

Assessment

**TANGAZA COLLEGE
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA**

**EMMAUS EXPERIENCE AS A PARADIGM OF JESUS'
PRESENCE IN DISCIPLESHIP: LUKE 24:12-35**

A CHALLENGE TO CHRISTIAN LIFE IN MALAWI

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the Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies**

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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this long essay (thesis) is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited and in full acknowledged.

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This long essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.

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To my parents Mr and Mrs RBP Mmana, members of our family, Uncle Luke Chiwanda, Carmelite Friars, Sr. Rosemary James, and to all the people of good will who showed me the presence of Christ in moments of crisis.

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I thank Sr. Carmel Powell, FMM, my former lecturer in the Gospel of Matthew who motivated me to write a paper on the presence of God in discipleship in the Gospel of Matthew. I therefore decided to take the same element of God's presence in discipleship for my long essay, now with reference to Emmaus narrative in the Gospel of Luke (24:12-35).

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. MOTIVATION AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The crisis of identity among many priests, religious and the faithful in Malawi has motivated the writer of this long essay to explore Luke 24.12-35 in order to get encouragement and insights from the situation of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. In this story, two disciples, Cleopas and his companion are seen grieving over the death of Jesus. Their hope and expectation were dashed as they complain: "But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel (21a)."¹ Their disappointment is the reason of their sadness. It was in this time of disappointment that Jesus changed the situation of the disciples from sadness to a wonderful experience when they recognised him in the breaking of bread (30-31).

The objective of the study is to give assurance of Jesus' presence in our discipleship whether as ordained ministers, professed religious men and women or as the faithful. Many Christians have lost that zeal, which they had when they were newly baptised, newly professed their religious commitment, or newly ordained.

Undergoing a crisis of identity, it may be found that what supported many Christians for so many years: "prayer, worship, sacrament, community life, and a clear knowledge of God's guiding love-has lost its grip on them. Long-cherished ideas, long-practised disciplines, and long-held customs of celebrating

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, biblical quotations are from the Revised Standard Version: Illustrated. Glasgow: Harper Collins Publishers, 1971.

life can no longer warm their hearts. Consequently, they tend to ask themselves why and how they were so motivated."²

However, what happened to the disciples on the way to Emmaus gives us hope that Jesus joins us as we walk in sadness, explains the scriptures to us and presents himself in the breaking of bread. He is ever present in our lives and in our difficult situations. Therefore, we accept the Emmaus narrative as a paradigm of Jesus' presence in our discipleship. St. Luke is taken as our guide knowing that he will lead us along the road to Emmaus.

The body of the Emmaus narrative is literarily framed by the theme of recognition. It tells us how Cleopas and his companion moved from not being able to recognise Jesus (24:16) to their recognition of him (24:31b). Like the two disciples, the Lukan communities suffered from not being able to recognise the risen Lord in the midst of their difficulties and persecutions.

The experience of the two disciples and the Lukan communities is also our own experience. There are moments when we experience the absence as well as the presence of Jesus in our lives. His absence causes perplexity while his presence causes joy. It is when we are aware of Jesus' perpetual presence in our lives that even his apparent absence becomes cause for joy.

2. METHOD AND CONTENT OF THE STUDY

The writer will refer to various commentaries and studies for the exegetical investigation in order to have a systematic synthesis of what some outstanding biblical scholars have said on the text in question.

² Nouwen, H.J.M., *With Burning Hearts*, New York: Mary Knoll, 1994, 26.

First chapter locates the text under study by mapping out a platform on which the exegesis in the next chapter is to be constructed.

Second chapter presents exegesis of the text. It does not analyse the text word by word. In order to be in line with the topic of this long essay, which stresses Jesus' presence in discipleship, only few relevant verses will be exegetically analysed³. This chapter also investigates the nature of the resurrection narratives.

The third chapter is an attempt to apply the Emmaus narrative to the Malawian situation with emphasis on Jesus' presence in crisis, his presence in the discipleship of the lay Christians, and his presence in politics. This will be followed by general conclusion marking the end of the long essay.

³ Such verses are Luke 24: 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 25, 26, 27, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35.

CHAPTER 1

SITUATING THE TEXT

1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the emphasis is on the location of the text under study. Situating the text helps us to know where the beginning and the ending of the text are. There is need to limit the text under study to prevent the study from being scattered.

We shall therefore begin with the delimitation of the text, establishing the "terminus a quo" and "terminus ad quem" of the pericope. The Latin words "terminus a quo" simply mean the beginning of the text and "terminus ad quem" meaning the end of the text. The delimitation of the text is followed by the textual criticism.⁴ After textual-critical analysis we shall establish the form and the structure of the text. Then there will be an investigation of parallel texts in the Bible. The parallel texts may be the source of the text under study or/ may cast light on the pericope under analysis. Finally, there will be an analysis of the remote and immediate contexts of the pericope.

2. DELIMITATION OF THE TEXT

2.1 The Terminus A Quo

Following McKenzie and Haynes⁵, Luke 24:12 will be taken as the beginning of the pericope under study. However, there are three arguments against

⁴ Hayes, J.L. & Holladay, C.R. Biblical Exegesis-A Beginner's Handbook Second Edition, Britain: SCM Press, 1988, 33.

⁵ McKenzie & Haynes, To Each Its Own Meaning-An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and their Application, Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1983, 159-164. They divided

considering Luke 24:12 as the beginning of the text. The first argument is that Luke 24:12 is not found in a number of manuscripts and has been omitted from the Revised Standard Version of Luke. It has been omitted probably because it was considered an interpolation from John 20:3-6. The second argument is that many authors identify Luke 24:12 as part of the story of the women with Peter going to the tomb to confirm their report. In this case, it is considered the terminus ad quem of the story of the women. The third argument is that the majority of commentaries take Luke 24:13 as the terminus a quo of the Emmaus narrative. So, taking Luke 24:12 as the terminus a quo is like moving against a tide.

For the sake of our study we prefer to move against a tide by taking Luke 24:12 as our terminus a quo. The preceding narrative unit, about the women, begins in 24:1 and in our view ends in 24:11. Luke 24:1 is the beginning of a narrative unit, since it describes the women in a new time ("on the first day of the week"), going to a new space ("the tomb"), where they are joined by new characters (the "two men," 24:4).⁶ Luke 24:12 comes immediately after the reluctance of the apostles to believe in the report brought by the women that Jesus had risen from the dead.⁷ This disbelief prepares the way for a further visit to the tomb by Peter (24:12). There is a change of characters from the women to Peter. Since the story of the empty tomb ends in v.11, then v.12 can be considered as part of the Emmaus story and our terminus a quo. Mentioning Peter in v.12 and also in v.34 indicates that Peter is part

Chapter 24 of Luke into three subunits: 24:1-11-the Introduction; 24:12-35-the Emmaus story; and 24: 36-53-the Conclusion.

⁶ Note the three criteria used to identify narrative units-new time, new space, new characters.

⁷ RSV-Illustrated lack verse 12 of Luke 24. Other ancient authorities add verse 12, "But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home wondering at what had happened."

of the Emmaus story. In this way, he also provides a link with the resurrection events from the beginning to the end

2.2 The Terminus Ad Quem

The majority of commentaries take Luke 24:35 as the terminus ad quem of the Emmaus story. However, there are some like C.F. Evans who move against the majority by taking Luke 24:32 as a retrospective conclusion.⁸ For the sake of our study we prefer now to go by the majority by taking Luke 24:35 as the terminus ad quem of the pericope. This is so because, in our view, verse 35 provides a neat closure by recapping the two parts of the Emmaus story: the conversation and the meal.

3. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

There are quite a few textual problems present in this pericope. For the sake of this study we want to discuss textual problems that are relevant to our understanding of the text. For that reason, we analyse only four textual problems.⁹

Luke 24:13 offers a textual-critical problem regarding the distance from Emmaus to Jerusalem. *Stadious hexekonta*, "60 stadia," is the reading in the best manuscript tradition.¹⁰ A stadium was 600 Roman feet, so sixty stadia would be about 7.5 miles.

