

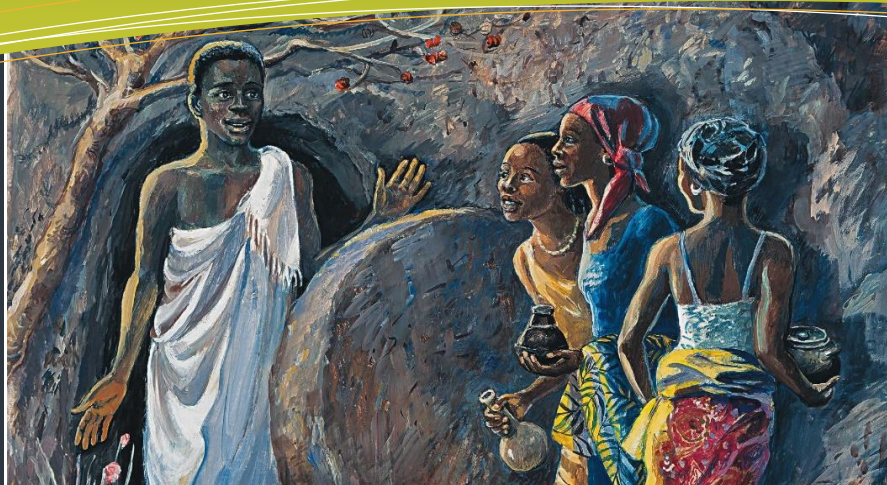


UGANDA MARTYRS SCHOLASTICATE - NAIROBI

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 4
APRIL 2022

**“WERE NOT
OUR HEARTS
BURNING
WITHIN US
WHILE HE
SPOKE TO US?”**



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EDITORIAL WALKING TOGETHER WITH THE RISEN CHRIST

The road from Jerusalem to Emmaus is the symbolic configuration of another road through the scriptures. This journey is necessary to recognize in the Risen Jesus the height of salvific events and figures and foresight of the past. Jesus brings about identification of himself in the breaking of bread – an invitation to share his life, triumphant over death. Thus, he flinches the time of the Church and the time of the celebration of sacramental signs, through which he continues to communicate the gift of love given once and forever.

In the context of the synod on Synodality “walking together”, the walk to Emmaus offers today’s Church a parallel opportunity to rediscover Christ’s presence in their lives, to gain a fresh understanding of God’s transforming grace, and to form a companionship that foster faith and support spiritual maturity. The Church, opening her windows, is a beautiful experience that allows those inside to see outside, and those outside to see inside. This does not only contribute to a more welcoming Church but most importantly reiterates an identity of a Church that mutually reaches others and is reached by others, rediscovering and appreciating each one’s gifts.

In this world still facing situations of wars, conflicts, climate change, stigmatization of the pandemics, and multi-faced violence, which put our less fortunate brothers and sisters into a continuous vulnerability, creating situations of marginalization and inequalities, we should not expect that the resurrection of Jesus brings a miracle without the inter-

vention of man and woman. Indeed, God does not have feet, hands, eyes, ears..., but he has us through whom he walks, works, sees, and hears. The message of the event of the Risen Christ, as well as the process of the synod, cannot pass unheard in both Christian and secular worlds. Alas, a good Christian is a good citizen, one whose life is concerned with the current situation the world undergoes, especially here in Kenya where the elections are at the door with an uncertain outcome.

In this issue, we share today’s experience in which the Risen Christ - as he did walk with the disciples to Emmaus - walks with us, touches us, and in which circumstances we witness his presence in a church that walks together. The resurrection and synodality are an opportunity to look at the past and the present, looking forward to discovering a new path for a better serving Church.

Sch. Jamito Paulino, MCCJ

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EASTER MESSAGE

Fr. Stefano Giudici, MCCJ



The events after the resurrection of Jesus are marked by shock, confusion, surprise, excitement, and a deep, though slow, personal and collective transformation. Looking at one of the most beautiful Easter narratives, “the disciples on the road to Emmaus”, we can draw some important invitations on how to live this incredible Easter time.

