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Religious Experiences among Minority Communities: A Case Study of the Gapuraning Rahayu Christian Station in Ciawi, Tasikmalaya

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Abstract:

Indonesia is known as a highly ethnically, culturally, and religiously diverse country, with six official religions recognized as well as numerous local beliefs. This diversity demands interfaith understanding and the strengthening of social harmony through dialogue and forums such as the FKUB (Religious Forum for Religious Development). This study examines the religious experiences of Catholics at the Gapuraning Rahayu Christian Church Station, Ciawi District, Tasikmalaya Regency, and their relationship to social harmony within the Muslim majority community. The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study strategy, utilizing in-depth interviews, participant observation, documentation, and literature review. The analysis is based on Joachim Wach's theory of religious experience, which divides faith experience into theoretical, practical, and social dimensions, as well as Peter L. Berger's social constructionist perspective. The results show that the theoretical dimensions of Catholics' religious experience include internalization of Church teachings, reflection on faith, and inner meaning of God, which serve as the foundation for morality and religious identity. The practical dimension is seen through the practice of worship, prayer, daily devotions, and involvement in social activities and mutual cooperation with the Muslim

community. Meanwhile, the social dimension emphasizes how faith experiences facilitate inclusive interactions, dialogue, and interfaith cooperation, thus creating social cohesion and real harmony in pluralistic environments. This study emphasizes that religious experiences are not merely ritualistic or dogmatic, but are manifested in social actions that contribute to societal harmony. This research adds to the literature on the faith experiences of minority Catholic groups in West Java and provides insight into the mechanisms by which religious experiences can foster tolerance, solidarity, and interfaith harmony in pluralistic societies. These findings are relevant for developing strategies for interfaith dialogue and social development based on inclusive faith experiences.

Keywords: Catholicism; faith experience; interfaith harmony; religious experience; Sociology of religion.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is known as a highly diverse country, both in terms of ethnicity, culture, and religion. In the context of religious life, Indonesia recognizes six official religions: Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, as stipulated in Law Number 1/PNPS/1965 concerning the Prevention of Abuse and/or Blasphemy of Religion. Furthermore, the government also provides space for recognition of local beliefs held by some Indonesians (Kementrian Agama RI, 2021). This diversity places Indonesia as one of the countries with the largest religious plurality in the world. In general, religious life in Indonesia is dynamic. On the one hand, religious communities can freely express their beliefs, for example through the construction of houses of worship, the provision of religious education, and the observance of nationally recognized religious holidays. However, on the other hand, friction or conflict often arises due to differences in religious interpretation, political identity interests, or socio-economic issues that are then linked to religion. To overcome this, the government together with religious leaders always prioritize interfaith dialogue and strengthen the interfaith harmony forum (FKUB) as a communication forum (Assyaukanie, 2009).

The basic principle that maintains harmony in religious life in Indonesia is the motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika." This motto originates from the Kakawin Sutasoma by Mpu Tantular in the 14th century, meaning "different but still one." In the context of nationality, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika serves as a moral foundation that, although Indonesian people have differences in beliefs, cultures, and customs, they remain united within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (Magnis-Suseno, 2013). This principle is also reinforced in Pancasila, particularly the first principle, "Belief in the One and Only God," which emphasizes that the Indonesian people are a religious nation that respects divine values, without denying religious freedom for every individual. Tasikmalaya Regency is one of the regions in West Java Province known as an agricultural region with geographical conditions dominated by hills and mountains, especially the Mount Galunggung area. This natural condition makes Tasikmalaya a fertile area and supports the lives of the community, most of whom are engaged in agriculture, plantations, and animal husbandry. With an area of approximately 2,708.82 km², Tasikmalaya Regency was home to over 1.9 million people in 2023 (BPS Tasikmalaya, 2024). The regency is also often referred to as the "city of Islamic students" due to its presence

of over 800 Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) spread across various sub-districts, making it one of the centers of Islamic religious education in West Java.

In terms of religious demographics, Tasikmalaya Regency is heavily dominated by Muslims. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the number of Muslims in 2020 reached 1,753,535, while other religions were relatively small: approximately 447 Protestant Christians, 92 Catholics, 5 Hindus, and 49 other religious groups (Halimah, 2020). This data emphasizes the dominance of Islam as the absolute majority religion in Tasikmalaya Regency. Specifically, data from 2023 shows that the total number of Muslims reached 68,988. Meanwhile, there were 35 Protestant Christians, 192 Catholics, 7 Hindus, and 28 other religious groups, with no Buddhists (BPS Tasikmalaya, 2024). This indicates that despite religious diversity, Islam remains almost completely dominant in the lives of the people of Ciawi District.

Gapuraning Rahayu Christ Station is one of the stations under the auspices of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Tasikmalaya. This parish has three stations: Santa Vianney Cipatujah Station, Gapuraning Rahayu Christ Station in Ciawi, and Santo Dismas Nagaraherang Station. Based on 2019 data, the number of congregants at Gapuraning Rahayu Christ Station was recorded at 251 people. The history of the station's establishment is quite unique because it began with followers of the Javanese Sundanese Religion (ADS) who decided to embrace Catholicism. In 1964, they applied to become Catholics, and from 1965–1967 they worshipped together in Tasikmalaya. Since May 1967, the congregation began pioneering efforts to build their own place of worship. Further developments occurred in 1989, when the congregation purchased a building for use as a place of worship. However, in 1990, the place was closed by the Ministry of Religion due to licensing issues, before finally being permitted again in 1992.