160 stadia, or 19.5 miles is the reading in other manuscripts.¹¹ The longer distance accords with the erroneous tradition of the pilgrims from the fourth century

⁸ See, for example, Evans, C.F. *Saint Luke*, London: SCM Press, 1990, 901.

⁹ Luke 24:13, 18, 32, 34.

¹⁰ A, B, D, K, L, W, X, Δ, φ, 065, 0124, in Fitzmyer, J., *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV-AB*, New York: Doubleday, 1985, 1561.

¹¹ N, K*, θ, Π, 079, 1079*, and some patristic writers (Eusebius, Jerome, Sozomen) read *studious hekaton hexekonta*, "160 stadia." Ibid, 1561.

that identified the site as Emmaus-Nicopolis. Though there is no certainty about the distance, many scholars are of the opinion that the better reading is clearly “60 stadia.”¹² They suggest that Luke’s “60 stadia” represent the figure of the round trip so that going to Emmaus they went 30 stadia and then returning to Jerusalem they also went 30 stadia.

Verse 18: Κλεοπάς

“A gloss in the margin of codex S (which dates from A.D. 949) states that “the one journeying with Cleopas was Simon, not Peter but the other Simon.” Codex V of the ninth century has the marginal note: “The one with Cleopas was Nathaniel, as the great Epiphanius says in his Panarion [xxiii.6]. Cleopas was a cousin of the Saviour, the second bishop of Jerusalem.”¹³

From what Codes S and Codex V say about the one journeying with Cleopas one gets the impression that there is no explicit knowledge about this companion.

Verse 32 ἡμῶν καιομένη (burning within us)

“The word καιομένη (burning) seems to have given trouble to copyists. The reading “was not our heart veiled?” may have been derived from 2 Cor 3:14-16. The early versions offer a wide variety of readings: the Old Latin manuscripts seem to imply “blinded” or “hardened”; less obvious as to its origin is the reading exterminatum (“destroyed”), though this may be a scribal blunder for exterritum (“terrified”).

The Old Syriac (Sinaitic and Curetonian) manuscripts and the Peshitta version read “Was not our heart heavy?” as do also the Armenian version, the Arabic and Persian Harmonies, and one manuscript of the Sahidic version; this reading seems to imply βραδέϊς in Greek, probably from v.25. O foolish (ones) and slow in heart to believe. The other Sahidic manuscripts read, “Is not then our heart being covered for us?” “Burning,” which is attested by the overwhelming preponderance of witnesses, best suits the context.”¹⁴

¹² As a measure of distance, Greek stadion equalled 600 Greek feet, 625 Roman feet, 607 English feet. Hence “60 stadia” would equal roughly 6.8 miles, and “160 stadia” roughly 18.4 miles. Ibid, 1561.

¹³ Metzger, B.M., A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament Stuttgart, 1994, 159.

¹⁴ Ibid, 159.

The hearts of Cleopas and his companion were burning as the words of the risen Lord reached their hearts. They were also overwhelmed by his presence.

Verse 34: αὐτοῖς λέγοντας (were saying)

"All the mss. read the accusative of the participle λέγοντας (i.e. the gathered eleven and others were saying), except for D, which reads the nominative plural λέγοντες which would mean that the two disciples are reporting that the Lord has been truly raised."¹⁵

4. FORM AND STRUCTURE OF THE TEXT

4.1 Genre

The Emmaus story is one of the resurrection narrative appearance stories. There are different opinions among scholars as regards the classification of the story. Without verse 21b, 22-24, some scholars classify it as a "legend." Legend is a collection of stories about the saints and a contribution to the devotional writings on the saints.¹⁶ Similarly, the Emmaus story is perceived as a narrative of a sainted person, which in this case is Jesus himself.

Some scholars classify it as a "myth." Myth (Gk mythos, "story") is a story concerned with the manifestation of the divine, and in particular as epiphany.¹⁷ The Emmaus narrative fits as a myth because it is a story concerned with the manifestation of the divine. In this case, it is the glorified Jesus who manifests himself to the two disciples. The power of the divine is evident in the fact that the

¹⁵ Fitzmyer, J., *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV-AB*, New York: Doubleday, 1985, 1569.

¹⁶ Broderick, R. C., *The Catholic Concise Encyclopedia*, Minnesota: St. Paul, 1957, 173.

¹⁷ Evans, C., *Saint Luke*, London: SCM Press, 1990, 902.

disciples' eyes are overpowered to the extent that they cannot easily recognise the risen Lord.

Other scholars classify it as a "recognition story." They call it "recognition story" because it is in line with a familiar genre in the ancient world, in which characters that have long been separated, when they meet unexpectedly, engage in an exciting talk.

I agree with those who consider it as a recognition story, because the body of the Emmaus story is literarily framed by the theme of recognition (24:16). It is an account of appearance and disappearance, non-recognition and recognition sequence. The disciples move from not being able to recognise Jesus to their recognition of him (24:31a).

4.2 Structure and Organisation

The Emmaus story is characterised by the theme of recognition. The story moves from the two disciples' failure to recognise the risen Lord to their recognition of him. From the very beginning of the story to its end, there is a kind of movement from ignorance to knowledge, from sorrow to joy, from appearance to disappearance.

J. Fitzmyer, in his division of the story, takes these elements into serious consideration. That is why, in this essay we will follow his structure of the pericope. He divides the story in four parts: the meeting (vv. 13-16), the conversation in route (vv. 17-27), the Emmaus meal (vv. 28-32), and the return to Jerusalem (vv.33-35).¹⁸

¹⁸ Fitzmyer, J., The Gospel According to Luke (X-XXIV), 1559.

5. PARALLEL TEXT

Our pericope has a parallel text only in the gospel of Mark. It is found in Mark 16:12-13. In Luke, the text is longer than in Mark. In fact, Mark 16:12-13 looks like a shortened account of the story of the two men on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:12-35). It seems, however, that Mark's account has nothing to add to Luke's story except for the statement "but they did not believe them" (13). Let us see this in detail.

The account of Luke of the appearance to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus differs from Mark in two ways: firstly, in its account of the two disciples' failure to recognise the risen Lord, and secondly, in how the report of their encounter with the risen Lord was received by other disciples.

Mark 16:12 expresses the appearance of Jesus in "a different form" which makes his presence difficult to be recognised. The same thought is present in Luke 24:16. However, instead of "in a different form" used by Mark, Luke attributes the disciples' failure to recognise Jesus to the fact that "their eyes were restrained from knowing him" (24:16). In Mark 16:13 we learn about the unbelief of the other disciples (eleven) in the story told by Cleopas and his companion which is contrary to what Luke says in 24:33 that the eleven met the two disciples with the story of Christ's actual resurrection and his appearance to Peter (24:34). In Mark 16:13 the story of the resurrection is not received while in Luke 24:33-34 it is received.

The original work of Mark ends at 16: 8. In fact, Luke's use of Mark ends in verse 8 with the story of the empty tomb. Therefore, the Emmaus story is not taken from Mark. It is an independent story that Luke added in his resurrection narrative accounts of the risen Christ. From the fact that Luke did not borrow the Emmaus

from Mark, it can necessarily follow that the longer ending of Mark could be inspired by Luke.