On this page of the Gospel, two aspects are worthy of our contemplative attention. Both are

connected with how the two fugitive disciples come to “see” Jesus among them. There are two moments: the first one is *on the road*, first encountering the stranger, then listening to him, and finally welcoming him to stay with them, at their home. The second moment happens *at the table*: sitting with the one who is still a stranger to them, they receive bread from him. In fact, it is Jesus/the stranger who breaks the bread and gives them, not the other way around.

In both moments, something deep happens in the two “former” disciples of Jesus (are they still disciples since they are running away, hoping for a clean start in their disillusioned lives). It happens *on the road*, they feel something; and it happens *at the table*, they see someone. And it happens without them knowing that they are with and in front of

Jesus. They walk with a stranger, accepting the challenge to listen to him – even though the stranger brings them some tough words – and they sit at the table with him. The two actions – walking and eating with a stranger – require a personal decision, but the gift received goes well beyond any possible expectation. Both actions (together!) reveal a new presence of Christ among them: not only the two former disciples of Jesus but them together with the stranger – *the new community of believers*.

In the season of the Synod in the Catholic Church and in the Easter season in our lives, these are important suggestions, which become wishes. After Easter, in the Church, especially now during the Synodal process, *we want to walk with the stranger* – all those individuals and communities who, for multiple reasons, are excluded or feel excluded from a visible and active life in the Church and, most importantly and most tragically, are excluded from the table of the Eucharist. And *we want to be nourished by the stranger*.

The Synod, as envisioned and proposed by Pope Francis, requires

It is not the Church, as we know it to welcome strangers and those far away, so to include them in an already structured community. On the contrary, it is the experience of faith and the voice of the strangers and those who are absent from the usual Church practices that will push us to create with them a new community of faith.

a lot of courage and humility to welcome the stranger to explain to us the Scriptures (shedding new light on them and on our interpretation) and to “break the bread” with and for us (revealing a new presence of Christ in the new community: the two fugitives and the stranger).

The renewal of the Church and of our individual lives will have necessarily to go through these moments, a combination of humility, courage, hope, and transgression. It is not the Church as we know it to welcome strangers and those far away, so to include them in an already structured community. On the contrary, it is the experience of faith and the voice of the strangers and those who are absent from the usual Church practices that will push us to create with them a new community of faith. The disillusioned Christians who run away from the centre of the Church and the stranger hopeful to find a new community, through human acts of walking together, mutual listening, welcoming, and eating together from the same bread – this is the new community of faith that was and is constantly born from the resurrection of Christ.

And so the wishes for this Easter, which still happens in the midst of tragic suffering of entire populations in the world, is to have courage and humility to allow the stranger to speak, to teach us, and to break the bread for us. Easter can be just another day, or it can become the day, one of a new life: my life and our lives.

SYNOD ON SYNODALITY: JOURNEYING WITH THE RISEN CHRIST

Sch. Winfred Etse Dzikunu, MCCJ



On the 9th of October, Pope Francis officially opened the two-year-long process of the Synod, which has come to be commonly referred to as the Synodal process. This journey towards the Synod is under the theme “*Communion, Participation, and Dialogue*”. This is a journey that involves not just the Bishops but the entire church including most importantly the involvement of the laity.

The journey toward the Synod can be likened to the experience of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Cf. Luke 24: 13-25), where the Church is called to journey with Christ as a whole not just a few parts of the body of the Church.

This journey is a journey that will lead us to what the Church in other words is supposed to be. The church as *communion* is a call to look at how to bring those on the margins of Christianity such as the sick, lost, the migrants, and those who don’t feel part of the Church into the fold of Christ. This is what Christ wanted that’s why he took time to journey with the disciple in order to make the disciple understand the mystery of the

Resurrection and to send them back to bear witness to this.

In order to discover the Risen Christ in this journey, we need the *Participation* of all, because in the hearts of the poor and marginalized are hidden also the mysteries of Christ which is necessary for this journey to be complete and come to the realization of the full knowledge in Christ. The third key term in the synodal journey is *Dialogue* which is a continuation of the second term *Participation*. This is a call on the church to listen to the stories of the members of the church just as Jesus listened to the two disciples without judging them. This is the new paradigm that we are called to a specific way during this season of Easter. When this journey is followed faithfully, at the end just like the disciples we would be faced with a similar question “Were our hearts not burning within us as we walked the road of the Synodal process with the Risen Christ?”

