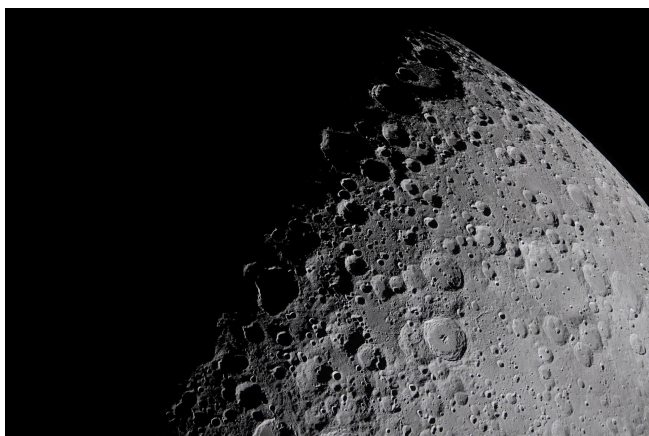




On April 6, the Artemis II astronauts reached the far side of the moon - the furthest distance from Earth any human has travelled in space. They would be completely out of contact from the planet for 40 minutes.

Before their communications went dark the pilot of the mission, Victor Glover, offered these words:

(I want) to remind you of one of the most important mysteries there on Earth, and that's love. Christ said, in response to what was the greatest command, that it was "to love God with all that you are." And he also, being a great teacher said, "the second is equal to it, and that is 'to love your neighbor as yourself.'"



And so, as we prepare to go out of radio communication we're still able to feel your love from Earth. And to all of you down there on Earth, and around Earth, we love you from the Moon.

The response from Mission Control:

Houston copies, we'll see you on the other side.

To close communications, Glover echoed their words,  
We will see you on the other side.

40 minutes, moving through space, the tether of contact broken.

All they could do was have faith in everything that had led up to that moment.  
The years of preparation.

First relying on what had come before them - the Apollo missions fifty years prior - taking the best of what worked for the mission and applying it to the new venture.

Then, for three years building the rockets, planning every aspect of the mission, training the crew members before launching into the known and beyond.

The objectives of the mission were centered on making progress “for all humanity.”

Back on Earth, 2000 years earlier, two homosapiens (earthlings, if you will) were walking on a dusty road. They were followers of the one who was made of Heaven and Earth called “Jesus.” They had just experienced their own “dark” period. For as long as they cared to remember, the words of Jesus had guided their lives, and all of a sudden, that voice had gone silent; they had experienced over 50 *hours* of silence.

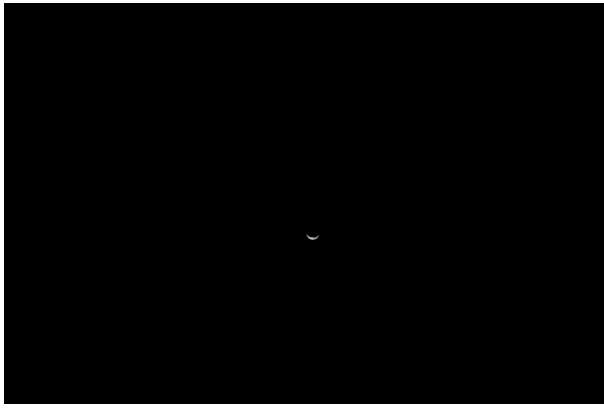
The difference between them and the astronauts on *Integrity* is that the disciples were lost and adrift. In trying to gain some clarity, they set themselves on a course for a place called Village of Warm Springs (Emmaus), seven miles away from where the rest of their crew was located back in Village of Peace (Jerusalem);

a complicated place, kind of like Earth. A sight to behold from a distance, but really conflicted the more you move around it.

And that's where these disciples were - conflicted. They had believed Jesus to be the Christ - everything he did and said pointed to that reality. And yet he was killed by an oppressive empire at the instigation of those who were the keepers of their faith. How? How could that be? And how could *Adonai* - God Almighty - allow that to happen? These were among the things they discussed that evening, on that road. Questions we certainly ask ourselves in our own time.

That's when the stranger - whom the reader is privileged to know is the resurrected Christ - joined them on the way. They were unable to recognize him.