The journey of this station has not been without challenges. During the "Tasik Kelabu" incident in 1996, the place of worship in Ciawi was affected by the riots and was damaged. Nevertheless, the congregation remained resilient and continued their church life. Pastor Agus Nindia Nikolas, Pr., then appeared as a companion to the congregation, particularly in encouraging the development of organic farming, as the majority of the congregation at this station worked as farmers. To facilitate pastoral care, the Christ Gapuraning Rahayu Station is divided into three neighborhoods. Neighborhood one covers the villages of Balemanggu, Sanghiangteureup, Cihanjaro, Perum Sawati, Karang Asem, Nampong, Asem Kidul, Sela Kopi, Kudang Mulya, Motoran, Kaum Tengah, and Sukahaji. Neighborhood two covers the villages of Kaliminggir, while Neighborhood three covers the villages of Sigung and Cipanjang.

As part of this development, the place of worship and meeting room at Ciawi Station were renovated in 2017. A year later, in 2018, the building was blessed by the Bishop of Bandung, Antonius Subianto Bunjamin. This renovation demonstrates the congregation's enthusiasm for maintaining and developing its faith within a diverse society. The relationship between the Catholic congregation of the Christ Gapuraning Rahayu Station and the Muslim community in Ciawi District is generally very good. According to Mr. Badi, the station's head, the social relations they have built are based on mutual respect. This mutual respect is reflected both in daily life and in social gatherings, where Catholics do not isolate themselves but always open up spaces for healthy dialogue and interaction with the surrounding community. This togetherness is also evident in activities involving the local government. Catholics and Muslims often work together and support various government programs at the village and

sub-district levels. This demonstrates that religious life in Ciawi does not operate in isolation but is united in social cooperation for the common good. Mr. Badi added that the Gapuraning Rahayu Christ Station had also held interfaith activities attended by various community leaders. These activities provided a platform to strengthen interfaith relations, build understanding, and eliminate potential misunderstandings. This momentum also emphasized that interfaith harmony is not only maintained formally but also manifests in daily activities involving various parties.

One of the important activities ever held was the Harmony Village in 2023. This event was attended by the deputy regent, Kesbangpol, and the Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB) of Tasikmalaya Regency led by Mr. H. Edeng. The presence of these government figures and official institutions shows that interfaith harmony in Ciawi District receives strong attention and support, both from the community and the government. This activity also shows that the Catholic community of Stasi Kristus Gapuraning Rahayu is not an isolated community, but rather an integral part of the Ciawi community that actively contributes to creating a harmonious life.

The urgency of research on religious experience in the context of interfaith harmony lies in the need to understand how an individual's faith experience influences social interactions and the quality of relationships between religious communities. In a pluralistic society like Indonesia, religious experience is not only interpreted personally as a human relationship with God, but also has a social dimension that has implications for how religious communities build communication, cooperation, and solidarity with other religious groups (Wach, 1984). Joachim Wach emphasized that religious experience has three dimensions: theoretical, practical, and social. This social dimension of experience is what bridges individuals or communities to not only live within an internal space of faith but also express their faith in tangible forms of interaction with the surrounding community. Therefore, this study is important to explore how the religious experience of Catholics at the Gapuraning Rahayu Christ Station can foster openness, mutual respect, and harmony within the Muslim community in Ciawi District.

Furthermore, the pluralistic context of religious life in Indonesia demands a deep understanding of how people from different religious backgrounds can coexist peacefully. The principle of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity) is indeed the philosophical foundation of nationalism, but in social practice, this principle requires the internalization of values derived from each person's faith experience. Peter L. Berger, in his theory of social construction, states that social reality is formed through the processes of externalization, objectivation, and internalization (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). This means that a person's religious experience does not stop at personal experience, but is constructed into social reality and influences patterns of interaction with others. If the experience of faith is experienced exclusively, it can create social barriers, but if it is experienced inclusively, it becomes the basis for the birth of harmony between religious communities.

Research on religious experiences in the context of interfaith harmony is also important because it can provide a concrete picture of how social harmony is formed at the local level. Several previous studies have shown that religious experiences play a significant role in building interfaith cooperation. For example, research conducted by Bambang Pranowo shows that local communities that utilize religious experiences as a source of shared values are able to build inclusive social networks and maintain harmony (Pranowo, 2009). This aligns with Masykuri Abdillah's view that interfaith harmony in Indonesia rests on the willingness of

religious communities to express their faith values through tolerance, mutual cooperation, and respect for differences (Abdillah, 2015).

The theory of religious experience proposed by Joachim Wach has significant relevance in understanding the meaning of the faith of Catholics, especially when linked to the reality of socio-religious life at the Gapuraning Rahayu Christ Station. Wach emphasized that religious experience is not something merely abstract, but is always manifested in observable expressions. These expressions, according to Wach, consist of three dimensions: theoretical, practical, and social. These three dimensions can be used as an analytical framework to reveal how Catholics live their faith, as well as how that faith gives meaning to daily life, both within the church and in relations with the wider community (Wach, 1984).