The longer ending of Mark in which our parallel text stands differs in vocabulary and style. The strongest possibility is that it is an official ending added by the early church to a sort of 'second edition' of Mark. It appears to be a kind of different pieces from other gospels. That is why it has interesting features of its own deriving from other "accounts."¹⁹

6. CONTEXT OF THE TEXT

6.1 The Remote Context

The remote context includes Luke's Passion and Resurrection narrative. It begins in chapter 22:1 and ends in chapter 24:53. "The resurrection narrative has not always been treated separately from the Passion narrative. Rather it is treated as a part or an appendage of the Passion narrative. Yet, given the diversity of the gospel tradition found here, it deserves separate treatment."²⁰ Chapters 22-23 constitute the Passion narrative. Chapter 24 constitutes the resurrection narrative. However, it starts in 23:53b "the women rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment."²¹

¹⁹ For 9-11, see John 20:1-2; for 12-13, Luke 24:13-32; for 15, Matt 28:19; for 19, Acts 1: 9. Its peculiar features link it more closely with the literature of the post-New Testament period than with the period of Mark's gospel.

²⁰ Fitzmyer, J., *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV-AB*, New York: Doubleday, 1985, 1533.

²¹ McKenzie, S.L. & Haynes, S.R., *To Each Its Own Meaning-An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and their Application*, Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993, 169.

6.2 The Immediate Context

Luke 24:1-11 constitutes the immediate context. It is a story about the empty tomb. It ends with the apostles' disbelief in the women's report about the resurrection of Christ (24:11). This disbelief prepares the way for a further visit to the tomb by Peter (24:12). Consequently, the empty tomb is not seen as a proof of the resurrection but only as source of wonderment. Faith in the resurrection springs from the actual experience of the risen Lord, and such is the message of our pericope (24:12-35).

Luke 24:36-53 comes after our pericope. It speaks about the disciples who, at first, "were startled and frightened, and supposed that they saw a spirit" (24:37), and at the end had a great joy and blessed God (24:52-53). We observe in this text an expression of true belief. Luke 24:53 closes the whole text of the resurrection narrative. Luke 24:1-53 is a complete thematic unit with three sub units: 24:1-11, the introduction; 24:12-35, the Emmaus story; and 24:36-53, the conclusion.

7. CONCLUSION

After the preliminary presentation of the situation of the text, we can conclude that our pericope is a resurrection narrative with its terminus a quo in Luke 24:12 and terminus ad quem in Luke 24:35.

The Emmaus story is considered as a "recognition" story. This is so because it is in line with a familiar genre in the ancient world, in which characters that have long been separated, when they meet unexpectedly, engage in an exciting talk. The parallel text in Mark 16:12-13 is not the source of the text under study. The

pericope in Luke 24:12-35 is an independent text and therefore will be treated without referring to Mark 16:12-13.

The remote context covers chapters 22:1 to 24:53. Luke 24:1-11 is considered the immediate context that follows the pericope. The immediate context acts like an introduction to the whole resurrection narrative with the last two passages (24:12-35 and 24:36-53) as complete thematic subunits. The remote context is a guide to the understanding of the text because the basic content of the resurrection narrative must have been part of the Passion narrative as we know that "Christ died, was buried, has been raised, and appeared"²²

²² Fitzmyer, J. The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV-AB, New York: Doubleday, 1985, 1533.

CHAPTER II

EXEGESIS OF LUKE 24:12-35

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter is dedicated to the exegesis of Luke 24: 12-35. However, we are not going to do a detailed exegetical analysis of all the verses of our text. We will concentrate on the verses that emphasise the manifestation of the risen Lord. Before we begin our exegetical analysis we will briefly discuss the nature of the appearance narratives, because the Emmaus story is one of the appearance narratives.

2. THE NATURE OF THE APPEARANCE NARRATIVES

The language of the resurrection appearances emphasises not the experience of the recipient, but the revelatory action of Christ. It is Christ who takes the initiative to manifest himself, and not the recipient of the revelation.

The verb "ᾤφθη" (he appeared) of Luke 24:34 "designates not necessarily physical seeing, not necessarily visions in a subjective sense (involving, for example, ecstasy or dreams), but a revelatory self-disclosure or disclosure by God of the eschatologically resurrected Christ."²³ "He appeared" emphasise the initiative of the transcendent subject, whether it be God, an angel, or Christ, rather than the experience of the recipient.

Christians should understand the Easter experiences as revelatory events in which the risen Lord takes the initiative to manifest himself. They are not a result of initiative of those to whom the Lord appeared.

²³ Fuller, R.H The Resurrection Narratives, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1971, 31.

There is a problem of categorising the Easter appearances in any available this-worldly language, even in that of religious mysticism. The Easter appearances cannot be called "objective vision" because to do so is to introduce a nominal form which the New Testament, apart from Acts 26.19, is careful to avoid.

Because of the difficulty we have in explaining the Easter experiences in our language, we resort to the language of metaphor, myth, legend, mysticism. In other words, we use analogy in conveying historical events that belong to the eschatological age. These historical events through which the Easter revelations were conveyed were visionary. However, we cannot describe them as objective visions. The word "vision" at best denotes the this-worldly event through which the eschatological event is mediated²⁴ "Objective" points to the divine act of disclosure mediated by the vision, but does not indicate that what was disclosed was eschatological.²⁵ That is why when we speak of the Easter appearances as visions, it is an attempt to speak of their this-worldly, historical aspect, of how the revelation is mediated, not of the revelation in its eschatological reality.

3. EXEGESIS OF LUKE 24:12-35

The exegesis will not be done word by word. Only few relevant verses will be analysed.²⁶ The criteria for this selection depend on the verses where the risen Lord manifests himself to the two disciples. But even then, the selected exegesis will not be exhaustive for the sake of space.

²⁴ Ibid,33.

²⁵ Ibid, 33.

²⁶ Luke 24:15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35.

15: Καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ ὀμιλεῖν: "And it came to pass while they communed together"²⁷

Talking and discussing: The two disciples were talking and reasoning together. What was that they were discussing? Since the talk of Jesus' death was a current affair accompanied by so much noise, and that surrounded by so remarkable circumstances, it can therefore be assumed that they were discussing the probability or improbability that Jesus was the Messiah

Καὶ αὐτὸς Ἰησοῦς ἐγγίσας συνεπορεύετο αὐτοῖς : "and Jesus drawing near journeyed with them. Jesus himself drew near: The αὐτὸς is emphatic that it was Jesus. Why did Jesus draw near? Jesus joined them to uplift them from their doubts, perplexities and to assure them that he was the Christ. Jesus saw that their minds were anxious about the state of things.

Συνεπορεύετο αὐτοῖς: "went with them": Jesus drew near while they were absorbed in their talk, and was already walking with them when they noticed him.

16: Οἱ δὲ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτῶν ἐκρατοῦντο τοῦ μὴ ἐπιγνῶναι αὐτόν : "but the eyes of them were held-not to recognise him."

"But their eyes were kept from recognising him." This implies that their eyes were held which literally speaking could mean that they "were held back, restrained." This expression means that they did not know who he was. They really saw Christ physically, but they could not recognise him. Why did they fail to recognise who Christ was?

²⁷ Marshall, A., The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, London: Samuel Bagster and Sons Limited, 1967, 351. Unless otherwise indicated, all the translations in this section are taken from the book of Marshall, A.

M. Henry, in his commentary, suggests that there were both an alteration of the object and a restraint upon the organ. This could mean that Jesus' appearance was changed and their eyes were affected

Some commentators like W. Barclay suggest that these two men were walking towards the sunset. It has been suggested that that is the very reason why they did not recognise Jesus. Emmaus was west of Jerusalem. The sun was sinking, and the setting sun so dazzled them that they did not know their Lord.

A. Barnes in his notes suggests that there was nothing supernatural or miraculous in the two disciples' failure to recognise the risen Lord. He is of the opinion that God did not even use any power to blind the two disciples' eyes.

The verb translated "to recognise" or "to perceive" is used by Luke quite frequently (1:4, 22; 5:22; 7:37; 23:7).²⁸ This verb "to recognise" will be taken up again in v.31. In this verse (31) the condition of the two disciples is reversed in the sense that their eyes were opened and they recognised Christ.

17a: Τίνας οἱ λόγοι οὗτοι οὐς ἀντιβάλλετε πρὸς ἀλλήλους περιπατοῦντες: "what manner of communications are these that you have one to another?" "What are you discussing with each other while you walk?"

