

The Contribution of Friday Bikers Community to The Dilemma of Busy Household and Active Church Participation

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Abstract

Since the Second Vatican Council, the Church has been concerned with the active participation of its members. However, work demands have made it increasingly difficult for the faithful to participate in Church activities. This study aims to find a pastoral style that can encourage active participation among the faithful despite their work demands. The research employed the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and comparative method to study the Friday Bikers Community, a categorical community in Banteng Parish, Semarang Archdiocese. The study revealed that the Friday Bikers Community serves as a model for the church, effectively balancing the demands of work and active participation in ecclesial activities. The Friday Bikers Community integrates churching in a genuine way, focusing on communio, relationships, inner dispositions, and existential limitations of its members

Keyword

Active participation, Friday Bikers, Church, Communio, Relationships.

INTRODUCTION

The Church is one of the oldest institutions in existence today. Its longevity can be attributed to its ability to face the challenges of the times and adapt accordingly. According to Berent's *A Political History of Early Christianity* (2009), the development of theology played a significant role in the Church's consolidation and dynamism during that period.¹

This article aims to provide a theological answer to the issue of individuals who desire to participate in the practical life of the Church but are hindered by work demands and time constraints. The focus is on identifying a suitable church model

¹ Brent, Allen. *A political history of early Christianity*. London: T&T Clark International Black, 2009, 12

for such individuals. Do they align with the gathered church and scattered church models², or do they envision a more fluid, adaptive, and authentic model of the Church? To answer this question, we employ a case study approach to the Friday Bikers Community.

Community Description

Friday Biker Community is a Catholic community that consists of family men, some bachelors and young people. Generally, workers who do not have much time to attend Church activities, except for the Sunday Eucharist. The name Friday Bikers is taken from two syllables, (1) "Friday" which refresh to Friday and (2) "Bikers" which means motorbike riders. The name is taken from the community's habit of riding motorbikes on Friday nights. The process of forming this community was very informal. It started with a few people who were making a pilgrimage by motorbike to Mary's Cave at night - an unusual time. These encounters happened repeatedly and then formed an agreement. Or rather a small promise to develop a more organised schedule and place of pilgrimage. It was from this promise that the encounters between the members intensified.

In the course of time, many men, bachelors, and young people were interested in joining. Therefore, the pilgrimage to the prayer garden or Mary's Cave slowly became a joint movement. However, the Friday Bikers community has never established a rigorous community structure. There is no chairman elected by voting or the like. Likewise, management such as treasurer, secretary, and so on do not exist in this community. Typically, all control of activities is based on an initiator who is also not fixed. Any member can become an initiator when they have an idea that is considered appropriate by many members. This is motivated by each member who is bored with the conditions of the world of work system that is too strict and tends to bind. They want to be freer and express themselves like young people. This uniqueness is what some members find attractive in joining this community.

Since the majority of the members come from the parish of the Holy Family of Banteng, the Friday Bikers community includes the territory of the parish of the Holy

² The term is borrowed from Joas Adiprasetya, in Joas Adiprasetya. "Berhimpun dan Tersebar: Menimbang Dua Model Eklesiologi," *Diegesis: Journal of Theology*, vol. 8.2 (2023): 124-144. <https://doi.org/10.46933/DGS.vol8i21-15>

Family of Banteng. However, the Archdiocese of Semarang has a unique pastoral style. Since June 2018, the Archdiocese of Semarang has established a territorial or non-territorial regional deanery. This new archdiocese deals with pastoral areas that have not been maximally reached by the territorial pastoral, in this case the parish pastoral. The pastoral types targeted by this categorial kevicepan are those who are weak, poor, excluded: the disabled, LGBT, widows, and also those who are rarely involved in the dynamics of church life.³

The Archdiocese of Semarang has made new breakthroughs based on the episcopal motto of Archbishop Robertus Rubyatmoko, Pr, 'Quaerere et Salvum Facere' (Seeking and Saving).⁴ According to Yohanes Dwi Harsanto, the Vicar of the Categorical Daenary, the Categorical community shares the Archbishop's vision of seeking and saving. The shepherd of the people aims to ensure that no sheep is left behind due to lack of care, greetings, or feelings of exclusion.⁵ Mgr. Robertus' ideal categorial community comprises at least ten members, with a name, vision-mission, purpose, and distinctiveness. The community should have a management structure, a mailing address, and a contact person. A moderator, approved by the categorial vicar, should be chosen by the group. The moderator of the community is typically a competent individual, such as a priest, brother, sister, or layperson. They should have a regular meeting schedule and incorporate prayer and meditation on Catholic scriptures into the meetings. Additionally, the moderator should provide faith teachings, ensure accountability and transparency in the management of the community budget, and communicate with other groups, parishes, and local organizations. It is also important for the community to have a group that focuses on helping the poor, weak, excluded, and disabled.⁶