Wach's three dimensions provide a comprehensive analytical framework for understanding the meaning of Catholic faith. The theoretical dimension helps explain the dogmatic basis for the community's attitude toward differences. The practical dimension reveals how faith is practiced in rituals and worship, simultaneously strengthening social solidarity. Meanwhile, the social dimension demonstrates how Catholic faith directly impacts interactions with Muslim communities, thus providing a foundation for interfaith harmony.

This research thus finds relevance because without understanding religious experience through Wach's framework, the meaning of Catholic faith will be seen as merely dogma or ritual. In fact, the meaning of faith in the daily lives of Catholics in Ciawi is manifested in the form of cooperation, mutual respect, and active involvement in maintaining social harmony. Wach himself emphasized that religious experience always contains expressions that are realized in community life. Therefore, an analysis based on Wach's theory can demonstrate that Catholic faith is not exclusive, but open to building social bridges with other religious communities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous research on religious experience and interfaith harmony has served as an important conceptual foundation for this study. These studies not only demonstrate a variety of theoretical approaches to understanding the dynamics of interfaith social relations but also emphasize that religious experience is a social practice that significantly shapes interactions in pluralistic societies. An examination of various empirical studies reveals a thematic consensus that faith experiences, both Islamic and Christian, especially in minority contexts, play a role in facilitating harmonious social relations with the majority community. The existing literature provides a strong foundation and clarifies the remaining research gap, particularly in the context of the faith experiences of Catholics in West Java.

Dea Retno Niti Azmi's research, "The Religious Experiences of Minority Muslims in Rejo Binangun Village, North Raman District, East Lampung," examines how minority Muslims realize their religious experiences within a heterogeneous society. This study combines sociological and psychological approaches using Joachim Wach's theoretical framework of religious experience, namely through three dimensions of experience: thought, action, and fellowship. The results show that minority Muslims are involved in Islamic learning through religious studies, lectures, and digital media (thought), implement ritual practices such as prayer, fasting, pilgrimage and sacrifice (action), and are active in social relationships such as religious study groups and religious celebrations (fellowship), although their participation varies. These findings reflect that the structural obstacles experienced by

minorities tend to be minimal and do not hinder their daily religious practices, which in turn affects the quality of social harmony in the environment. This study provides an in-depth understanding of how religious experiences are formed and carried out in a Muslim minority context, while strengthening the idea that religious experiences contribute to a conducive social order (Dea, 2022).

The Religious Experience of Minority Christians in Bekasi Ahmad Sa'dudin Attaptajadi, in his thesis "The Religious Experience of Christians in a Muslim Majority: A Study of Jagawana Village, Bekasi Regency," examines the minority Christian community within the context of the Muslim-majority social environment in Bekasi. This study uses a sociology of religion approach with descriptive qualitative methods, including interviews, observation, and documentation. Attaptajadi found that despite being a minority demographic, Christians continue to actively practice religious worship and celebrations while maintaining their religious identity. Adaptation strategies to local social norms, including involvement in mutual cooperation, interfaith dialogue, and daily tolerance practices, are shown to be mechanisms that strengthen harmonious social relations between the Christian and Muslim majority communities. The results of this study confirm that religious experiences not only strengthen the identity of the Christian community but also contribute to social cohesion in a multicultural society (Attaptajani, 2025).

Saleh Tri Aryanto examined the conditions of minority Muslims in Ngento-ento Hamlet, Sumberagung, Moyudan, Sleman Regency, to understand patterns of social interaction with the majority Christian group. This study used a sociological approach and purposive sampling techniques in data collection. The results indicate that relations between minority Muslims and the majority Christian community are harmonious without significant social discrimination. The attitude of mutual assistance in religious and social activities is strong evidence that religious identity can be maintained while being integrated with local cultural values, particularly moderate Javanese culture. The pattern of interfaith relations in this region reflects manifestations of inclusive, exclusive, and pluralist attitudes that are contextual and flexible according to situational needs. These findings strengthen the view that local sociocultural structures play a crucial role in shaping peaceful interfaith interactions.

Rosidin's research on "Majority-Minority Relations of Religious Communities: The Experience of the Tegal Community in Establishing the Kong Miao House of Worship" focuses on the challenges and strategies for implementing Joint Regulations of the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Minister of Home Affairs No. 8 and 9 of 2006 concerning the establishment of houses of worship. This case study shows that with appropriate regulations and good communication between local governments and religious leaders, the establishment of houses of worship can be carried out effectively even in a pluralistic society. The main factors for this success are the religious awareness and maturity of all stakeholders, as well as the support of large religious organizations that do not question the existence of these houses of worship. These findings enrich the literature on interfaith harmony with aspects of public policy and social actors that support social cohesion. This research confirms that a policy structure that is responsive to diversity is crucial in facilitating the existence of minority groups.

Esti Zaduqisti conducted a study on the "Dynamics of Religiousness of Muslim Minorities in Purbo Hamlet, Jolotigo Village, Talun, Pekalongan," focusing on religious awareness, experience, and maturity, as well as the phenomenon of religious conversion among Muslim minorities. This study used a qualitative approach combined with studies of religious and

social psychology. The findings indicate that religious awareness is understood as the fruit of faith experience and is manifested through ritual practices, but religious maturity does not fully meet the ideal indicators. In addition, religious conversions that occur, both into and out of Islam, are generally influenced by factors such as marriage, education, and the social environment. These findings emphasize that religious experience is dynamic and influenced by internal individual factors as well as external structural factors of society, including social interactions and cultural values.