Jesus takes the initiative by asking them what they have been talking about as they walked. He wants to know the subject of their conversation. He is inquisitive to know what has so much affected their minds.

²⁸ Keck, L.E., The New Interpreter's Bible-Volume 1X Luke John, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995, 477.

Here we have a striking question, literally: "what are these words that you have been pitching back and forth to each other?"²⁹ Ἀντιβάλλετε means "pitching or throwing back and forth." It means discussing a doubt and tossing it to and fro. It is the exchange of ideas in a discussion. They were sad at the overwhelming events that had come upon them. It is in this moment of despair that Christ fell into discourse with them. Despite being a stranger to them and not knowing him, they readily welcomed him.

17b: Οἱ δὲ ὄφθαλμοὶ αὐτῶν ἐκρατοῦντο: "and they stood sad-faced." Jesus' question stops them in their tracks, and they stand looking sad, downcast, or gloomy. His question concerns their present sadness which plainly appeared in their countenances.

M. Henry in his commentary gives us suggestive reasons about what contributed to their sadness. They are sad because they had lost their dear master. They were lost in their own apprehensions, quite disappointed in their expectations from him. They are disappointed and do not know what to do next as regards their call to follow Jesus. Christ's disciples have reason to be sad when he withdraws from them, reason to fast when the "bridegroom is taken from them." (Luke 5:35).

19a: Ποῖα: "what kind of things?" This is ironic for it would be presumed that Jesus had reason to know whatever happened. Jesus asks a leading question to which they give a long explanation. Consequently, they take the occasion to brief

²⁹ Keck, L.E., The New Interpreter's Bible Volume 1X Luke John, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995, 477.

Jesus of all that happened to the expected Messiah (himself) and Jesus instructs them in return.

Jesus now looks back on his sufferings without concern. The past is gone and the future is bright. Jesus made light of his own sufferings, in comparison with the joy set before him, which was the recompense for it.

21: ἡμεῖς δὲ ἠλπίζομεν: "**But we were hoping**" is an expression of disappointment. These words of disappointment echo Jer 14:8, where Yahewh himself is called "the hope of Israel." He is the Saviour in time of trouble. The people had placed their hope in Jesus. But now there is an intimation of their disappointment in him. Their disappointment is the reason of their sadness. "We trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel" (v.22). Their hope and expectation were dashed as they complain: ἡμεῖς δὲ ἠλπίζομεν "But we were hoping, until his death put an end to our expectation, that precisely he, and no other, was the one who should redeem Israel."³⁰

The two disciples are trying to say that they are among those people who not only looked upon him to be prophet like Moses, but to be both prophet and redeemer. Jesus was the one they depended on. They expected great things from him as they were looking for redemption and for the consolation of Israel. Now, it seems that everything ends in vain without any hope of redemption.

Λυτροῦσθαι τὸν Ἰσραήλ: "to redeem-Israel": The two disciples expected Jesus to be the political Messiah. The popular idea of the Messiah was the idea of

³⁰ Plummer, A., The International Critical Commentary-St Luke, Edinburgh: T & T.Clark, 1989, 553.

a conquering king who, with his mighty armies, would defeat the Romans and lead the Jews to world power. Conversely, Jesus thought of messiahship in terms of love. The people thought of messiahship in terms of Jewish nationalism. Their expectation of a political redemption was in line with the theme begun in 1:68 and 2:38 concerning "redemption." However, Jesus came for spiritual redemption not the political one. With that thought in mind, we have to understand Israel in spiritual terms as restored people of God.

Σὺν πᾶσιν τούτοις: "with all these things" (his betrayal and crucifixion, etc).³¹ Cleopas is direct in his explanation. He states things just as they occurred to his own mind. There is little connection. It is clear that Cleopas is confused and distracted, but in spite of his confusion and distraction, he sees that there was so much evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. Their hopes have been suddenly dashed by his death. The succeeding events have been so wonderful that his mind is confused. Consequently, he does not know what to think. What he now states serves to increase his perplexity. Indeed, Cleopas is very open in his expressions. His expressions reveal an agitated mind.

Τρίτην ταύτην ἡμέραν ἄγει ἀφ' οὗ ταῦτα ἐγένετο: "Today is the third day since these things were done." The phrase forms an idiom that cannot be neatly rendered. Literally, it is, "He (Christ) is passing (ἄγει) this day as the third." It is

³¹ Vincent, M.R., Word Studies in the New Testament-Volume 1, New York: Hendrickson Publishers, 1888, 434.

now the third day since, etc.³² The verb ἄγει in a temporal sense is found in extra-biblical Greek, used transitively, in the meaning "to spend" (time) "to celebrate" (a feast).³³

25. Ὁ ἀνόητοι (O foolish ones)

"Foolish" is a hard word, a word that offends us and makes us defensive. But it can also crack open a cover of fear and self-consciousness and lead to a whole new knowledge of being human. It is a wake-up call, a ripping off of blind folds, a tearing down of useless protective devices."³⁴

"O foolish people": The epithet "ἀνόητοι" (literally, "lacking sense") used by philosophers for those without proper understanding.³⁵ It is equivalent to "dull of perception". Therefore, the word employed in this place denotes "weakness or dullness." Jesus reproached them for not seeing what he himself so clearly predicted, and what had been foretold by the prophets. Therefore, the condemnation of their foolishness is based on their slowness to believe the writings of the prophets. If these two disciples had given the prophets of the Old Testament their due weight and consideration, they would have been as sure of Christ's rising from the dead that morning (being the third day after his death) as they were of the rising of the sun.

The risen Lord then leads them to the understanding of the scriptures. The mystery can only be revealed by the word of God. The two had not really

³² Vincent, M., Word Studies in the New Testament-Volume 1, New York: Hendrickson Publishers, 1888, p.435.

³³ Fitzmyer, J., The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV AB, New York: Doubleday, 1985, 1564/1565.

³⁴ Nouwen, H., With Burning Hearts-A Meditation on the Eucharistic Life, New York: Mary Knoll, 1994, 41.

understood the Bible, so they kept thinking as humans. They looked at things with human eyes, not with the eyes of faith. The way of the cross is unacceptable to human minds; only if we read the scriptures can we discover that it is part of God's plan. This revelation begins with the fulfilment of the scriptures, just as the Gospel opened with emphasis on this theme in the first chapter. Those who do not see this fulfilment are "foolish and slow of heart to believe" (v.25).

Βραδεῖς τῇ καρδίᾳ τοῦ πιστεῦειν: "Slow of heart to believe": The heart is a centre of intelligence and will. This is well expressed in 1:17, 51, 60; 2:19; and especially 21:14: "put therefore in your heart," and 21:34 "so that your hearts not grow heavy."

"Slow of heart to believe" goes deeper and contemplates the region of feeling and moral susceptibility. Your heart is dull and slow to respond to these testimonies of your own prophets.

Πᾶσιν οἷς ἐλάλησαν οἱ προφῆται: "all things which spoke the prophets." Luke's fondness for the encompassing "all" is evident again in "all that the prophets have declared" (v.25) and "all the prophets" (v.27; cf. 11:50; 13:28).³⁵ The word all v.25 warns us not to take the scriptures selectively because doing that may lead to the omission of the Messiah's suffering (v.26).

Two things are to be noted about this statement: "All that the prophets have declared." In the first place, it signifies that to believe in Jesus is connected with proper understanding of the scriptures. Secondly, Luke understands this as "all the prophets," implying that all the scriptures bear a prophetic, messianic significance.

³⁵ Harrington, D.J. Sacra Pagina-The Gospel of Luke, Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press 1991, 395.

³⁶ Keck, L.E., The Interpreter's Bible Volume IX Luke John, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995, 478.