I wish you all a happy Easter Season. May the joy of the resurrected Christ move our hearts to work for the common good of all.



FRATERNITY WITH THE MARGINS

Sch. Ngbolo Christ Jordy Larry, MCCJ



In this topic, we shall focus on the experience of the disciples of Emmaus to point out some aspects so that we may see how it is important for us human beings, particularly Christians through the light of the resurrection to bring hope and life to the margins, or to be in communion with them.

Therefore, the experience of the two men on the road to Emmaus is powerful. Not only does it serve as one of many post-resurrection appearances of Jesus, but it shows us how we can look to Scripture to see how God's plan has unfolded. It's a powerful tale, one filled with lessons about discernment, hope,

and the truth. Indeed, the message of Jesus to these disciples is for all people, not just the rich, the Jew, or the "special".

However, through this encounter on the road to Emmaus, we can make an analogy that can be understood also as a reversal of the Garden of Eden in which God walked with Adam and Eve. Their eyes were opened to sin when they ate the forbidden fruit. Now God walks with another couple whose eyes are opened to Jesus in the breaking of the bread, the fruit of the Tree of Life. Jesus blesses them by breaking open Scripture and breaking bread. These two disciples give us a physical representation of the whole of salvation history walking away from God in sin and returning through Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, Emmaus' experience involves seeing things with new eyes or in a different way.

Now how can we, based on the experience of the disciples of Emmaus bring hope and respect to the marginalized people? As Christians in our daily life, how may we assist those on the margins such as widows, children, and women?

Therefore, human hope is a fragile thing, and when it withers, it's difficult to revive. Hopelessness as a disease of the human spirit is desperately hard to cure. When you see someone you love and care for overtaken by illness, which goes

on, and on, despair sets in. It almost becomes impossible to hope for recovery, to be even afraid to hope because of not being able to cope with another down-heartedness. By understanding these issues, we can support the capacity of vulnerable populations in emergencies. We can give them a priority, and engage them in decision-making processes for a response, recovery, preparedness, and risk reduction. As Christians, the experience of the disciples of Emmaus may help us to create a fraternity with the vulnerable, marginalized people, in order to bring hope, tell the truth, and discern what can be good for these people.

However, Jesus' encounter with the disciples of Emmaus must lead us to be aware of the people we encounter in our daily life. This encounter has changed the direction of these two disciples to go back and bring hope and tell the truth to the rest of the disciples who were disappointed. Indeed, this can be a good example for us as human beings as well as Christians to go back and bring hope to those on the margins and also to reveal the truth in what is unjust.

...the message of Jesus to these disciples is for all people, not just the rich, the Jew, or the "special"



REDISCOVERING JESUS' PRESENCE IN OTHERS

Sch. Queliso Amade, MCCJ



Walking together is a matter of collaboration, united with someone or some special group. Walking together gives us space to communicate or exchange ideas. In this case, if we want to do something together is better to rediscover the ability and recognize different gifts from others.

A human being has been called to have a global correlation with others, and this relationship requires faith, witness, love, and hope as the first apostles did, one can rediscover Jesus' presence in different ways: being in solidarity with others, collaborating, good attitude, unity, communication, hardship, happiness, sufferings of the human aspect.

Walking together to rediscover Jesus' presence in others, helps us to understand the Risen Christ despite his experience of faith or witness, it also helps us to know Jesus as the son of God in different aspects. The call of Christians is "to be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8); with this Jesus teaches us that he will be sending us into the world to be his witness and the Holy Spirit will come on us.

The road of Jesus in his public ministry, suffering, death, and resurrection, is a symbol of love for others, Saint John said "God is love" and Jesus came as a symbol of that love. Jesus brought us new life to recognize others in the image of God, the cry on the cross was not for himself but the sympathy for all people in the world. This is the reason why the Church is the face of humanity.