Among these ideals, on the one hand, the Friday Biker community has heeded several recommendations, such as having a name, having a minimum of ten

³ "Kevikepan Kategorial," Keuskupan Agung Semarang, accessed on 10th Sept 2023, 20:30 WIB, <https://kas.or.id/kevicepan-kategorial/>

⁴ Mathias Haryadi, "Mengenal Dekat Uskup Agung KAS Terpilih: Logo dan Motto Penggembalaan Mgr. Robertus Rubiyatmoko", accessed on Sept 10th 2023, <https://www.sesawi.net/mengenal-dekat-uskup-agung-kas-terpilih-logo-dan-motto-penggembalaan-mgr-robertus-rubiyatmoko-5/>

⁵ Yohanes Dwi Harsanto, "Ciri Komunitas Kategorial," *Kevikepankategorial KAS*, ", accessed on Sept 8th 2023, at 11:27 WIB, Audio 02:44, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JSuLX_YaXSA

⁶ Harsanto, "Ciri Komunitas Kategorial", 02:53 menit.

members, having a moderator, getting approval from the Vicar for Categorical Affairs, and establishing relationships with various categorical communities in the Archdiocese of Semarang. On the other hand, it has not yet implemented some rules, namely administrative regularity and clear and structured management. As mentioned above, this community has its own reasons.

It is these peculiarities that prompted this study. We see an imagination of a church model that is growing and developing in these people. Therefore, this research focuses on uncovering the meaning of the Friday Bikers community's church model and what it contributes to the Church's reflection.

Review Article

There have been many studies of Church models that emphasise the fellowship and participation of people with a particular theological locus. In 2014, Kees de Groot started a study on the Liquid Church with inspiration from Peter Ward and Zygmunt Bauman. That study found that the Church can be an attractive community if it is able to open itself to fluid culture. This openness to an increasingly fluid world is based on the perichoresis or dynamism of the Trinity and the concept of the Church according to the Apostle Paul. What makes up the church is not first of all the presence in the weekly Eucharistic celebration, but the individuals who are in Christ and participate in the liquid dance of God.⁷ Two years later (2022), Peter Muriithi Wambugu and his two colleagues examined the relationship between the biblical message and the theology of the Church in relation to the pastoral development of people in human dimensions, such as education and economy. The result was that such involvement of the Church is not merely a socio-ethical act, but is truly inspired by biblical views and theological teachings.⁸ A year later, William Livinus drew a hypothesis that synodality could enhance the spirituality of the faithful. In a context of individualism, secularism, vertical and clerical pastoral styles, synodality became a new

⁷ Kees de Groot, "The church in liquid modernity: A sociological and theological exploration of a liquid church," *International journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, vol. 6, no. 1, (August 2006): 92, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14742250500484469>

⁸ Peter Muriithi Wambugu, Dickson Nkonge Kagema, Stephen Micheni, "Biblical and theological basis for church involvement in community development in Kenya." *Journal of pastoral and practical theology*, vol.1 no. 1 (Sep 2022): 21, <https://doi.org/10.51317/jpvt.viii.203>

breakthrough for faith. Especially for small groups.⁹ And the latest research (2023), Joas Adiprasetya sees that during the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a shock to our church model which was very thick with the gathered church model.¹⁰ Whereas the history of Christianity records that our Church is not only in the form of an assembly (in a public place).

From some of the previous studies above, the author wants to further examine the openness of the Church to actual realities, pastoral care for certain groups and the model of church in the era of synodality offered by Pope Francis.

METHOD

This research utilised the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and comparative methods. The IPA method was chosen as it is a suitable approach for revealing the meaning of respondents' perspectives on a given phenomenon. A phenomenon, in this context, refers to anything that appears in the subject's consciousness, including mental, thought, and material objects.¹¹

The IPA method employs deep-interviews as a data collection instrument. This approach involves gathering information on a phenomenon through the first-person experiences, feelings, and meanings of the respondent who has directly experienced it. The collected data is then processed using a classification pattern and compared with the ecclesiological model in the doctrinal development of the Church. For this research, the author conducted interviews with three individuals: an 'initiator' of the Friday Bikers community, and two members of the community, one middle-aged and the other a young man. The interviews were conducted three times with the same questions, but with different phrasing, in order to validate the meaning of the phenomenon as described by the research respondents.

