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The Meaning of Pilgrimage Activities on the Face of Jesus' Mercy for the Life of the Local Community

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Abstract

Pilgrimage is a universal human movement. The habit of pilgrimage is carried out by humans at all times and places. The tradition of pilgrimage belongs to all mankind, regardless of nation, tribe, race and religion. People perform pilgrimage activities with spiritual motivation. On the other hand, the arrival of people at pilgrimage sites also has an influence on improving the economic welfare of the community. Using the framework of Interpretative phenomenological Analysis, the focus of this research is to explore the experiences of the community around the pilgrimage site of the Jesus face of mercy about the meaning of the pilgrimage in faith development and community welfare. The five respondents interviewed were local residents. Two of them were Muslims and the other three were Catholics. The interviews focused on their impressions of the pilgrimage site, the meaning of pilgrimage activities and the contribution of pilgrimage activities to the economic development of the local community. The research yielded data that

the presence of pilgrims made the place more sacred and widely known. They found the meaning that pilgrimage activities in the place helped the community to live in harmony, recognize each other and appreciate diversity. The existence of a pilgrimage place invites many people from various places so that the economic activities of the community become more developed. The existence of pilgrimage activities has an influence on improving the economic welfare of the community. Pilgrimage activities on the Face of Jesus' Mercy in Bantul contribute both to the deepening of the faith of Catholics and to the development of community welfare.

Keywords: encounter, faith development, mutual respect, well-being

Introduction

Bantul Regency has natural tourist destinations in the form of a stretch of south coast, beautiful hilly natural scenery and several religious tourism sites. One of these religious tourist destinations is the Jesus Mercy Face prayer garden in the St. James Alfeus Pajangan church complex, on Jalan Pajangan - Sedayu, Dusun Kamijoro RT 05, Sendangsari Village, Kapanewon Pajangan, Bantul Regency, Yogyakarta. In the courtyard of St. James Alfeus Pajangan Church stands a large statue of the Face of Mercy of Jesus with a height of approximately 5 meters. The statue was donated by a Bantul sculptor named Hardo Wardoyo Suwanto.

A leader of the Catholics in the Pajangan area, Mr. Heru Sutrisno, said that the statue of the Mercy Face of Jesus is a supporting facility and prayer facility for Catholics in the St. James Alfeus Pajangan area. The statue of the Mercy Face of Jesus was inaugurated on October 2, 2016, by the Regent of Bantul Drs. H. Suharsono and blessed by the Parish Priest of St. James Bantul, Rev. F.X. Suhanto. The moment of the blessing coincided with the celebration of the Year of Mercy launched by Pope Francis. Since the statue of the face of Jesus' mercy, pilgrims who usually come to the pilgrimage site of Ganjuran Temple have a new religious tourism destination, namely the prayer garden of the face of Jesus' mercy in Pajangan.

With the statue of the face of Jesus' mercy, the Pajangan church complex has become a religious tourism destination with a prayer garden. The atmosphere of the environment of the religious tourism site of the face of Jesus' mercy looks beautiful with the natural scenery of the Progo river flow. The existence of this new pilgrimage site is an attraction for Catholic pilgrims. Many pilgrims who come to the Sacred Heart Temple of Ganjuran continue their pilgrimage journey to the prayer garden of the statue of the face of Jesus' mercy.

Although at the beginning of its existence, there was a group of Bantul community members who rejected the existence of the statue of the face of Jesus' mercy, gradually the community around the religious tourism site began to experience positive contributions from the pilgrimage site. In other words, the existence of this pilgrimage site has meaning for Catholics in the Pajangan area and non-Catholics around the pilgrimage site. In the perspective of the life of the Catholic faith as affirmed in the Second Vatican Council documents *Lumen Gentium* (Light for the Nations) and *Gaudium et Spes* (Joy and Hope) which reveal the unity of the two sides of the Church's life as a community of people who believe in Jesus Christ and as members of society whose role is to bring light and goodness to the world (Laksito, 2019, 88). This is also in line with the affirmation of Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*, that believers need to know the culture of the local community and give witness to the values of the Gospel according to the circumstances, context and situation of the local community (EG. 2).