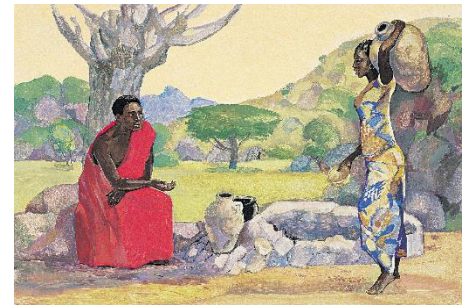
"A woman of Samaria came to draw water, Jesus said to her give me a drink then the Samaritan woman said to him how can you a Jew ask me a Samaritan woman for a drink and Jesus answered if you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you give me a drink, you would have asked him and would have given you living water" (John 4,7-10).

We can imagine, after her encounter with Jesus Christ, the woman got surprised and scared because they were of different tribes and their relationship was not good.

The experience of this woman was very significant because the relationship between the Samaritans and Jews was not good by then. When Jesus came and asked her for a drink she got surprised that was an impossibility. This encounter invites us to have a good relationship with others, to be in solidarity, and to recognize others as the same image of God.

He had shown us clearly who he is, and that is exactly how he loves us.

***This
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The whole Church has prepared herself to celebrate the great mystery of the Crucifixion, the death and resurrection of the Saviour of the world. At the climax of this paschal mystery is the resurrection of Jesus. And as we are celebrating the Risen Lord, we immerse ourselves in this great mystery with the story of the Disciples of Emmaus (*Luke 24:13-35*) who were unable to recognize Christ as He walked with them and explained the Scriptures to them with regard to the Son of Man.

The episode of the apparition of the Risen Christ to these two disciples, confused and desperate, is carrying a *pedagogy*. The Lord wants to transform these disciples already desperate into powerful and convinced disciples. They responded to it only through the transformative grace of God which helps them to carry out the salvific mission of God. Indeed, God is still at work (*John 5:17*) in the world and He is operating through us. Jean-Claude Gianadda, a French gospel singer, stressed the participation of humanity in the work of God. He has sung, “Some say that God became blind, but it’s

with our eyes that He can see today.” God is transforming the world through us. But before humanity becomes the *tools* of transformation, everyone is called to let himself or herself be transformed by God.

Through the paschal mystery, we received as John said “grace upon grace” (Cf *John 1:16*). This grace pushes us out to make an impact in the world, *to make present* the kingdom of God. We are no longer fearful but empowered by God’s grace. Humanity thought that wars are elements of the past but are still unfortunate experiences of today.

We are in front of conflicts in different parts of the world. Climate change is another cross in front of us that leads to questions with a reason for our hope for a bright future. To make the situation worse is the problem of Insecurity, which is in us. This is becoming more and more part of our daily life and the observation is that many have lost hope. Despite all this, it is the best moment to experience the Risen Lord in our midst. He removes the darkness in our eyes and transforms our despair into incredible hope. Humanity is renewed by Him and dared to go back to “Jerusalem”.

We are no longer fearful but empowered by God’s grace

As we celebrate the Risen Lord who is among us, let us seek peace for our world, let us protect our environment. The Common Good is our priority. The Risen Christ invites us to be the rays of His Light in the world. The miracle Jesus is operating today passes by our capacity to reflect on what is in our society today. Therefore, there is no reason to be a barrier to God’s transformative actions, rather the collaborator. This is because we have first experienced the Risen Lord in our hearts and he has joined us along the way to bring his light to the world. Let us be determined to let the Lord use all our senses to operate in his crucial way in saving humanity as he is an eye-opener to this historical moment of renewal of humanity.



WALKING TOGETHER: A NEW PARADIGM OF BEING A CHURCH

Sch. Jean-Marie Vianney, MCCJ



In 1964, Pope Paul VI decided to abandon his tiara and donated it to the poor. The history of the tiara, whose symbolism referred to the papal authority over the earthly rulers, is one of the signs of how the development of the Church has been influenced by cultures and governmental systems. Taking a step today for a Synodal Church, one of the points to take into account is an auto-critical analysis of various elements that we have inherited from history and cultures that may render in one way or another the realization of a communal Church difficult.