Supardi's ethnographic research on "The Dynamics of Religiousness of Muslim Minorities in Karangasem, Bali (2000–2019)" highlights the religious expressions of minority Muslims and their patterns of interaction with the Hindu/Balinese majority. Supardi shows that Muslims are free to express their religion within the village environment, but public spaces tend to be more restricted. The dialectic between Islam and local culture produces variants of religious practices such as local Islam, pure Islam, and syncretic forms. Intracommunal interactions tend to be dissociative, while intercommunal interactions depend on the community's religious character, which is more inclusive among local or syncretic Muslims and more exclusive among pure Islam. Factors such as village identity, religio-political issues, internal differences, and experiences of past conflict are important variables in this dynamic.

Abd Madjid, Santoso, and M. Ridwan examined "Religious Experience; Harmony and Minority in the Muslim Community of Akit, Siak, Riau" using a qualitative sociological approach. The findings indicate that the community upholds the values of togetherness and mutual respect, thus maintaining religious freedom. Support from traditional leaders and the local government provides space for minority Muslims to practice their religious lives harmoniously in a multicultural society. This research reinforces the idea that local institutions and cultural norms are important mediators in shaping religious experiences that support social harmony.

Based on the literature review presented, it is clear that previous research has focused heavily on the faith experiences of minority groups, both Muslims and Christians, and their relationships with the majority community in pluralistic social environments. These studies demonstrate that religious experience, manifested through ritual practices, social strategies, and interfaith interactions, plays a crucial role in strengthening social cohesion and maintaining societal harmony. The dominant methodological approach is qualitative, descriptive, and phenomenological, with theoretical foundations rooted in the sociology of religion, the psychology of religion, and social interaction theory. However, these studies have several limitations. First, the focus is largely limited to Muslim or Christian groups, resulting in minimal attention to other religious groups, such as Catholics in West Java. Second, most studies are local theses or dissertations that have not been published in reputable journals with DOIs, thus limiting scholarly accessibility and visibility. Third, although addressing social dynamics, the existing literature has not comprehensively integrated theories of religious experience with the social construction of harmony, as proposed by Joachim Wach and Peter L. Berger.

In this context, this study aims to fill this gap by emphasizing the faith experiences of Catholics in Tasikmalaya and their relationship to social harmony within the Muslim community. By integratively combining the theoretical perspectives of religious experience and social construction, this study is expected to explain not only the personal dimension of faith but also how faith is formed, practiced, and influences interfaith social interactions. Thus, this research makes an important contribution to expanding the study of interfaith harmony

in Indonesia, while complementing the literature that has previously focused on Muslim and Christian minority groups.

METHOD

This study uses a sociological approach because the main focus lies in understanding the religious experiences of Catholics at the Gapuraning Rahayu Christ Station and its relationship to social harmony with the Muslim community in Ciawi District, Tasikmalaya Regency. According to Creswell, qualitative research is an appropriate approach to explore and understand the meaning experienced by individuals from social problems or humanitarian phenomena (Creswell & Clark, 2018). Thus, this approach is relevant to explore the dimensions of faith in the life experiences of Catholics that cannot be fully explained through quantitative data, but rather through narratives, interpretations, and personal reflections.

The type of research used is descriptive qualitative with a case study strategy. Qualitative descriptive research focuses on depicting social reality as experienced by research subjects, based on their own perspectives and experiences. Meanwhile, a case study was chosen because this research focuses on one specific case, namely the religious experience and harmony of Catholics at the Gapuraning Rahayu Christ Station with the Muslim community in their neighborhood. Yin explains that case studies allow researchers to investigate contemporary phenomena in depth, especially when these phenomena are related to contexts that cannot be easily separated from real life (Yin, 2018).

The selection of this research approach and type was based on several considerations. First, the research's focus on the personal and subjective dimensions of faith makes a qualitative method appropriate. Second, the social harmony established between Catholics and Muslims is a complex social phenomenon and cannot be separated from the cultural, historical, and interfaith contexts. Third, the case study strategy provides an opportunity to examine the relationship between religious experience and social reality as a whole, in line with the focus of this research. Therefore, the use of a qualitative approach with descriptive research and a case study strategy is expected to provide a comprehensive, in-depth, and contextual understanding of religious experience and interfaith harmony at the research site. Research subjects were determined based on their relevance to the problem under study, using a purposive sampling technique. The primary subjects included Catholics from the Gapuraning Rahayu Station of Christ, with data collected related to their daily faith experiences, their interpretations of worship, their involvement in the community, and their views on their relationship with the Muslim community. In addition, Catholic figures were also used as subjects to gain perspectives on managing the faith life of the congregation, their experience leading religious activities, strategies for building interfaith relations, and their views on the role of the church in maintaining harmony.

In qualitative research, data sources are a key element in obtaining in-depth and comprehensive information. This study utilizes complementary primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and field documentation with the research subjects. Secondary data were obtained through document reviews, literature, and other relevant written sources. Data collection was conducted systematically yet flexibly, allowing researchers to explore the deeper meaning of the subjects' experiences. Data collection techniques used included in-depth interviews, participant observation, documentary observation, and library research (Miles et al., 2020).

