



Cavanis Lay Fraternity
Sacred Heart House, CAVANIS INSTITUTE
Via Col Draga - Possagno (TV)

INVISIBLE MONASTERY

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Dearest friends!

I put my hand to the text that we will use to renew the invisible bonds of communion that bind us to the beloved Congregation of the Schools of Charity, letting myself be guided by the suggestions that come to me from the beautiful Luke's story of the disciples of Emmaus. The evangelical account is found in the center of the chapter 24 of Luke's Gospel, inserted between two other Easter stories: that of the women at the tomb (verses 1 - 12) and that of the apparition of the Risen One to the Eleven (verses 36 - 53). In this story, in fact, more than any other, Luke tried to answer the fundamental question posed by the primitive Christian community: how and where to meet the risen Jesus, how and where to recognize him? To enter a little into the logic of narration it may be useful to dwell on the two stories that occupy the time of the journey: the one made by the disciples and the one made by Jesus. In the first account (verses 19 - 24), the two disciples retrace the itinerary of Jesus of Nazareth, as they lived and



P. Antonio e P. Marco Cavanis

**SETTI
MANA
CAVA
NIS**

*Perché i giovani
abbiano vita...!*



experienced it: the hope kindled in them by this “powerful prophet in works and words”; the dismay at his condemnation and his ignominious end; the disappointment left by the emptiness of the three days passed since his death without anything having happened yet. As an appendix, it is mentioned then the shocking testimony of some women who, going to the tomb on the morning of that same day, did not find the body of Jesus but in return received the assurance from some angels that “he is alive”. This testimony, however, seems to have little weight for the two disciples or, in any case, does not have the sufficient strength to make their hope reborn. They seek him, his living body, they want to see Jesus ‘in flesh and bones’: no other vision, even that of the empty tomb, can satisfy their desire. But the absentee who haunts the two disciples is the very person who walks beside them. Between the two travelers, however, and this “stranger” who, unique among all, does not know the facts of those days, is interposed what the story itself calls “blindness”. In the other story, the one made by Jesus (verses 25 - 27), the same story is seen under a totally different light: Yes, it is a story of suffering and humiliation, but the mention of “glory” directs it in another direction. Moreover, Jesus speaks of himself by presenting himself as “the Christ”, the Messiah of whom the prophets spoke. This other version of the story is made from a long ‘tour’ that the unknown traveler makes the two disciples go through “all the Scriptures”. But the misunderstanding remains, because the disciples still fail to recognize Jesus. What clouds their vision? It is interesting to note here that Jesus addresses his traveling companions in a strong and decisive way (“Foolish and slow of heart...”) not so much because of their inability to recognize him, but because of their inability to understand the Scriptures (“...to believe everything the prophets have said!”). Their blindness originates above all from a lack of faith, from an inability to listen to the prophetic word. They still don’t know what is the key that ‘opens’ the Scriptures... Jesus’ rebuke is also addressed to us, who live the spirituality of the FLC; we too must revive familiarity with the Scriptures and discover them as the way to give meaning to our lives and to our pastoral commitment. May the Risen guide and accompany us!

From the Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke (24, 13-35)

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.





Synodality is the best way to face the crisis

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Fr. Diego Spadotto, CSCh

Cavanis' religious life lives in an opaque world, where the distinction between joyful fidelity to the Gospel and mediocrity is too often faded, it's an illusion of perspective. We glory in the past while continuing to live a contradictory present. The challenge is to navigate this opaque sea, trying to make order among the many contradictions that hit us like threatening waves. The navigation route is not based on certainties but on the ability to give an account of our daily choices, in the synodal journey and **"unity of purpose"**, in the credible style of consecrated life and in the authentic living of the charism. **Synodality, it is a call from God and in listening to it we must have an attitude of gratitude. It is truly a blessing.** It is about responding to God's will in the Church of the third millennium, patiently rebuilding juvenile pastoral in synodality. It is a journey of kenosis, where space must be made for the Gospel in a journey of true conversion and transformation. **Synodal discernment is about listening to the Spirit in us and in others, as a gift** with an attitude of gratitude. **Synodality is a creative journey.** The more we are able to discern synodality as a gift from the Lord, the more creative we will become by discovering new ways to live our consecration to the youth, what are the most urgent situations to be addressed, priorities to be selected, and spirituality gaps to be filled.

It is an intense and not easy work; it is important to have a methodology to arrive at wise and courageous decisions, by listening to the Spirit. If synodal religious life stops, it happens like a river that reaches a barrier: it inevitably turns into a quagmire or a swamp. Origen, in the third century

of Church history, observed that it is not enough ***“to be renewed once; one must renew the same newness”***. The Spirit is, by its very nature, newness. The world, the society has not stood still, but has undergone a dizzying acceleration. Changes that used to take place in a century or two now take place in just a decade. ***This need for continual renewal is none other than the need for continual conversion, extended to each religious and to the Congregation, in its human and historical dimension***. The real problem is not in the novelties but rather in the way of dealing with them in synodality. It was not a straight and smooth path, not even that of the primitive Church. The decision taken by the apostles to welcome the pagans into the community is resolved with these extraordinary words: ***“It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us”*** (Acts 15:28). It is the synodality. In front of events, of the political, social and ecclesial realities, we are led to immediately side with one side and demonize the other, to desire the triumph of our choice over that of the opponents. Just as when a war breaks out, everyone prays to the same God to give victory to their armies and annihilate those of the enemy. Pope Francis, exhorts instead to follow the Spirit in freedom and synodality, the Spirit should not be caged with an excess of rules, the primacy of God's love, the gentleness of his Fatherhood and attention to the changing world should be emphasized. This is what the Founders did before the profound changes that the decadence and fall of the Venetian republic had caused. Synodality is ***“that attitude of consecrated life, which grows in silence, in prayer, in charity, in service, in listening to the Spirit”***.