And here is another major difference between the disciples of Jesus and the Artemis astronauts. Each cohort had been trained for three years for what was coming. The astronauts accepted that they would reach a time of no communication with their supporting community. Once Jesus began talking about his death, the disciples tuned out the truth, hoping there could be another way. The reality was harsh. And while Jesus promised them eternal life, all they could concentrate on was death, and that darkness was falling. Such that they couldn't even see the Source of their Life when it was standing right in front of them.



The astronauts knew their home was there even when it was obscured by the moon, and even when it was the largest of the small objects in a sea of darkness.

Christina Koch said, “I found myself noticing not only the beauty of the Earth, but how much blackness there was around

it, and how it just made it even more special. It truly emphasized how alike we are, how the same thing keeps every single person on planet Earth alive.”

For the astronauts, life continued where sight failed. “We’ll see you on the other side,” they reminded each other.

We disciples forget that Jesus also promised, “I will see you on the other side.”

They forgot to look. So, the Resurrected One spent the rest of the journey connecting the life of Jesus with all the life-affirming bits of teachings found in the Hebrew Scriptures. Those words must have helped bring the disciples out of their funk, for they then did the most lifesaving thing they could, they invited the stranger to lodge and share a meal with them.

That simple, yet deeply profound, bit of hospitality opened the door to having their eyes’ opened. And what did it? The most common of gestures – the breaking of bread – the most elemental staple of life sourced from the earth.

Those of you who were present on Maundy Thursday will remember me explaining what “Jesus did for them, when he set that table - washed their feet - broke the bread - poured the cup. Only when they were at the lowest point in their lives – when they were lost and at sea – would they find themselves, each one, walking back to that room. No other place made sense, but to return to that room, and try to make sense of the reality of what had just happened.” (Diana Butler Bass, Southern Lights Conference 2026)

Well, as soon as the Resurrected One broke the bread in their presence, those two disciples came around from the far side of their grief and they were ready to return home. They had been given the fresh perspective that, above all, life wins ... love wins ... and it was now time to place everything they had on sustaining life. That was their commission. And so they went headlong into the darkness to deliver their witness of the good news of Christ’s Resurrection to those still locked in fear and confusion.

**Video:** <https://youtu.be/WdgsAtjrxq4?si=jAGuwrH66ZJ3j0dm>

Interestingly, the trip around the far side of the moon occurred on the day after we celebrated Easter here on Earth. On Holy Saturday – the Day of the Great Silence – the Artemis II astronauts were asked the following during a news conference:

“Apollo 8 had a memorable Christmas Eve reading from Genesis. Do you have a message you’d like to share from space about Easter Sunday?”

Victor Glover responded,

I don't have anything prepared. I'm glad you brought it up, though; I think these observances are important.

You guys are talking to us because we're in a spaceship really far from Earth, but you're on a spaceship called Earth that was created to give us a place to live in the universe. Maybe the distance we are from you makes you think what we're doing is special, but we're the same distance from you. And I'm trying to tell you — just trust me — you are special.

In all of this emptiness — this is a whole bunch of nothing, this thing we call the universe — you have this oasis, this beautiful place that we get to exist together.

I think, as we go into Easter Sunday, thinking about all the cultures all around the world, whether you celebrate it or not, whether you believe in God or not, this is an opportunity for us to remember where we are, who we are, and that we are the same thing, and that we've gotta get through this together."

(Victor Glover: <https://cdn.jwplayer.com/previews/sma8TDgo>)



There's so much work to do to make this home one that promotes life for everyone. The Artemis II mission has given us this fresh perspective of our planet, this spaceship called Earth. Scientists have discovered more than 6,000 confirmed exoplanets -- but we have yet to find another one like Earth.

The biggest reason we have to take care of our home and everyone who shares it with us is simple: there is no planet B.

(from the article “A view from space we can’t ignore: Artemis II helps us see Earth from a different perspective, why warming oceans matter, and nuns planting hope in Nigeria” by Katharine Hayhoe, Apr 15)

Think about it: God trod on this earth! Our Christ summoned us to love with all that we are. We are a people of LIFE. We must each dedicate ourselves to engaging in one or two initiatives that affirm everyone and everything’s right to live and to thrive. For we *are* all the same, completely dependent upon the health and well-being of this beautiful and unique oasis called Earth. Let us fulfill the prayer to have God’s kin-dom come on Earth as it is in Heaven. Amen.