This approach allows the research to capture the religious experiences of Catholics and the dynamics of harmony with the Muslim community in a comprehensive, detailed, and contextual manner.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Religious Experience of Catholics in the Theoretical Dimension

In the study of religiosity and religious experience, the theoretical dimension is a fundamental aspect that enables a conceptual understanding of faith as both a subjective and intersubjective experience. This theoretical dimension encompasses cognitive assimilation, theological reflection, and the internalization of religious doctrine, which then serve as the basis for people's understanding of the existence of God, the symbols of faith, and the ritual practices that give meaning to their religious lives. Conceptually, the theoretical dimension serves as an epistemic framework that transforms formal theological views into everyday behavior and experiences of faith—growing, moving, and developing within the social context of religious communities. — both in communal and personal life. Research on the theory of relativity and the dimensions of religious experience in the study of religiosity also shows that the cognitive and reflective aspects of faith experience play an important role in the overall meaning of religion, not just ritual practice (Burger & Allen, 1973).

In the context of the sociology of religion, understanding religious experience is not only seen as mere rituals or normative beliefs, but also as a dynamic process that includes the subjective experiences of individuals as well as social relations within their communities. For example, formal studies on the dimensions of religious experience have been conducted to identify the structure of the experience of faith that includes the feeling of God's presence, inner reflection, and the social consequences of the experience (Głaz, 2020). Research like this opens up space for a more holistic study of the experience of Catholic faith, positioning faith as a lived experience that is directly experienced, shaping the values and behavior of believers in social reality, rather than simply an abstract theological concept. This emphasizes that theoretical religious experience is experienced through the interaction between inner conviction and the real social situations faced by individuals and communities in everyday life.

In the theoretical dimension of the religious experience of the Catholic community of Gapuraning Rahayu Station of Christ, this theological faith experience is realized through the internalization of the teachings of the Catholic Church. encompassing scripture, liturgical tradition, dogma, and the moral teachings of the Church. These teachings are not merely studied academically or textually, but are understood within the context of the lived experiences of the faithful as a whole, directly impacting their attitudes and actions. In the process of internalizing this doctrine, Catholics are given a reflective framework for understanding God, Jesus Christ, the sacraments, and the Christian values that form the basis of their attitudes towards life. This theoretical experience leads to a form of living faith, enabling them to interpret God as a figure of faith present in personal experience, not merely a theological concept. Theoretical studies of religiosity show that religious experiences, such as the experience of God's presence, are not merely emotional but also involve deeper cognitive reflection on the meaning of life and humanity's social relationship with the divine (Burger & Allen, 1973).

In a heterogeneous social reality such as that experienced by Catholics at Gapuraning Rahayu Station, the theoretical dimension of religious experience interacts with the context of

interfaith interactions, particularly with the majority Muslim community in the region. In a minority situation, Catholics' theoretical faith experience serves as a foundation for religious identity and a source of spiritual strength that helps them forge harmonious social relationships. More broadly, the theoretical dimension of faith experience is understood not only as personal and ritual, but also as a source of moral orientation and values that guide the social behavior of the congregation in the context of community life. This is in line with studies of religiosity, which show that religious experience is inseparable from the socio-cultural context that surrounds it, and that religiosity can only be truly understood if examined holistically in its interaction with the social life of the congregation.

The faith experience of Catholics in the context of the Stations emerged through various forms of religious expression, both personal and collective. For example, in the experience of prayer, the celebration of Mass, devotion to saints, and the proclamation of Church teachings, which were internalized into meaningful inner experiences in the daily lives of the congregation. The perception of God's presence through the experience of prayer or the sacraments demonstrates how faith is experienced theoretically and practically at the same time. Empirical research on religious experience also shows a connection between the subjective experience of God's presence and the dynamics of social life, so that the experience of faith not only provides inner peace but also impacts how individuals interact with others (Głaz, 2020).

A theoretical understanding of the experience of faith also encompasses the internalization of Church teachings formulated through homilies, catechesis, and Catholic faith education received by the faithful from childhood to adulthood. In this context, the experience of faith grows alongside the internalization of Christian values that shape patterns of thought, action, and relationship. When Catholics internalize the teachings of love, forgiveness, and solidarity, they not only understand them doctrinally but also give them personal meaning in their daily lives. The theme of Christian love, for example, is not merely taught as dogma but is reflected through concrete experiences in social relationships with others, including in the context of interfaith harmony (Burger & Allen, 1973).

On a personal level, the faith experience of Catholics in the Stasi community is far from mere formal rituals. Worship and prayer are concrete forms of inner experience that strengthen their relationship with God. For example, the experience of intensive prayer in difficult situations is often experienced not simply as a ritual, but as an inner dialogue between individuals and God in the context of their real lives. This is also evident in the faith experience of the community during times like the pandemic, when limitations on liturgical celebrations present new challenges in experiencing God's presence (Sugiyana, 2022). The theoretical dimension of religious experience itself also develops through the process of internalizing relational experiences between individuals and God, where the experience of faith is not merely an abstract concept, but is manifested in a grounded, lived awareness. For example, Catholics interpret God not as a distant entity whose presence cannot be felt, but as a source of spiritual strength and inner comfort in the journey of daily life. Experiences such as these affirm that faith is a real, living presence and experiential interaction with God, not merely theological knowledge.