The existence of the prayer garden of the face of Jesus' mercy is in the midst of a pluralistic society in faith beliefs. Consequently, the existence of a place of pilgrimage and pilgrimage activities in that place should play a role to bring blessings to Catholics and the surrounding community. Thus, the existence of a place of pilgrimage and all activities related to the pilgrimage of faith contribute to the development of the faith of Catholics and the good of the surrounding community. In other words, the activity of living faith has a missionary dimension *ad intra* and *ad extra* (Laksito, 2019; 89). This means that pilgrimage activities are church life activities that foster the faith of Catholics and contribute to the development of the quality of life of people who have different beliefs. With the above background in mind, this qualitative research focuses on exploring the experiences of people around the pilgrimage site regarding the meaning of the Face of Jesus' Mercy pilgrimage site for the development of the faith of Catholics and the improvement of community welfare. The purpose of this research is to obtain evaluative data about the meaning of the pilgrimage site of the face of Jesus' mercy as a form of appreciation and constructive suggestions for the management of this pilgrimage area..

Method

This qualitative research uses the interview method to collect data. In qualitative research, there are three important things that happen, namely data collection, analysis and interpretation of the collected data (Creswell, 2016: 3). Interviews were conducted to obtain actual authentic data from the respondents. The basis for selecting respondents was their familiarity with the religious tourism site of the statue of Jesus' mercy and their openness and honesty to answer the researcher's questions in order to obtain sufficient data. The interviews were conducted in a natural setting where the respondents were

domiciled. This is done so that researchers find the right expression according to the social situation of the local community. Before conducting interviews to obtain experiential data on the meaning of the existence of religious tourism and its influence on the development of community welfare, researchers interacted with respondents. In this interaction, secondary data was extracted, namely their impression of the existence of the religious tourism site. With this interaction, respondents felt comfortable to share their experiences.

The researcher selected five respondents to be the source of data. The average age of the respondents was between 50 and 65 years old. They are residents around the religious tourism site of the statue of the face of Jesus' mercy. Three of the five respondents were Catholic and two were Muslim. There were three questions that became the instruments of this research. First, what is your impression of the existence of the religious tourism site of the statue of Jesus' mercy? Second, what does the existence of this religious tourism site mean for the life of faith? Third, what is the influence of the existence of this religious tourist spot for the economic development of the surrounding community?

The data collected were analyzed using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach. This approach was chosen because it helps to achieve objectives related to data analysis to find meaning. The first and second questions become instruments to obtain experiential data (Kahija, 2017). Experience is important data in research with a phenomenological approach. The third question became an instrument to explore meaning, which is one of the important characteristics of the IPA approach (Eatough, 2017; Smith, Flower & Larkin, 2009).

Result and Discussion

The interview data includes impressions of the existence of religious pilgrimage sites, the meaning of pilgrimage sites for faith development and the impact of pilgrimage sites on the development of community welfare.

Table 1. Interview Data

Respondent (R)	Local People's Impressions of the Pilgrimage Site	The Meaning of Pilgrimage Places for Faith Development	The Impact of Pilgrimage Sites on the Development of Community Welfare
R ¹	The existence of a pilgrimage site brings in many people from various places. Local people feel safe	The serene and sacred environment of the prayer garden helps devotees to pray solemnly. Many faithful from various places come to gain spiritual strength.	Many community members around the pilgrimage site open food stalls. There is an increase in community economic activity and increased employment opportunities for local people.
R ²	The community accepts and welcomes the existence of pilgrimage sites with pleasure, comfort and enthusiasm	A place of pilgrimage helps to live out silent prayer. Catholics and the people of Pajangan are known by people in various parts of Indonesia for having a place of devotion to the face of Jesus' mercy.	Families around the pilgrimage site are impacted by increased income through stall services and parking lots
R ³	The existence of pilgrimage sites makes people appreciate plurality more, relate more widely and live in harmony	The existence of the pilgrimage site makes the local community recognize and appreciate people of other religions. There is a process of developing a tolerant attitude for the local community of Pajangan	There are additional funds coming in for Catholics and the community. There is an increase in the number of donors for the maintenance of the prayer garden and public facilities around the pilgrimage site.
R ⁴	The Place of pilgrimage adds a means to live out faith and provide a space for harmony in living together in religious diversity	Pajangan Catholics understand the pilgrimage site as a space for pastoral services of prayer and adding spiritual insight for Catholics from various parts of Indonesia.	Interfaith communities around the pilgrimage site develop cooperation in improving the welfare of local communities
R ⁵	The pilgrimage site of the face of Jesus' mercy became a means of encounter for many people who communicated with each other in a friendly manner. The community experiences the hospitality of the pilgrims	The pilgrimage site is a means for people with different religious backgrounds to understand each other's differences in faith and religion.	There is an increase in the number of relationships and shop customers. There is an opportunity to develop a home stay business around the pilgrimage site.