26: Οὐχὶ ταῦτα ἔδει παθεῖν τὸν Χριστὸν καὶ εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"

Christ asks a rhetorical question that demands the affirmative answer. Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer after these things and then enter into his glory? In other words, was it not decreed, and was not that decree declared, that the promised Messiah must suffer and then reign, that he must go by his own cross to his crown? Had these two disciples never read the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah and the ninth chapter of Daniel, where the prophets speak so plainly of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow? With that rhetorical question Christ goes to the heart of the matter.

The verb "δεῖ" meaning "it is necessary," is one of Luke's key words (cf. 2:49; 4:43; 13,16, 33; 15:32; 18:1; 19:5; 21:9; 22:7, 37; 24:44 along with the basic passion prediction of 9:22). The unexpected element in Christ's Messiahship was his suffering. The suffering of the Messiah was necessary in God's providential plan for the redemption of Israel and the salvation of sinners. However, the notion of a suffering messiah is not found in the Old Testament or in any texts of pre-Christian Judaism. The Christians find the notion of the suffering Messiah from their experience of a crucified and raised Jesus.

Καὶ εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ: "and to enter into the glory." The verb εἰσελθεῖν εἰς is the same used of "entering the kingdom. Luke uses the term "glory" with regard to kingly rule and authority."³⁷

³⁷ Harrington, D.J., *The Gospel of Luke*, Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991, 396.

When we read Luke 9:26 we see it clearly that "glory" is the condition of a "Messiah" or "Son of Man." This explains the fact that Christ already enjoys the company of his heavenly Father.

Reading some of the Old Testament books like Exod 14:4, 17-18; 16:7,10; 24:16; 40:34-35, Pss 26:8; 72:19, "glory" is seen as the splendor associated with the presence of Yahweh in the Old Testament, and even in an eschatological sense (Isa 43:7; 58:8; 60:1-2).

In Luke 21:27 and Acts 7:2,55 "glory" represents Jesus' transit to the Father. Jesus has reached his destiny. Even while he converses on the road to Emmaus, he tells the disciples that he has already entered upon that status. In other words, he is in "glory," and from there he appears to them.

It was therefore necessary for Jesus to go to Jerusalem (13:33) and there to suffer and die (9:22; 17:25). It was necessary that the scriptures be fulfilled in Jesus (22:37; 24:44). The fulfilment, however, consisted not only in Jesus' suffering but also in his entering "into his glory" (v.26).

27. Καὶ ἀρχάμενος ἀπὸ Μωϋσέως καὶ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν προφητῶν : "And **beginning at Moses and all the prophets."**

Luke singles out two parts of the Hebrew Old Testament here as he does also in Luke 16:31; Acts 26:22; 28:23. The coupling of the Torah and the Nebiim is really Lucan in the New Testament. Luke is using a mode of expression known from Palestine Judaism.

"Beginning from" probably implies that Jesus drew on all the scriptures but principally on the Law (Gen-Deut) and the prophets. The central subject of these Old Testament passages is himself.

What is special about Moses and the Prophets? Moses is the first inspired writer of the Old Testament. At the transfiguration, Moses and Elijah (the prophet) appeared to Jesus in his glory (9:30) and spoke of his departure. Here the risen Lord appears and explains how his suffering and entry into glory fulfilled Moses and the prophets (cf. 17:2-3).

Luke also mentions Moses and the prophets in 16:29-31 with reference to the ones the rich man should have heeded during his life. He uses it again in Acts 26.22 and 28:23 with reference to the scriptures which spoke about Jesus.

Διερμήνευσεν : "He expounded" means then that he explained or interpreted it to them. Probably he showed them that their notions of the Messiah were not according to the prophecies that he ought to suffer, and that his death, therefore, was no argument that he was not the Messiah.

Ἐὰν περὶ ἑαυτοῦ="the things concerning himself." The things concerning himself implies that Christ had brought to fulfilment the meaning of Scripture (see 22:37.this scripture must be fulfilled in me). He showed what the scriptures foretold, and they saw that these things applied to Jesus of Nazareth, and began to be satisfied that he was the Messiah. Christ is the fulfilment to which all scripture points.

29. Παρεβιάσαντο αὐτὸν : "they urged him," prevailed upon him.³⁸ They pressingly invited him. Had they not pressed him to stay, there is no reason for thinking that he would have done so. Without the invitation he would not have stayed. Christ would have gone further if they had not courted his stay so that here was nothing like dissimulation in the case. Jesus forces himself into no one's home.

Μεῖνον μεθ' ἡμῶν: "Remain with us". In other words, pass the night in our house. It is already evening, so they urge Jesus to stay with them (cf. 19.9). The risen Christ deigns to accept their invitation.

The question we may ask ourselves is where did they stay? It probably means in the home of one of them. Some suggest that they went to an inn. While others suggest that they went to a house of their friend. "Stay with" us reads so much as if the house to which they had come was their own home that we may discard the idea of an inn or of their friend's house.

Πρὸς ἑσπέραν : "Toward evening" meant that it was time to stop normal travelling. After dark the going would be difficult on unlit paths and there might be dangers from robbers or wild beasts. It was better to call a halt. According to Jewish calendaric reckoning toward evening would mean that "the first day of the week" (24:1) has come to an end.

30: καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ κατακλιθῆναι αὐτὸν μετ' αὐτῶν λαβὼν τὸν ἄρτον εὐλόγησεν καὶ κλάσας ἐπέδιδου αὐτοῖς: "And it came to pass as he reclined with them taking the loaf he blessed and having broken he handed to them."

³⁸ Fitzmyer, A., The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV-AB, New York: Doubleday, 1985, 1567.

Jesus is the guest and yet he takes the role of the host. At table Jesus went through the motions familiar at the beginning of a Jewish meal, though normally they would have been performed by the host, not a guest.

Jesus' presence in the breaking of bread always sounds as if it is referring to the Blessed Sacrament in the modern sense; but it does not. Why not? Some have seen here a reference to the breaking of bread always in the eucharist, but this seems far-fetched. It would have been a very curious eucharist, broken off in the opening action and as far as we can see never completed. And it would have been quite out of place. In any case, the two were not present at the Last Supper (22:14, Mark 14:17) so they could not have recalled Jesus' action then. Moreover, there is no mention of the wine.

"Jesus did not celebrate the Eucharist in Emmaus but every meal has the potential of being an event in which hospitality and table fellowship can become sacred occasions. This was not a miraculous meal like that of the five loaves, nor a sacramental meal like that of the Eucharist, but a common meal, rather, a common supper."³⁹

The breaking of the bread further implies that the church experiences the continuing presence of the risen Lord when it gathers at the Lord's table. The two had not recognised the risen Lord when he appeared to them, but at the table they saw who he was.

31: Αὐτῶν δὲ διηνοιχθησαν οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ καὶ ἐπέγνωσαν αὐτόν· καὶ αὐτὸς ἄφαντος ἐγένετο ἀπ' αὐτῶν: "and their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight."

³⁹ Keck, L.E., The New Interpreter's Bible Volume IX Luke John, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995, 480.

"Their eyes were opened": The passive construction corresponds to verse 16, "their eyes were bound " "They do not "see" Jesus, but rather "recognise" him.⁴⁰ "Their eyes were opened" implied that the obscurity was removed. This shows that their doubts were gone and they saw clearly that he was risen, and was truly, as they had long hoped for, the saviour of men. It does not mean that the disciples were blind, but they did not know till then who he was. By saying that "their eyes were opened, and they recognised him" (v.31), Luke resolved the plot and closed the gap opened v.16. Immediately, Jesus vanishes from their sight.

"And they recognised him": i.e. as the risen Christ. The same verb "to recognise" is used as in v.16. It was at ordinary meal in an ordinary house, when an ordinary loaf was being divided, that these men recognised Jesus. It is not only at the communion table we can be with Christ. We can be with him at the dinner table too. He is not only the host in his church. He is the guest in every home.