From a broader theoretical perspective, the experience of faith also serves as a source of spiritual resilience and inner resilience in facing life's challenges. People facing significant life challenges, such as personal or social problems, often experience struggles of faith that strengthen their belief in God. This process is not merely individual, but part of the dynamic

of faith life within a community, encouraging people to interpret difficult experiences as part of a productive process of faith maturation—a phenomenon whose vision is emphasized in theoretical studies of religious experience as part of the structure of human religiosity. In the context of a minority Catholic community such as the Gapuraning Rahayu Christian Church, the theoretical experience of faith serves not only as a source of internal reflection but also as a relational basis that helps build harmonious social relationships with the diverse Muslim majority community. When people understand their faith in a theoretical dimension (namely as an inner relationship with God, internalization of Church teachings, and affirmation of morals and the value of love), they tend to express this experience of faith in inclusive social behavior, oriented toward dialogue and tolerance. This factor shows that a theoretically and reflectively sound faith experience can have a positive impact on social cohesion and interfaith harmony.

In practice, the theoretical experience of faith is often linked to Church tradition, which provides moral narratives, symbols, and sacraments that leave a strong imprint of inner experience on the congregation. For example, the experience of inner peace while attending Mass or receiving the sacrament of confession can strengthen the congregation's belief that God is personally present in their lives. Such experiences affirm that Christian faith is not merely a learned dogma, but an experience that is explored, felt, and lived out in real life. This theoretical experience also shapes the congregation's way of thinking and social behavior, which focuses not only on ritual needs but also includes aspects of social ethics such as love for others, respect for human dignity, and involvement in social activities that strengthen solidarity. This is a concrete manifestation of the experience of faith that has been theoretically internalized, because a correctly understood faith will lead the congregation to embody these Christian values in their social lives (Głaz, 2020).

The theoretical dimension of the religious experience of the Catholic community of Gapuraning Rahayu Station of Christ emphasizes that faith is understood not only through rituals and church teachings, but as a personal, reflective, and relevant life experience within their social context. This experience provides a strong foundation for the community to live their daily lives, maintain their religious identity, and build harmonious social relationships within a diverse community. Thus, the theoretical dimension of faith is the heart of the religious experience, linking theological belief, inner reflection, and social action throughout the religious life of Catholics within the context of a pluralistic society.

The Religious Experience of Catholics in a Practical Dimension

After outlining the theoretical dimensions of religious experience related to the understanding and reflection of faith of the Catholic community of Stasi Kristus Gapuraning Rahayu, the next study focuses on the practical dimensions of religious experience. This practical dimension refers to the concrete manifestation of the experience of faith in daily actions through religious behavior, worship practices, and moral behavior carried out in community and social life. From Joachim Wach's theoretical perspective, religious experience is not only an individual's inner meaning, but is also manifested concretely in the form of repeated and consistent religious actions and habits that become part of the rhythm of daily life (Taylor, 2007).

In pastoral theology and the study of practical religiosity, the practical dimension of religious experience encompasses practices of worship, prayer, and moral action that reflect lived faith in social reality. Empirical studies show that these religious practices form recurring

and consistent patterns of religious life in the lives of people, thus providing a source of inner and moral strength that fosters the sustainability of religious life in real-world contexts (Fisher, 2011). This explains how faith transforms from mere internal belief into concrete expression in everyday life related to social interactions and moral values. In the Catholic context, these religious practices include the celebration of the Eucharist, personal and communal prayer, daily devotions, and involvement in church and social activities at the station level. These activities serve as a means for the faithful to maintain a relationship with God, strengthen their faith, and experience God's presence in the rhythms of daily life. As demonstrated in studies of ritual practice and practical religiosity, rituals such as prayer and liturgical celebrations serve to deepen the inner experience of a believer and encourage involvement in the community of faith (Hood, 1975).

Repeated and regular worship practices foster a faith experience that becomes increasingly embedded in the lives of believers and is passed down through generations within the community. Habitual patterns of religious practices, such as attending weekly Mass and prayer, make religious experiences not merely formal rituals but also an integral part of daily life, both personal and communal. Research in religious studies shows that well-internalized worship practices contribute significantly to the spiritual well-being and psychological stability of religious communities (Koenig, 2012). In addition to ritual practice, the practical dimension of religious experience also encompasses attitudes and moral actions born from the experience of faith itself. For the Catholic community of Stasi Kristus Gapuraning Rahayu, faith is not only manifested in liturgical activities in church, but is also reflected in their daily actions in the family, workplace, social environment, and in interfaith relationships. This shows that the religious practices of the community are not exclusive or separate from social life, but are integrated into local social and cultural dynamics. Studies in the sociology of religion explain that the manifestation of faith in the context of social life shows how religious practices integrate with the reality of the community's life as a whole (Reed, 2021).

The practical dimension of religious experience holds a unique significance for Catholics as a minority group. Limited numbers, the simplicity of church facilities, and social conditions that require adaptive attitudes shape a distinctive pattern of religious practice. The experience of faith is lived simply but consistently through daily prayer, participation in Mass, and involvement in socio-cultural activities. This demonstrates that religious practice is not merely a formal ritual, but a way of life shaped through the congregation's lived experiences within their social context. The literature on minority religiosity shows that minority congregations often find creative and adaptive forms of religious practice within the majority social context, enriching the dynamics of their religious lives. Therefore, the discussion of the practical dimension in this study aims to describe how the faith experience of Catholics of the Gapuraning Rahayu Station of Christ is manifested through worship, prayer, and concrete actions in daily life. Analysis of interviews with informants indicates that congregations interpret these religious practices as something inherent in their lives, which continually strengthens their faith and plays a role in spiritual resilience amidst life's challenges. This explains that the practical dimension of faith experience is a bridge between internal belief and the implementation of religious values in real, daily life.

