



GNB

GOOD NEWS BULLETIN

A Publication of the Genesis Catholic Community
Jakarta, Indonesia | November - December 2017

7 THEMES OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

HOLY FATHER'S PRAYER INTENTION FOR THE MONTH:

The Elderly

That the elderly, sustained by families and Christian communities, may apply their wisdom and experience to spreading the faith and forming the new generations.



GOOD NEWS BULLETIN

GOD'S SOLIDARITY AND OURS

Moving from Jakarta to Yogyakarta and living in this new place for four years helps me see, taste, and feel a different reality of life. Yes, the reality of life in different villages in Yogyakarta is far from the glittering life in Jakarta, which many of the readerships of this beloved "Good News Bulletin" have.

One of those villages is Tritis, located about 20 kilometers to the north from Yogyakarta; around six kilometers to the south from Mount Merapi. Most of the villagers live by "mining" sands. Their daily earning is 50,000 rupiahs (IDR 50,000). In the early seventies they worked hand in hand to build a very simple building to be used as an elementary school for their children to go to school. After the building was erected they handed over to a local Parish, which in turn handed it over to two different Religious Congregations consecutively. In April 2016 the Religious Congregation, which had been running the school for more than 20 years, decided to close it down. In a way it was a rational thing to do because the school always suffered monthly financial deficit of around 20 million rupiah (IDR 20,000,000). The 70 pupils could only afford to pay 40 thousand rupiah (IDR 40,000) for their monthly tuition. **But if we look at it from the perspective of "the preferential option for the poor" and "the fundamental rights of each person to receive education" it will be totally different.**

The Catholic Church, through its Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis* (GE), acknowledges that having an education is a fundamental right as it had been declared by the United Nation's Profession of the Rights of Men on December 10, 1948 (see GE, Preface). The Church even moves further by saying that "**All men [and women] of whatever race, condition or age, in virtue of their dignity as human persons, have an inalienable right to education**" (GE 1). Hence, the Church "**earnestly requests all those who are in charge of civil administration or in control of education to make it their care to ensure that young people are never deprived of this sacred right**" (GE 1). As a consequence, the Church also "**exhorts the sons [and daughters] of the Church to assist in a spirit of generosity in the whole field of education, especially with the aim of extending more rapidly the benefits of suitable education and instruction throughout the world**" (GE 1).

"The sacred inalienable right to education" has not become a real experience of million of children in Indonesia and other countries yet, as it happens to 70 pupils at

the *Sekolah Dasar Sanjaya Tritis, Sleman, Yogyakarta*. It takes place because of their poverty. **Should we, as followers of Christ, close our eyes?**

Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG), says that "**Our faith in Christ, who became poor, and was always close to the poor and the outcast, is the basis of our concern for the integral development of society's most neglected members**" (EG 186). Born of this faith, the Pope says: "**Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society**" (EG 187). We need to help and empower the poor, because "**God's word teaches that our brothers and sisters are the prolongation or the incarnation for each of us: 'As you did it to one of these, the least of my brothers, you did it to me'**" (Matthew 25:40)."

In this context, Pope Francis invites us to understand the command of Jesus to His disciples "**You yourself give them something to eat!**" (Mark 6:37) as "**working to eliminate the structural causes of poverty and to promote integral development of the poor, as well as small daily acts of solidarity in meeting the real needs which we encounter**" (EG 188).

Showing solidarity to the least members of our community and society is an expression of our gratitude to GOD's solidarity to human being. GOD shows His solidarity to us by becoming the man Jesus, the Emmanuel, so that He can be present among us (John 1:1; 14), journey with us, and struggle with us (cf. Matthew 1:23). In this context, Pope Francis says that a lack of solidarity towards the needs of the poor will directly affect our relationship with GOD (cf. EG 187).

As we will soon celebrate the Advent of GOD, which will culminate in Christmas, to show His solidarity with us, let's show our gratitude to Him by showing our solidarity with one another, especially with those whose sacred inalienable right to education has not become a real experience yet.

To put our solidarity into real action, you are cordially invited to visit our website: www.geraksopantritis.org.

Have a Merry Christmas and a hopeful Happy New Year!