Local People's Impressions of Pilgrimage Sites

Five respondents affirmed a positive impression of the pilgrimage site of the face of Jesus' mercy. Since the existence of the pilgrimage site, the rural environment of Pajangan is known to many people. There are many people coming from various regions to the pilgrimage site. The community recognizes pilgrims from various ethnic backgrounds, races and regions of origin. The local community works together to provide good services for the pilgrims.

The community enthusiastically accepts the existence of the pilgrimage site and the guests from various places who come to pray. They get to know many people and have new experiences in terms of relating to many migrants who have different ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds. People feel happy and comfortable in relating to the pilgrims. In other words, the existence of pilgrimage sites makes people recognize and experience life in diversity.

With the existence of a place of armor, people appreciate the existence of a means of prayer for many people. The atmosphere of the prayer garden remains quiet and sacred. Respondents 3 and 4 found a deep impression of living in harmony from pilgrims who came from different places. The prayer garden of the face of Jesus' mercy is a place where many people meet. Even though they come from different places and only know each other at the pilgrimage site, the pilgrims can communicate and respect each other. They also greet the surrounding community with friendliness and respect.

It can be affirmed that the community around the pilgrimage park of the face of Jesus' mercy has a positive impression of the existence of the pilgrimage site. They also have the impression that in carrying out pilgrimage rituals, pilgrims who come from various places respect and help each other. This is in line with the Christian tradition that pilgrims are travelers who live their vocation as the People of God who respect each other as fellow travelers on the pilgrimage of life (Nataniel, 2018: 47). The pilgrims' spiritualization of faith unites them and provides the basis for their welcoming attitude and friendly behavior. A distinctive community impression in relation to the pilgrimage activity at the prayer garden of the face of Jesus' mercy is the hospitality of the pilgrims towards the local community. This was affirmed by respondent five. The third respondent emphasized the positive impression of the existence of the pilgrimage site which has an impact on increasing the harmony of life in the local community.

The Meaning of Pilgrimage Places for Faith Development

The first respondent stated that the existence of the pilgrimage site of the prayer garden of the face of Jesus' mercy made "the atmosphere of the Church and the prayer

garden more quiet and sacred". This expression points more to the meaning of prayer for the formation of a spiritual environment in the place. The second respondent emphasized the meaning of prayer for the pilgrims. He asserted that the prayer garden "helps to live out silent prayer". The second respondent's idea illustrates that the prayer garden has meaning for believers to find a means that answers the need for a place of silent prayer.

The third respondent emphasized the meaning of a place of pilgrimage for living with people who have different religious backgrounds and beliefs. The existence of pilgrimage sites means for pilgrims and locals alike to "appreciate different faiths and learn to complement each other in differences". The same idea was underlined by the fifth respondent. For locals, the presence of pilgrims with different ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds is also a valuable experience to experience harmony in diversity.

The fourth respondent emphasized the meaning of pilgrimage sites for the development of Christians. For him, the place of pilgrimage is "a space for pastoral prayer services and adding spiritual insight". With the pilgrimage garden of the face of Jesus' mercy, the faithful meet in an atmosphere of prayer and share their faith experiences so that they grow in understanding and living the Christian faith.