Throughout the history of the Church, we can see how the gap has been created slowly by slowly in the relationship between those who were supposed to be one another's brothers and sisters. This relational gap has its source in the development of a hierarchy characterized by the search for power, aristocracy, and nepotism. These elements are somehow the consequences of bilateral synchrony between the State and the Church. The lower class could do nothing but create tyrants. They submitted their freedom and will to

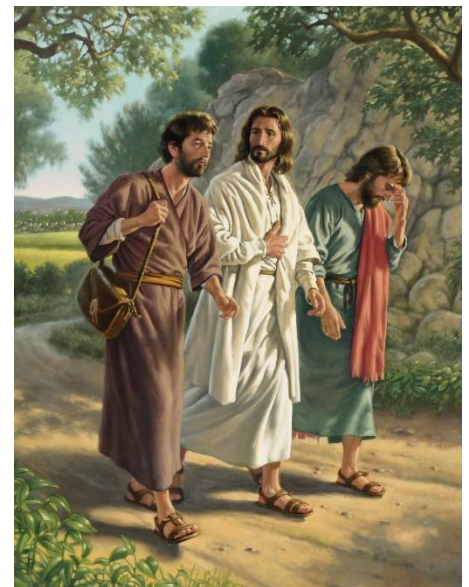
those whom they believed to ensure them a meaningful existence. When a relationship is marked by fear and hesitation to challenge one another freely, the spirit of fraternity is slowly killed.

The French revolution definitively brought a blow sealing the beginning of the process of separation between the State and the Church. Though this movement brought disastrous damages to the Church, we should be thankful today as the Church breathes an air of freedom and can focus on matters of spiritual growth. However, we should ask ourselves if we have made the step of getting rid of some of the things acquired from this relationship, which are affecting the understanding of authority and fraternal communion in the Church.

The example of the giving up of the tiara given above shows how the Pope was somehow put at the summit of a pyramid. This is an image completely different from the Peter of the early Church. The Jesus that we are following was a man of the people, and not a man distant from the people. In many places, we can still see the gap between 'superiority' and 'inferiority' in the relationship between the clergy and the laypeople. Coming together at the table of fraternity and walking together as a synodal Church is a constant call to putting aside the

coat of a spirit of domination and complexity. In some areas in Africa and different places in the world, the culture of excluding women, as well as the less fortunate to participate in decision-making spheres for their communities, continues a reality. These are cultures that affect the ideal of a synodal Church. The synodal journey is also a journey of a deep dialogue between culture and the Christian faith. The human person should be at the center of this dialogue. We have to learn how to contemplate the human person as a mystery to explore with love.

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The story of the disciples of Emmaus - recounted by the Evangelist Luke (24:13-35) shows us the way of this process of Synodality convoked by Pope Francis, it invites us to walk together as Catholics with the resurrected Christ, which means walking in the light. This process of Synodality can cause damage to the heart, not only our complaints of others, “but also their complaints of us when everything seems to have turned sour.” It is a historical event as the resurrection of Christ and the disciples of Emmaus.

The disciples of Emmaus were dismayed at the death of their Teacher, which was so overwhelming and painful. They thought it best to leave the city and look for a comfortable place. Yet, the poor things were still talking about it, weren't they? And they were complaining. In their hearts

they were thinking: “we had such great hopes, but everything has failed.” We will face this situation of complaining in the process of the Synodality of walking together on this long journey.

When we encounter the Cross, we too incur this risk of withdrawing into complaining. Yet at that very moment, the Lord is “close to us, though we do not recognize him. He walks beside us, though we do not recognize him. He speaks to us as well, although we do not hear him.” For us, the complaint is something certain, it is in truth: a failure. Hope is gone when we start complaining. What did Jesus do? He was patient. First, he listened and then slowly began to explain to them. In the end, the disciples saw him. Jesus does the same with us. Even in the darkest moments of our life, he is always beside us, and in the end, he reveals to us his presence.

***We must have hope
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pathways***

Therefore, the journey of the Emmaus disciples as the process of Synod of Synodality can be full of complaints which is a bad attitude, it does away with hope and all expectations in our life. Let us not enter into this game of living on complaints in this unforgettable moment of Synodality. The Lord's presence was made visible “when he broke the bread.” Then, the disciples could see “the wounds” and then “he disappeared.” We must have hope and trust in God who “always moves with us along our pathways, even at the dark hours of our life. We may be sure that the Lord never abandons us... let us not seek refuge in complaining because it harms our hearts.



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