Vanishing from their sight implies that Jesus left them abruptly. He left them unexpectedly. When they were enjoying their conversation with him, he suddenly left them. This sudden disappearance does not necessarily mean that Jesus disappeared in a miraculous way. It may mean that he just slipped away of a sudden or went out of sight.

32: Καιομένη ἦν: "was burning": The periphratic tense emphasises the continuance of the emotion. "Was not our heart burning within us while he was talking with us on the way, and while he was opening to us the scriptures?"

⁴⁰ Harrington, D.J., The Gospel of Luke, Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991, 396.

Ὡς ἐλάλει . ὡς διήνοιγεν: "while he was speaking...while he was opening." The verb "opening" is both used for opening of their eyes and the opening of the scriptures.

The notion of burning can also be found in Greek literature. In Greek literature it is associated with emotions such as love. In the LXX, the verb is used to describe the presence of the Lord."⁴¹

"The burning of hearts," is an expression denoting the deep interest and pleasure which they had felt in his discourse before they knew who he was. Now, they came back to their senses by recalling his instruction. The two disciples could vividly remember how his words reached their hearts as he spoke to them on the road.

In the final analysis, the reader sees that through their concern to provide hospitality to a stranger, the disciples' sadness, foolishness, and slowness of heart are transformed into joy, insight, and joyful recommitment to Jesus' way.

33a: Αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ: "That very hour." Though it was toward evening, they had to rush to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples of their encounter with the risen Lord. They had to share their great joy with the other disciples.

Their thrill and optimism are in stark contrast to their pessimism when they begun their walk to Emmaus. Completely oblivious to the dangers which lurked on that semi-wilderness road at night, they still went back to Jerusalem.

⁴¹ See texts Exod 3:2; Deut 4:11; 9:15; Ps 49:3; Sir 48:1; Isa 30:27; 62:1.

33b: Καὶ εὗρον ἠθροισμένους τοὺς ἑνδεκά καὶ τοὺς σὺν αὐτοῖ: " **and found the eleven gathered together with those that were with them.**" They found the eleven apostles. This shows that the two that went to Emmaus were not apostles. As in 24:9, Luke uses this awkward phrasing to remind us that the apostolic circle of the twelve is still broken, and that the messianic community is made up of others as well.

34: λέγοντας ὅτι ὄντως ἠγέρθη ὁ κύριος καὶ ὤφθη Σίμωνι.: "**Saying, the Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon.**" This was the statement with which the assembled disciples greeted the two from Emmaus

Luke 24:34 is a valuable testimony to the primary appearance to Peter, confirming 1 Corinthians 15:5.⁴² Luke 24:34 also confirms Mark 16:7 and indicates that Luke knew no narrative of that appearance, only the statement of it in a list.

Why then has Luke inserted this allusion to the primary appearance to Peter? Evidently because he did not agree with the impression created by his source that the Emmaus appearance was the first appearance narrative. He wished to correct it on this decisive point. Why? Because the report of the appearance to Peter authorises his role as the leader of the apostles early in Acts (Acts 1-12). Furthermore, Jesus' appearance to Simon shows that Jesus' prayer has been efficacious. Simon Peter has also been forgiven and is now empowered to strengthen his fellow Christians on the way (Luke 22:31-34).

"He must therefore allude to the primary appearance in order to bridge the gap between the earthly ministry and the history of the early community, between the first and second volume of his historical work. To ask why Luke did not include a

⁴² In his collaboration (1 Cor 15: 5), Paul regards the appearance to Simon (Cephas) as being one of the great evidences for the resurrection despite the lack of more information. Paul fails to mention the testimony of the women.

narrative of an appearance to Peter is beside the point, once we are prepared to face the probability that no such narrative ever existed."⁴³

35: Καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐξηγοῦντο ἐὰν ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ καὶ ὡς ἐγνώσθη αὐτοῖς ἐν τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου : "And they related the things in the way and how he was known by them in the breaking of the loaf."

Excepting John 1,18, the verb occurs only here and in Acts 10.8; 15:12, 14, 21; 19. We note that the Lord's breaking of the bread, and not the disciples' partaking of it, is spoken of as the occasion of their recognising him. What is important here is that the disciples report that they knew him "in the breaking of the bread" (35) and not by seeing him.

4. THEOLOGY OF THE TEXT

The Emmaus story is rich in theological themes. The theological implications mentioned here are not exhaustive. They are only a sample from the many theological reflections that can be developed from the Emmaus story. The challenge remains for the reader to add his/her own theological reflections.

"The walk to Emmaus is part of the experience of each Christian community in every age. How a believing community interprets the cross cannot be separated from the way it celebrates the death of Jesus in liturgy and sacrament nor from the specific socio-cultural world in which it finds itself."⁴⁴

In Africa, an African Emmaus refers to the ongoing conversion walk of the third millennium Christians who attempt to recognise the Crucified and Risen Lord within the complex and pluralistic cultures of Africa.

⁴³ Fuller, R.H., The Formation of the Resurrection Narratives, New York: Macmillan Company, 1971, 113.

⁴⁴ Duffy, R.A., An American Emmaus-Faith and Sacrament in the American Culture, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1995, 1.

"The Emmaus story is a paradigm of God's meeting with us on our roads to Emmauses, in the ordinary places and experiences of our lives, and in the places to which we retreat when life is too much for us. The story warns us, however, that the Lord may come to us in unfamiliar guises, when we least expect him."⁴⁵

Cleopas and the other disciple show us that good company and good conversation are an excellent antidote against prevailing melancholy. It does not therefore become Christians to be morose and shy, but to take pleasure in good society

From the very beginning to the end of Luke 24.1-53, we see a contrast between people who do not believe that Jesus is risen (the women who go to anoint his body in 24:52-53, the disciples on the way to Emmaus) In this text we see now the theme concerning the process of becoming true believers in the crucified and resurrected Christ being developed. We observe that belief in the crucified and resurrected Christ is in continuity with Judaism (see 24:1 and 24:52-53 Jewish rituals). More still, this belief is held when people remember Jesus' words (prophecies) during his ministry about his death and resurrection. This belief is also held in the absence of Jesus (cf. 24:3 and 24:51). We observe that for one to have a true belief, one needs to be in the right place. This implies being among the living, in society (Jerusalem, 24:52) not among the dead (the tomb, 24:5). The Scriptures should also help us to understand the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection=understanding why he "must" die and rise (cf. 24:7). In view of the sub units (24:12-35 and 24:36) which emphasise the recognition of the risen Jesus' presence, we observe that "true belief in Jesus' resurrection is not a belief that the

⁴⁵ Keck, L.E., The New Interpreter's Bible Volume IX Luke John, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995, 482

risen Christ is present, since the great joy associated with this belief occurs in the absence of Jesus (see 24.51 after he parted from them)."⁴⁶

5. CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have investigated the nature of the resurrection appearances of Jesus where we underlined that the initiative is not of the recipient but the revelatory action of Jesus Christ himself.

We have analysed fifteen verses that emphasise the manifestation of the risen Lord. We have done so because our essay emphasises the presence of Christ in our discipleship.

Most of our translations in this text were taken from A. Marshall's book "The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament." Marshall's book provides us with good translation from Greek to English. We have also used different commentaries for the exegetical investigation in order to have a systematic synthesis of what some outstanding biblical scholars have said on the fifteen verses we have treated.

The theology of the text gave us the opportunity to investigate theological themes that are relevant to our essay.

⁴⁶ Mc Kenzie, S.L.-Haynes, S.R., To Each Its Own Meaning, Louisville: Westminster, 1993, 159.

CHAPTER III

EMMAUS EXPERIENCE AS A CHALLENGE TO CHRISTIAN LIFE IN MALAWI

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter is an attempt to apply the Emmaus narrative to the Malawian situation. We shall consider in a special way the following areas: Jesus' presence in crisis, Jesus' presence in the discipleship of the lay Christians, and making Jesus present in politics.