In particular, the practice of prayer holds a crucial place in the life of a faithful believer. Prayer is understood as personal and direct communication with God that can occur anytime and anywhere. The forms of prayer expressed vary, from formal church prayers to

spontaneous prayers offered according to daily needs. Through prayer, believers feel strengthened, comforted, and empowered to surrender life's struggles to God, especially when facing financial, family, or work-related challenges. Research in the psychology of religion confirms that the practice of prayer plays a crucial role in the emotional recovery and spiritual well-being of religious believers (Pargament & Park, 1995). The celebration of the Eucharist is also understood as the pinnacle of the spiritual life of the congregation. Attending Mass is not merely a ritual obligation, but an inner need that provides serenity, spiritual depth, and moral strength to live daily life. The Eucharist provides a tangible experience of community and the presence of God, especially for minority communities who often experience social and cultural limitations. The study of pastoral theology shows that the Eucharistic liturgy is not merely a ritual, but a religious experience that shapes and strengthens the religious identity of the congregation collectively (Chang et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the involvement of the congregation in social activities, both within the church and in the wider community, such as mutual cooperation, community service activities, and interfaith dialogue, is a concrete form of faith experience manifested in social behavior. This involvement demonstrates that religious experience does not stop at the ritual dimension, but also extends to moral and social actions that strengthen solidarity and harmony between religious communities. Sociological studies show that participation in social activities also broadens religious experience and helps strengthen the community's attachment to religious values (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021). In busy situations or when congregations face difficulties attending Mass, they maintain their faith practices through personal prayer, reading Scripture, and applying religious values in their daily lives. This demonstrates the flexibility of faith practices, where God is experienced not only in formal liturgical experiences but also in personal experiences relevant to the dynamics of real life. Contemporary spirituality studies confirm that the experience of faith is strongly influenced by personal engagement and reflection on daily life, not solely by formal rituals.

The experience of feeling God's presence often arises in difficult life situations, such as financial hardship, confusion in decision-making, or the exhaustion of daily life. In such situations, people experience God's presence as a source of strength, comfort, and direction in life. Through sincere and simple prayer, people feel God's presence, giving them peace and the courage to move on. Research in the psychology of religion shows that the experience of God's presence is closely related to people's real-life experiences, which can strengthen their religious identity and spiritual resilience (Koenig, 2012). Catholic faith values are also internalized in family life through the habit of praying together, the example of parents, and daily moral practices such as honesty, patience, forgiveness, and living in harmony with others. Family life becomes a laboratory of faith where religious values are practiced, reflected upon, and passed on to the next generation. Research on religious families shows that the practice of faith in family life has a significant impact on the development of children's religiosity and strengthens family cohesion as the primary social base of believers.

The practical dimension of the religious experience of the Catholic community of Stasi Kristus Gapuraning Rahayu shows that faith is not only understood internally or theoretically, but is primarily lived through concrete practices: prayer, liturgical worship, social engagement, and consistent moral behavior in daily life. These practices are an important foundation in maintaining the steadfastness of faith amidst the various social,

cultural, and limitations faced by the community as a minority group. The experience of faith in the practical dimension shows that religious life is not merely doctrine, but is a real, relevant, and meaningful life experience in the social context that Catholics live both personally and communally.

The Religious Experience of Catholics in the Social Dimension

The religious experience of Catholics occurs not only personally and ritually, but also socially and collectively, namely in the form of social relations, community interactions, and expressions of faith integrated into social life. The social dimension of religious experience refers to how faith is practiced and experienced through interpersonal and community relationships, both within the church environment and in broader social life. Studies in the sociology of religion show that social religiosity is an important aspect of religious experience, because it provides a space for people to articulate their faith through interaction, solidarity, and tangible social involvement in everyday life (Glock & Stark, 1965).

For the Catholic community of Gapuraning Rahayu's Christ Station, the dimensions of fellowship and social life are crucial because they live as a minority community amidst a predominantly non-Catholic society. In this situation, the relationships between believers internally at the station and with those outside their own community form a concrete social experience of faith. These relationships provide a concrete space for expressing religious values such as love, tolerance, respect for others, and mutual cooperation in communal life. The literature on religion and social relations shows that involvement in a religious community strengthens social relationships and creates solidarity, which is essential for the religious life of the congregation (Putnam, 2000).

The socio-religious dimension is evident, among other things, through harmonious interpersonal relationships within the station, as well as through involvement in social activities such as neighborhood prayers, community service, and participation in joint activities. These activities are not merely formal rituals, but also social experiences that strengthen the bonds of brotherhood among members of the community. Through these social interactions, faith values such as love, solidarity, humility, and openness toward others are concretely realized. Sociological studies underscore the importance of social practices as part of the religious experience that strengthens community cohesion.

Interfaith relations at the station are strongly influenced by a familial atmosphere, emotional closeness, and strong solidarity, despite the relatively small number of congregants and the majority being elderly. This closeness fosters a sense of mutual recognition, mutual assistance, and mutual strengthening in church life. Despite the small community, the quality of its social relationships is felt in the form of moral support, interfaith visits, and practices of love evident in daily life. Religious research shows that small communities with strong social networks tend to have a higher sense of cohesion in experiencing shared religious experiences (Lin, 2025).

