, be crucified, and rise on the third day—and later like Saul of Tarsus before his conversion, the two disciples had totally missed the main point of all that God had revealed.

The unnamed Interlocutor made their slow hearts burn by explaining to them how “all the Scriptures” (v. 27) showed that Jesus's Crucifixion and death were not a contradiction of the Messianic prophecies but a confirmation. Their universe was flipped right-side-up. And their hearts were able to recognize the Savior and Messiah in faith as he celebrated in their home what he had prayed in the Upper Room three days earlier. As soon as he had become present in their midst under sacramental appearances, he disappeared in his risen physical manifestation.

Having recognized with astonishment their risen Lord in the Holy Eucharist, they couldn't keep that truth to themselves. Even though they had already journeyed for more than two hours downhill, even though the sun had long set, they laced up their sandals and ran seven miles

uphill in darkness to share the greatest news of all time with the similarly sullen and slow-hearted Apostles hiding behind bolted doors in the Upper Room. Soon after their arrival and recounting, the risen Lord himself appeared anew to all of them to help them stop questioning, cease doubting, and start believing.

In this work, Scott masterfully takes us through all the elements of the Emmaus encounter, so that we might recognize that the same risen Traveler who journeyed with the two disciples now journeys with us—especially in the Mass, where the Church recapitulates the ambulatory Liturgy of the Word over which Jesus himself presided on the way to Emmaus.

The Church does so to make our hearts burn and our eyes open to behold the Lamb of God, to hear his voice as he says, “This is my body” and “This chalice . . . is the new covenant in my blood” (Luke 22:19–20), and to be ignited to go forth, with God’s blessing, to fulfill the Great Commission by announcing the Gospel of the Lord.

As the Church in the United States continues the National Eucharistic Revival, meant to reform and transform the Church in a Eucharistic key, Scott reminds us that the journey of the “pilgrim Church on earth,” as the third Eucharistic Prayer calls her, is on an Emmaus walk. That journey is ultimately a Eucharistic procession, as

the risen Good Shepherd—really, truly, and substantially present in the Most Blessed Sacrament—walks with us, not to Emmaus, not to the earthly Jerusalem, but to the heavenly Jerusalem.

That's why the US Bishops, as they launched in 2024 the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage—a sixty-five-day journey unprecedented in the history of the Church, which I was privileged to help catalyze—entitled it, “Our National Emmaus Moment.” Indeed, the Church's whole dynamic life between Pentecost and the Parousia is the continuation of what Jesus started on Easter afternoon.

In Emmaus, Jesus shows us that the Eucharist is essentially the pinnacle of salvation history. It wasn't enough for the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity to take our humanity. It wasn't sufficient for him to suffer, die, and rise on the third day. He loved us so much that he humbled himself to become our spiritual food, the new and eternal covenant incarnate, so that we might ever abide in him, remain united in him, and, as his Body and Bride, continue his saving mission in tandem with him to the ends of the earth.

That's why what Scott Hahn gives us in this book is so important.

He helps us to understand the meaning of Jesus's whole life and our own, to grasp how Jesus seeks to

interact with us, to hear his voice and understand his words and actions.

The Emmaus Paradigm provokes us to ask Jesus to “stay with us” (Luke 24:29), to recognize him in the Holy Eucharist, to love him and adore him, conscious that by means of the Eucharist God-with-us fulfills his promise to remain with us until the end of time.

And Scott inspires us urgently to share our Eucharistic Emmanuel, inviting all we know to journey with Jesus and us on the Eucharistic procession of earthly life into eternity.

So don’t waste another minute. With hearts burning and eyes opened, turn the page and begin to plumb the depths of what Scott says is the greatest gift he could give us, as he expertly translates for us the life-changing lessons we all learn from Jesus on the road to Emmaus.

Msgr. Roger J. Landry
National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies

January 25, 2026
Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul
Vigil of Sunday of the Word of God

The Road to Emmaus

LUKE 24:13–35

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, “What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?” And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” And he said to them, “What things?” And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since this happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed

us. They were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; and they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said; but him they did not see.” And he said to them, “O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He appeared to be going further, but they constrained him, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight. They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them, who said, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Chapter 1

The Key to Everything

Talking about the Scriptures is what I do, and it's what I've done full-time for almost forty years.

No, it's more than full-time. On my weekdays, I teach at a university, bearing a normal course load. I teach about Scripture. During weekends, I travel to speak at parishes, usually giving more than one talk per visit. I talk about Scripture. My summers are filled with conferences, at which I often give several lectures per day about Scripture.

During down time, I sit for video and audio interviews about—you guessed it—the Scriptures.

I write about the Scriptures too. I long ago lost count of the articles I've written. My books could line a respectable set of shelves.

So you probably won't be surprised to hear that I'm often asked to cite my favorite passage in Scripture. Some of the questioners are sure—because of my bestselling study on the Book of Revelation—that I'll answer with something mind-bending, complex, and apocalyptic.

They're surprised when I answer with a simple story.

"Luke 24," I say.

"Which verse?" they ask.

"All of it."

There was a time when I would now and then shift my answer to other selections, other scenes. There were days when I declined to answer, comparing the decision to naming a favorite child. But those days are long gone. For me the last chapter of the third Gospel—Luke's entire report of the Resurrection—has become not only my favorite passage but also the lens through which I read all the rest of the Bible.

It is the authoritative account of God's most explicit instruction about how to understand the Sacred Page. In the course of the chapter Jesus delivers the lesson to not one but two groups. So he himself seems to underscore its importance.

I have earned my doctorate, and I occupy a named chair in the field of biblical theology. But if I go forward in faith, I have to acknowledge that I am still a student—still

among those good-willed but slow disciples Jesus speaks to in Luke 24.

When I speak before a classroom or a congregation, I'm learning as much as I'm teaching. That, too, is a lesson I've taken from Luke 24. Many of the disciples had spent three years in company with Jesus. They had listened attentively and with love. Yet often, if not always, they had missed the deepest and most important messages. Only in light of the grace received on Easter Sunday could they, at last, see what Jesus meant.

By that time, they too could have claimed to hold impressive degrees and titles. They had often been eager for such things (see, for example, Mark 10:37). But they knew relatively little because they knew only the promise of the Old Covenant and not its astonishing fulfillment in the New.

Not until Luke 24 did they learn that essential and necessary lesson. Not until fifty days later, on Pentecost, did they find out what to do with their newly acquired knowledge.

In spite of all the books I've written and books I've read, I still sometimes find myself walking or sitting with those troubled, puzzled disciples on that first Easter Sunday. I still find myself returning to the scene because I've come to believe that Jesus's lesson that day is the interpretive key not only to "all the Scriptures," but to all my life.

So I stand by the answer I've been giving for many years now. "Luke 24. All of it." In the rest of this book I hope to show you why and to hand you the key I've come to use for unlocking the Old Testament and the New. I don't know that I can give you anything more valuable. I have nothing greater to leave for my children nor for my colleagues at the St. Paul Center when I'm gone.

I do not intend this to be a work of scholarship, though I will invoke the witness of important scholars. My desire and my hope are to write a simple account of the great revelation of that last chapter of Luke—its all-important instruction on how to read the Bible.