Five respondents felt the positive meaning of the existence of the pilgrimage park of the face of Jesus' mercy. On the one hand, the pilgrimage site and the activities of the pilgrims have meaning for the development of Christian faith. On the other hand, the presence of pilgrims is felt by the community around the pilgrimage site. The activities of the pilgrims in prayer and interacting with the surrounding community also help the community to find the meaning of living in faith in the midst of a pluralistic society (testimony of the Church *ad extra*). People experience living in harmony and relating with people of other religions in an atmosphere of mutual respect. It can be said that the pilgrimage site and the pilgrims who come reflect the presence of a missionary Church that brings goodness to its members and the surrounding community. Pilgrimage activities colored by an atmosphere of prayer become fertile fertilizer for the growth of a humble attitude and the ability to capture the good things that come from God (testimony of the Church *ad intra*). This pilgrimage place is also a space for interfaith dialogue so that people experience living in harmony and mutual respect

The activity of pilgrimage to a holy place is a form of devotion to God through holy figures. According to Maldano (1986), the pilgrimage tradition is a popular religious practice that has been practiced by various groups of believers in various places (Maldano, 1986:6). The simple form of the activity and its tangible symbols are attractions that help the faithful to make pilgrimages.

It is interesting that five respondents affirmed that the existence of the pilgrimage site of the face of Jesus' mercy contributes positively to the development of the quality of Christian faith, the enhancement of interfaith harmony around the pilgrimage site, and

the improvement of community welfare. In terms of increasing inter-religious harmony and cooperation in developing local communities, these are positive signs for the people of Yogyakarta, which in recent years has been marked by many incidents that can be categorized as intolerance events (Santalia, 2013: 123). The local community movement in developing interfaith encounters and cooperation in developing local communities is a model of dialog work in pluralistic Indonesian society.

The Impact of Pilgrimage Sites on the Development of Community Welfare

All respondents emphasized that the presence of the pilgrimage site of the face of the mercy of Jesus had an impact on improving the welfare of the local community. The community's economy has become dynamic, marked by the opening of food stalls and parking service businesses. The more dynamic economic activities have influenced the increase in income of many community members. That the presence of the pilgrimage site of the face of Jesus' mercy in Pajangan contributed to the development of community welfare was recognized by all five respondents.

Internally, Catholics also benefit from the presence of the pilgrimage site of the face of mercy. With the development of devotion to the face of mercy, there are many pilgrims who periodically come to the pilgrimage site of the face of Jesus' mercy. They become customers of the food stalls around the pilgrimage complex. Thus, the people around the pilgrimage site who run service businesses and food providers get regular financial income.

The presence of pilgrims has an impact on the community's economy. The pilgrimage site of the face of mercy also has an impact on the emergence of joint ventures of young people with different religious backgrounds. New stalls have sprung up. Parking lot services also bring fortunes to local residents.

The presence of pilgrims from various places makes the community members around the pilgrimage site find opportunities to increase their welfare. They open food stalls to serve the pilgrims. This was confirmed by the first respondent. Apart from the food stalls that enable community members to increase their income, the second respondent emphasized that some village youths also see opportunities to earn income through parking management.

For Catholics in the Pajangan area, the presence of pilgrims from various places also increases the amount of donations for the maintenance of the shrine. Some pilgrims become regular donors who send their donations regularly. The incoming donations are used to improve public facilities that benefit the local community. The existence of

pilgrimage sites makes interfaith communities work together to improve community welfare.

The fifth respondent emphasized that the existence of the pilgrimage site is an opportunity to manage the sustainability of the community's economic life. There are several food stall owners who already have subscriptions from pilgrims who often come. In addition, there is also an opportunity to build a home stay that facilitates pilgrims who want to stay at the place. In line with Suryani's research (2021), the existence of pilgrimage sites further develops the social and economic welfare of the community. Religious pilgrimage sites or often known as religious tourism sites are proven to increase the absorption of local labor in the field of entrepreneurship and have an impact on improving the economic welfare of local communities (Suryani, 2021: 99).

Conclusion

Synergistic management and cooperation between the government, Church institutions and local communities are needed so that the existence of the pilgrimage site of the face of Jesus' mercy in Pajangan has a more optimal impact on the development of people's faith, increasing the ability to dialogue for people with different religious backgrounds, improving welfare and absorbing local labor. Cooperation between the local government, Church institutions and local community leaders needs to be improved so that the management of the pilgrimage site of the face of Jesus' mercy contributes more to the implementation of Pancasila values in the grassroots community (Susilowati, 2020: 75). One effort that needs to be developed is publication through digital media involving local young people so that young people have greater pride and responsibility for their involvement in managing the potential of their area. Local governments also need to assist local communities who live near religious pilgrimage sites so that they are increasingly aware of their responsibilities, commitments and roles in receiving pilgrims in a friendly and welcoming manner.

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