This chapter will be followed by the general conclusion marking the end of the long essay on "Emmaus Experience as a Paradigm of Jesus' Presence in Discipleship."

2. JESUS' PRESENCE IN CRISIS

"A crisis is a turning point, a moment or stage at which a process of whatever kind can go in two or more different directions. It is a time of separating out, of deciding."⁴⁷

Crisis is as much a part of human experience as birth, growth, and death. In fact, there can be no growth without crisis. Consequently, to acknowledge that someone is in crisis is to say only that he/she has reached another turning point in his/her life.

Cleopas and his companion were in a crisis. They were suffering from the crisis of identity because they had no hope that their master whom they were following

⁴⁷ MacBrien, R.P., Catholicism Study Edition, Mineapolis: Winston Press, 1981, 5

was still alive (24:21). They could hardly imagine that it was only a few years ago when they had met Jesus who had changed their lives and followed him. Now, that their master was dead, they did not know what to do next. They had reached a turning point in their lives as whether to remain disciples of Jesus or not. The energy that had filled their days and nights as enthusiastic disciples of Jesus had left them completely. They were lost.

There can be no growth without a crisis. It is in that moment of dilemma Jesus comes up and walks by their side (24:15), but their eyes are prevented from recognising him (24:16). Jesus then listens to their words of disillusionment, sadness, and utter confusion. Nothing seems to make sense (24:18-24).

Jesus' presence in their time of crisis challenges the two disciples that their sadness was part of a larger sadness in which joy was hidden. Their sadness was based on the fact that Jesus died. Jesus shows Cleopas and his companion that what had been confusing them is a beginning of a new horizon.

When Jesus was talking to them they realised that there was a great mystery hidden in Jesus' death and later his resurrection. Their loss of hope, the un answered questions that disturbed their minds were all lifted up by Jesus and put in the context of the story much larger than they expected. Their crisis comes to an end when they recognise the risen Lord in the breaking of bread (30-31). In the same moment that Cleopas and his companion recognise him in the breaking of bread, Jesus is no longer with them. Precisely, when he becomes most present to them, he also becomes the absent one. But now that they are aware of his presence in their lives, even that sudden disappearance of Jesus does not bother them. Instead, they rise

that same hour and return to Jerusalem to tell the others about this encounter with the risen Lord (33.35)

How do we explain the presence of Jesus in moments of crisis? The experience of Cleopas and his companion is also our own in one way or another. The normal thing when we are facing a crisis is that we do not experience the presence of Jesus at that particular moment but after the crisis is gone. "Very often when I am in crisis I do not see the presence of God. I see God far away from me. But when the crisis has gone then I experience the presence of God" says Sr Rosemary.⁴⁸

On the same issue Fr. Steven remarks "Often it is hard for me to experience Christ's presence in times of crisis, and I suppose I try to remember to slow down, to "practice the presence," and to remind myself that what seems dark and difficult now I may be able to understand at a later time. How do I bear witness to Christ's presence in my life when I am working with others in crisis? First of all, I try to be a compassionate presence myself. I wouldn't start out with a lot of pious words, because it's not usually the time for it. People in crisis usually need someone just to be with them, to listen to them, even (sometimes) to "give them some space" without proposing a ready-made answer or religious solution. Later on, when the crisis is not so intense and the emotions have calmed a bit, there may be a right moment to offer insights from Scripture, personal experience, and so on. But first of all I try (not always successfully) to be prudent."⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Sr. Rosemary James is a Carmelite Sister (CS) residing at Namiteic Convent and working at St. Gabriel's hospital in Malawi.

⁴⁹ Rev. Dr. Steven Payne OCD lectures in Spiritual Theology both at Tangaza College and the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) in Nairobi, Kenya. He is a holder of two doctorates both in Philosophy and Theology.

What Sr Rosemary and Fr Steven have said is true. At the very moment that Jesus is with us in times of crisis we cannot fully understand what is happening. His presence cannot be recognised. But, later, when it is all over, we might be able to say, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" (32).

3. JESUS' PRESENCE IN THE DISCIPLESHIP OF THE LAY CHRISTIANS

The faithful in Malawi need the support of the clergy. Unfortunately the number of ordained ministers does not satisfy the needs of Malawian Christians because it is relatively small. In the year 2001 alone the church in Malawi lost 23 ordained ministers. These ordained ministers comprise of missionaries who left for good, priests who gave up their ministry, and those who died in the Lord. The church had only 7 ordinations.

"In the year 1976 there were 3,313 Catholics per ordained minister. In the year 1997 there were 4,802 Catholics per ordained minister. In the year 2001 there were about 5,500 Catholics per minister fully inserted in the pastoral work. In the Catholic Church all over the world the ratio between priests and Catholics is of 2,417 per priest."⁵⁰

While the number of ordained ministers is decreasing, the Catholic population is increasing. In the year 1976 there were 994, 000 members. The number reached to 1, 911, 500 in the year 1997, an average of 43, 600 new members per year, during a period of 21 years. In the same period of time there were 98 more ordained ministers including diocese and missionary groups.

⁵⁰ Fr.Sabino Giocolea, OCD, You are My Friends NO:37, Malawi: Kasungu, 2001, 1-2.

Christians are deprived of sacraments because of the small number of priests. In big parishes run by one priest, especially in the outstations, Christians simply find themselves without a priest and consequently become "basic communities"⁵¹. Christians' hearts normally burn within themselves as they ponder the Scriptures just like Cleopas and his companion (24-32). Unfortunately that zeal diminishes as they lack encouragement and enlightenment from priests. These Christians normally show faith similar to that of the earliest Christians. They would like as the first Christians to give witness to Christ to the extent of giving their lives. Unfortunately, they cannot celebrate the Eucharist, the wellspring of their life, because they have no priest. For that reason, they are deprived of Jesus' presence through the sacraments as well as Scriptural enlightenment from the clergy.

Christians and their clergy are encouraged to value the presence of Jesus in the liturgical celebrations and Scripture. In promoting the liturgical celebrations, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of Vatican II (Sacrosanctum Concilium #7) says:

"Christ is always present in his Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of his minister, but especially under the Eucharistic species. By his power he is present in the Sacraments, so that when one baptises it is really Christ who baptises. He is present in his word, since it is he himself who speaks when the holy Scriptures are read in the church. He is present, finally, when the church prays and sings, for he promised: "where two or three are gathered together for my sake, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt 18,20)."⁵²

We also seek the face of the living God and walk in his presence as we ponder on the Scriptures. The reality of the presence of God stands at the centre of biblical faith.

⁵¹ By "basic communities" I mean Small Christian Communities run by church elders and catechists.

⁵² Flannery, A., Vatican Council II-The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, New Delhi: Rekha Printers Pvt. Ltd., 1999, 24.

Due to the shortage of priests, there is need to empower the "laity."⁵³ Mostly, the laity are involved in temporal affairs. Despite that, they can do valuable work for the evangelisation. "By empowering the laity, then we are not limiting discipleship to ordained ministers."⁵⁴

Due to the decline of the number of ordained ministers, there is need to raise the consciousness of the local church and to help congregations equip the laity for using their talents for ministry in Malawi. However, lay people are already playing a prominent role in the country. They are already administering some parishes. They voluntarily reach out to the poor. They are committed to justice and peace. They are doing catechetical and liturgical work, filling chaplaincy posts in schools, hospitals and prisons, providing pastoral care.

There is no need to close down already existing parishes due to the shortage of priests. Also amalgamating two parishes in one surely does not help the Christian vitality of the communities. We can perpetuate the presence of Christ by empowering the faithful to do some church activities that do not require the attention of ordained ministers. The best solution to perpetuate the presence of Christ is by promoting the local vocations to Holy Orders to satisfy the needs of the growing church. It calls for the ordained minister to bring the presence of Jesus in the breaking of bread (24,30) and in the explanation of the Scriptures.