The social and religious life of Catholics takes place not only within liturgical contexts such as Sunday Mass, Christmas, and Easter, but also in communal activities outside of formal liturgy. For example, church cleaning, liturgical preparation, and station facility management serve as social spaces that strengthen the community's brotherhood. These activities provide opportunities for the congregation to interact intensely and become concrete forms of faith experiences within the community. These social relationships embody the theology of koinonia, the experience of fellowship and brotherhood within the Christian community.

Harmonious social interactions occur not only within the community but also in the relationships between Catholics and the surrounding community, which is predominantly non-Catholic. Interviewees in this study consistently described social relations as peaceful, respectful, and tolerant. This is achieved through a shared commitment to maintaining social order and an awareness that religious differences are not a source of conflict. In the study of religious pluralism, research shows that social tolerance is rooted in shared values respected by all groups, including mutual respect and cooperation in communal life.

Daily interactions between Catholics and non-Catholics involve social activities such as neighborhood community service, village community service, and socio-cultural celebrations involving all parties. The active participation of Catholics in neighborhood activities strengthens inclusive social relations. This practice is not merely a form of community cooperation but also an experience of faith embodied in concrete social actions. These social actions serve as a way for people to demonstrate their religious values without separating religious experience from social interactions in the broader community. Research on social religiosity indicates that inclusive social relations are crucial for strengthening social cohesion and shared religious experiences (Capra, 2002).

Christmas for the Catholic community of Gapuraning Rahayu's Christ Church is a unique social experience, perceived not only as an internal religious celebration but also as a social moment involving the surrounding community. Interviewees stated that the Christmas celebration was perceived as a grateful faith experience and a social experience demonstrating the acceptance of Catholics by the community. Many non-Catholics attended, offered greetings, or simply witnessed the celebration, demonstrating the level of social acceptance of Catholics within the majority community. This aligns with the findings of research on religious pluralism, which states that religious celebrations can provide opportunities for social dialogue that strengthens appreciation and recognition of religious differences (Putnam & Campbell, 2010).

The key to Catholics remaining accepted in non-Catholic communities is how the values of their faith are embodied in concrete, everyday actions. Gospel values such as love, humility, openness, and tolerance are not only taught theoretically but are demonstrated in the congregation's social attitudes and behavior. Catholics at this station demonstrate that religious experience extends beyond worship rituals and permeates daily social behavior, both in interactions with fellow believers and with people of different faiths. Studies on religion and society demonstrate that religious experience becomes more meaningful when lived in a concrete social context through actions that reflect these religious values.

The social experience of faith for Catholics is also related to how they respond to the challenges of living alongside other communities. For example, the congregation stated that maintaining harmony and tolerance is not merely a formal matter of social regulations, but is part of the experience of faith embodied in daily behavior. This aligns with studies of religion in social life, which emphasize that respect for differences and interfaith cooperation are essential foundations for strengthening social cohesion in pluralistic societies.

The social dimension of the religious experience of the Catholic community at Gapuraning Rahayu Station of Christ demonstrates that faith is not merely internal and ritualistic, but also deeply social and collective. The experience of faith is manifested in harmonious interpersonal relationships, involvement in inclusive social activities, and moral actions that reflect Gospel values in daily life. These social practices serve as an important foundation for the community's religious life, especially in the context of a pluralistic and

diverse society. This social experience affirms that religious life is not a separate entity, the church and the world, but is closely interconnected and mutually enriching in the community's practical lives.

CONCLUSION

This study examines the religious experiences of Catholics at the Galpurauning Rahayu Christ Station in Cicalengka District, Tasikmalaya, as a living, contextual manifestation of faith that is closely intertwined with the social realities of the surrounding community. The Galpurauning Rahayu Christ Station is not merely a church administrative unit, but a faith community that has developed through a long history, social dynamics, and intergenerational relationships. Based on the results of field research through in-depth interviews with informants, the lived experiences of Catholics at this station demonstrate an integration between theoretical dimensions, religious practice, and harmonious social life. Historically, this station was born from the journey of faith of Catholics since the 1960s, which faced various challenges, including the lack of a permanent place of worship until 1984. The process of moving from house to house to worship shaped the character of the congregation to be simple, resilient, and uphold solidarity. In the context of a predominantly non-Catholic society, Catholics were able to live side by side harmoniously, building social relations that mutually respect and support their religious practices. From a theoretical perspective, this study confirms that understanding the Catholic faith is not abstract or merely speculative theology, but rather grows out of daily experiences, family interactions, and personal appreciation of God. Prayer, worship, and liturgical practices are understood as concrete means to foster a relationship with God and shape ethical, honest, and caring characters. From a social perspective, this study shows that Catholics are active in social and liturgical activities, building internal solidarity and harmonious relationships with the surrounding community through community service, mutual cooperation, and religious celebrations. The presence of Catholics in a predominantly non-Catholic environment is perceived as a source of harmony, not conflict, because their faith practices align with local social and cultural values. Thus, the religious experience of Catholics at the Galpurauning Rahayu Christ Station is a holistic faith experience, integrating belief, religious practice, and social relations. Faith is embodied in an open, tolerant, and compassionate daily life, making this station a concrete example of a church that is contextual, down-to-earth, and relevant to the reality of Indonesia's pluralistic society.

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