



# CATHOLIC CHURCH of St Ignatius

## Being Christian

**F**r Louis-Marie Chauvet, a professor of sacramental theology at the *Institut Catholique de Paris*, found in the Emmaus story an important lens for understanding sacramentally the life of a Christian, that is, what it means to be a Christian, in terms of the action or phenomenon of faith, and the influences of liturgy, Scripture, and actions. The following explanation is taken from his book, *The Sacraments* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2001)

His enquiry starts with a question that followers of Jesus have sometimes asked: How is Jesus “alive” or relatable for me in his absence? Chauvet identifies this as the “central question of faith” which Luke answers very satisfactorily for every follower of Jesus through the Emmaus story.

Chauvet notes that there are three significant layers to the story, namely, geographical, theological and symbolic. Geographically, there is a movement from Jerusalem to Emmaus, before there is a return to Jerusalem. Theologically, Chauvet highlights how Jerusalem is the summit and staging point of Luke’s Gospel. Most importantly, though, is that at the symbolic level, in the interiority of the disciples, Chauvet notes how the disciples underwent a conversion, as indicated by their hasty return to Jerusalem.

Chauvet notes that this conversion required transformation of faith and understanding to happen. He opines

that *performance* or accomplishment of the conversion requires a particular *competence* or series of actions that the disciples demonstrated. The Emmaus story then illustrates how such a *competence* unfolded, at three important places: “a first stop on the road” (v. 17), “the rest at Emmaus” (v. 29) and “the return to Jerusalem” (v. 33).

In a way, one can understand these three moments as analogous of “seeing”, “judging” and “acting”. In seeing, one first has to stop, in order to receive the (in)sight from something outside of one’s self. In the Emmaus story, through

**In the Emmaus story, the disciples leap into action, returning to Jerusalem, realising that to have Christ in their lives, their lives must be a mission to witness to Jesus to the world.**

Scripture, Jesus gave the disciples a new interpretation of the very public tragedy and great loss that had made them so despondent. In other words, Jesus gave a sermon to the disciples, interpreting Scripture contextually to address their particular situation — just like homilies in our present time.

Chauvet dissects this action for its faith implications. In the homilies, Chauvet notes that Jesus speaks to us through the (physical) instrument of the Church. Empirical or scientific evidence cannot support this belief in Jesus’ actions because belief is now based on faith. Fundamentally, faith does not rely on physical signs or explanations, and must accept the mediation of the Church. In faith, the Church mediates Jesus who is absent, and the church is effectively the sacrament of Jesus, symbolically representing Jesus in our world.

In the act of resting, that is, gathered at the table, the disciples finally recognized Jesus from the sequence of four actions that are the core of the Eucharist — “he **took** bread, **blessed** and **broke** it, and **gave** it to them”. They discerned and realised through this moment of the Eucharist, the source and summit of the church, the real and live presence of Jesus — who immediately vanished. Such discernment, of contemplatively wrestling with one’s daily reality and what Jesus communicated through the Church, though accessible as one prays through the liturgy through actions and words, has its summit in the Eucharist.

Jesus’ disappearance is not another loss or tragedy, but instead, is part of the transformation of the

Continue from Page 1

presence of Jesus, now realized as real, into actions that mediate Jesus' presence in the world. Hence, in the Emmaus story, the disciples leap into action, returning to Jerusalem — realising that to have Christ in their lives, their lives must be a mission to witness to Jesus to the world. According to Luke, mission concretely works to make the poor no longer poor. Chauvet even extrapolates a dynamic from John's Gospel to say that Jesus' exemplary selfless love is what gives his followers "the power to act in the same way".

We understand that "it is [Jesus]

who explains the meaning of the Scriptures; it is He who presides at the breaking of the bread; it is He who continues His service to humans through that of His disciples". The Church, all of us followers of Christ, keep alive Jesus in our midst through the Scriptures we read and interpret, through the sacraments — especially the Eucharist, and through our ethical actions that mirror Jesus' selfless love for all humanity.

A Christian fundamentally believes in Jesus Christ. Yes, there is salvation outside of the visible Church. However, a Christian life in

the Church is based on the interplay of Scripture, Eucharist and ethical action. Yet, the church is not self-serving, just as much as Jesus did not act and speak for His own intentions. Instead, all acts and speech (and in this case, any symbols too) are directed towards the common good of the world. The evidence, then, of God's reign in the world is a constant conversion resulting in ethical action that authentically marks the Church, the sacrament of Jesus Christ offered for the suffering world.

MICHAEL PHUNG, SJ

## PARISH NEWS

During this 'Circuit Breaker' period, the entire grounds of the Church of St Ignatius is closed to the public. We have noticed, however, that some people are still entering the church premises for whatever reasons. For your health and safety, please do not enter church grounds. The pedestrian passage way/staircase next to the main church building is also closed until further notice. If you have any business to transact with the parish office during this period, please first contact us by telephone (6466 0625) or email ([administrator@stignatius.org.sg](mailto:administrator@stignatius.org.sg)) and we will advise you on how to proceed.

A recorded **GOSPEL REFLECTION** for this weekend, 26 April by Fr Colin Tan, SJ is available at <https://stignatius.org.sg/home/what-s-happening/upcoming-events/859-new-weekly-bible-reflection>

Fr Jerome Leon, SJ celebrates **MASS** every Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday, at 12pm. Livestream at [www.facebook.com/mas.jesuits.fgiat/](http://www.facebook.com/mas.jesuits.fgiat/) It is accessible to all, even if you do not have a Facebook account.

All are welcome to join Fr. Ravi, SJ and our youth community, De Vita Christi, for **EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION** "live" on youtube, every Wednesday, 8pm -10pm. The link will be posted on Telegram.

Fr Colin Tan, SJ is available for "tele-meeting" with 10 parishioners daily. Call the office (6466 0625) to leave your

name and number. He will be happy to return your call. Or email him at [csi.pp@catholic.org.sg](mailto:csi.pp@catholic.org.sg)

Information pertaining to Church ministries, activities and events are available at:

**MASS SCHEDULE:** <https://stignatius.org.sg/home/sacraments/mass-schedule-offering/mass-schedule>

**COVID 19 PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES:** <https://stignatius.org.sg/home/what-s-happening/all-events/849-covid-19-precautionary-measures>

**INFANT BAPTISM:** <https://stignatius.org.sg/home/sacraments/infant-adult-baptism>

### THANK YOU TO OUR PARISHIONERS

Our parish priests, Frs Colin, Jerome and Ravi would like to thank all parishioners for their thoughtfulness and generous donation to the Church, even though the Church is closed and all Masses have been suspended.

### DONATION TO MASS COLLECTION

If you wish to donate to the Mass collection, you may go to: <https://stignatius.org.sg/home/donation>

### MASS OFFERING

In view of the suspension of all church Masses until further notice, all Mass Intentions will be offered by priests during their private daily Masses. All mass intentions can be emailed to: [csi.admin@catholic.org.sg](mailto:csi.admin@catholic.org.sg)

Fr Colin Tan, SJ Parish Priest ★ Fr Jerome Leon, SJ Assistant Parish Priest ★ Fr Ravi Michael Louis, SJ Assistant Parish Priest  
Angela Kurnadi Parish Administrator ★ Suzie Wee Parish Accountant ★ Gerard Robert Youth Coordinator ★ Cheryl Lek Youth Coordinator ★ Susan Thian Catechetical Coordinator  
Robert Ong Sacristan ★ David Saw Operations Manager ★ Steven Leong Facilities Manager ★ Therese Gian Communications Manager