⁵³ The term "laity" is here understood to mean all the faithful except those in Holy Orders and those who belong to a religious state approved by the church.

⁵⁴ Limiting discipleship to ordained ministers is a common phenomenon in Malawi and should not be continued because the lay Christians are also disciples of Christ by virtue of their baptism.

4. MAKING JESU'S PRESENT IN POLITICS

"Christians must be conscious of their specific and proper role in the political community. They should be a shining example by their sense of responsibility and their dedication to the common good: they should show in practice how authority can be reconciled with freedom, personal initiative with the solidarity and the needs of the whole social framework, and the advantages of unity with profitable diversity."⁵⁵

Christians and their clergy must combat injustice and oppression. They must combat injustice and oppression with integrity and wisdom. They must preach the truth of the gospel and clarify all sectors of human activity through teaching and personal witness to the demands of the gospel. This is what exactly the Catholic bishops' pastoral letter in Malawi in 1992 did. It denounced injustice and oppression in many sectors of life.

In March 1992 Malawi hit the international headlines. That time, press coverage of many newspapers was characterised by the occasional article which examined the whimsical nature of Africa's oldest head of state. The Bishops' Pastoral Letter "Living Our Faith" changed all that and sparked off a flood of articles about Banda's repressive regime.

The letter prophetically denounced injustices of all kinds done by the Government in areas of:

"The Dignity of and unity of humankind, Church and Society, The Aspiration to Greater equality and unity, The Right to an Adequate Education, Problems of Malawian Educational System, Church-State Partnership in Education, Adequate Health Services, The Tragedy of AIDS, Participation of all in Public Life, Freedom of Expression and Association, Fostering Participation".⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Fannery, A., Vatican Council II-The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, New Dehli: Rekha Printers Pvt. Ltd., 864.

⁵⁶ Cullen, T., Malawi-A Turning Point, Edinburgh-Cambridge-Durham: The Pentland Press, 1994, 120-130.

This Pastoral Letter came as a total surprise. The Catholic Church had remained silent over the mysterious death of three cabinet ministers in 1983 and the deportation of all Northern teachers from the South and Central regions in February 1989. The visit of Pope John Paul II in May, 1989 seemed to cement ties between the church and state, and only days before the letter, Archbishop James Chiona publicly thanked Banda for being a dynamic leader.

Government reaction to the letter was outrage. Within days the government launched a frenzied campaign to prevent the bishops gaining support. The bishops were detained, the letter was labelled seditious, mass arrests were made and senior Malawi Congress Party (MCP) officials plotted to kill the bishops.

Just like the Catholic bishops who risked their lives by their involvement in politics, Christians also should be involved in politics. Their presence in some of the political positions may be a source of light to the state.

5. CONCLUSION

The Emmaus experience does not only challenge the Christian situation in Malawi but also Christian situation everywhere. It challenges us as individuals, or as a community, nation. Emmaus is not only the name of a town in the Gospel of Luke, it may also be a symbol of how we perceive the risen Lord in our present situations.

The Emmaus experience challenges in a special way the church in Malawi in promoting the local vocations to satisfy the needs of the growing church. The promotion of local vocations to Holy Orders is more appropriate because the laity cannot do some sacred functions such as celebrating the Eucharist. The

empowerment of the laity is emphasised only in areas that do not need special attention of the ordained minister.

The Immaus experience challenges the bishops of Malawi and their clergy not to be "foolish" like Cleopas and his companion (24:25) who failed to understand the situation and events they describe. Rather, they should be able just like what they did in 1997, to interpret political events in terms of the Scriptures and the Scriptures in terms of the political events (24:27). Then, they will not see their prophetic role as a failure but as the voice of the voiceless. It is therefore their role to bring the presence of Jesus in every sphere of life, be it political, religious, social, moral etc.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The Emmaus narrative is a wonderful material for theological reflection, preaching and discussion. We can compare the Emmaus narrative to a rich mine to which one should return again and again.

The Emmaus narrative gives us hope that Jesus always journeys with us in every circumstance of life. In moments of joy and in the turbulence of our lives Jesus is always there. Jesus is not only a figure of the past but he is alive and mysteriously present in the world. Sometimes his presence is obscure as it happened to Cleopas and his companion. The story warns us to be always conscious of Jesus' presence because he may come to us in unfamiliar guises, when we least expect him. Cleopas and his companion share their table with a stranger and discover that they have been in the presence of the Lord. The stranger was Jesus himself. Therefore, Jesus can be recognised in the ritual gestures of the community fellowship meal. Furthermore, he can also appear in the guise of a stranger on the road in the midst of human dialogue.

Many Christians today find it difficult to identify themselves with Jesus Christ. It is not because they do not believe in him but because they think Jesus is someone who existed long time ago and no longer present in daily circumstances of their lives. This conception has led many Christians to spiritual, moral, social and psychological crises.

Some Christians are not convinced that they can relate with Jesus as someone truly living in the present. Focussing on their prayer life becomes an untold problem." All these spiritual problems seem to have no solution. The

presence of Jesus is doubted. This is so because sometimes Jesus seems to be absent in our lives, though in reality, he is present there. That is exactly what the Emmaus narrative is all about. It is an account of appearance and disappearance, non-recognition and recognition sequences. That is why turning to Emmaus narrative we get insights and encouragement to tackle our spiritual, moral, social, and psychological problems.

Jesus is always present to us even when we do not recognise him. It is not necessary that we see him with our naked eyes to be convinced of his presence in our lives. We have all the reasons for great joy in the absence of Jesus. Our joy comes from right belief in Jesus' absence/presence. This is a conviction underscored in Luke 24:36-53. This passage shows us how the fear of the disciples and their wrong belief in Jesus' presence were transformed into great joy. As a result of that joy, they continued to have true belief in Jesus' presence when Jesus was absent.

The Emmaus narrative reminds us that Jesus' presence is always elusive, fleeting, dancing at the edge of our awareness and perception. This is well manifested in 24:31 where we hear that as soon as the two disciples recognised the risen Lord he disappeared from their sight. Jesus' presence is never constant, steady, or predictable according to the Emmaus narrative.

The Emmaus narrative teaches us to treasure religious experiences in retrospect. The two in Emmaus exclaim, "Did not our hearts burn within us?" (24:32). One of the secrets of a vigorous spirituality and a confident faith is learning to appreciate the importance of meeting the risen Lord in the past as well as in the present. Luke guides us in this spiritual discipline: "Remember how he

told you, while he was still in Galilee. There they remembered his words.' (24:6, 8).

The Emmaus narrative reminds us that the experience of the presence of Jesus is not a private gift. That experience is never for us alone. The women at the tomb rushed to share their experience with the apostles (v.10). Just like Cleopas and his companion also rushed to Jerusalem to share their experience of the risen Lord with the eleven (33). They never kept it to themselves. For those who have personally experienced Jesus' presence in their lives at a tomb, on a lonely road, or in hospitality extended to a fellow traveler, the words in verses 10 and 33 are a transforming reality. They are not empty words.

The Emmaus text is obviously relevant to Easter season. However, Easter is not over at sundown Easter Sunday. It stretches into the rest of our lives. The women could not be in a position to keep the news to themselves, and Cleopas and his companion might never meet the stranger again, but it would not matter. Life would never again be the same. Luke's gospel sparkles with theological insight when it stretches Easter day into the series that happened thereafter. The Emmaus narrative is an extended Easter experience. "The Lord is risen and he comes back to meet us on the road to Emmaus. Through the study of Scripture, we find our hearts strangely warmed and we recognise him in the breaking of the bread. How can we not go and tell?"⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Bruce, F., The International Bible Commentary, Michigan: Zonervan Publishing House, 1996, 483

ABBREVIATIONS

ABC: Anchor Bible Commentary

DOB: Dictionary of the Bible

HBD: Harper's Bible Dictionary

MPED: The Marshall Pickering Encyclopedia of the Bible

NCF: New Catholic Commentary

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