RESULT

In deep-interview research, we begin by identifying the main distress experienced by the respondent. Two respondents reported that they do not attend

⁹ William Livinus, "The Spiritual Dynamics of Synodality in the Small Christian Community." *JOS STUDIES* 30 (2023):17

¹⁰ Joas Adiprasetya, 141

¹¹ Asep Sudarsyah, "Kerangka Analisis Data Fenomenologi (contoh analisis teks sebuah catatan harian)." *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan*, 13 no. 1,(2013), 22. <https://doi.org/10.17509/jpp.v13i1.3475>

church regularly, except on Sundays to celebrate the Eucharist. Prior to entering the workforce, they were active individuals. However, they have become less active lately due to spending a lot of time at work. Additionally, they may have out-of-town obligations. Upon returning home, it is often too late to participate in joint prayer activities in the neighbourhood or the Basis Community Group. This is not due to fatigue, but rather because the timing of the activities is no longer synchronised. Furthermore, other respondent finds church activities uninteresting and perceive them to be attended mainly by older individuals.

This reality has led some parishioners to give them a bad stigma. They are regarded as selfish people who place too much importance on church life. One of the respondents was considered well-established by his neighbours. Therefore, his action of working until he lost track of time was regarded by his neighbours as wealth-hungry. However, the respondent honestly said that, despite his large income, he had large expenses as he was the eldest child who had to provide for his family. This was compounded by his parents being old and his siblings still in school.

Having raised the respondents' concerns, we will next look at why they are interested in the Friday Bikers community. Apart from offering solutions to their concerns, all three respondents were attracted to the Friday Bikers community because of its uniqueness. The camaraderie within the community is more intimate, like that of young people. This kind of climate was felt to be a neutraliser to their lives in the rigid and very serious workplace. This community dynamic is also an opportunity to relax and get away from the noise of the working world. There is no standardised structure, as is commonly found in the bureaucracy of work. At Friday Bikers, everyone is a friend who is free to express their opinions, as long as those opinions contribute something to the common good.

In addition to these profane matters, within the Friday Bikers community respondents were able to integrate their lack of spiritual dimension. They were able to gather together for prayer, meditation, and casual conversations about their faith experiences in their families and work environments. Nonetheless, these respondents still faced new problems. They were considered people who were running away from church duties. They did not embrace sacrifice and take up the cross as advocated by Jesus (Mat.16:24-27).

The respondents dismissed this accusation. According to them, not being able to participate in church life and having to find new ways, was their cross. They had to form new communities, taking time out of their lives to gather together and put their faith into action. One respondent gave a different account. They did not not carry their crosses, but they carried their crosses joyfully. This is why it seems that their crosses are invisible to others. Internally, they are challenged by their families to be faith, prophet and king in the family (*tria munera Christi*). They also donate their resources to social services outside the parish, such as the planting of mangroves on the beach, the restoration of city parks and chapels in disrepair, and the renovation of the Mary's Cave and several prayer gardens.

Upon analysis of the collected data, it was found that active participation had the highest percentage. This indicates that despite their busy lives, members of Friday Bikers have a strong desire to participate. Following this, there was tension observed between church and basic needs. Additionally, members expressed a desire for a faith experience that is both enjoyable and relaxed.

These experiences are the daily struggles of the respondents. Therefore, they are genuine. They expect a model of churchgoing that can answer their longing to participate, but in new ways that may be more contextualised. There is a hope for a way of church that is not just ritualistic and rigid, but sensitive to taste, art, and intimacy. The respondents' church expectations suggest a need to re-evaluate our church life. The established Church order can be institutional, rigid, and emphasise large gatherings. To address this tension, the next section will evaluate the development of ecclesiology.

Church in the Light of the Bible

The term 'church' is generally defined as 'ekklesia', a Greek term that refers to a group of men who gather to make judicial and legislative decisions regarding the common good (*polis*). The word more specifically emphasises assembly and place.¹² In the scriptures, 'ekklesia' is used to translate the Hebrew word 'Qahal', which means

¹² Gerard Mannion and Lewis S. Mudge, "Introduction Ecclesiology – the nature, story and study of the Church," in *The Routledge Companion to The Christian Church*, Ed. by Gerard Mannion and Lewis S. Mudge, (New York: Routledge, 2008), 3

assembly.¹³ Early Christianity came to understand it as people being drawn out (ek + kaleo) from the world and forming a fellowship.¹⁴ The change in eating habits is first mentioned in the new covenant. The term 'ekklesia' appears only three times in the four gospels, all in Matthew. Two of these instances refer to assemblies (see Matt. 18:17), while the third is used in a narrow sense: 'On this rock I [Jesus] will build my ekklesia' (Matt. 16:18). In the epistle, the word 'ekklesia' first refers to the local church (see Rom 16:16), and secondly, to the universal church (see Gal 1:13). Meanwhile, the apostolic accounts use several terms, such as 'adelphoi' (brothers and sisters), 'hagioi' (saints), 'mathe-tai' (disciples), 'christianoi' (Christians), and 'ho hodos' (the way). The latter term does not place significant emphasis on location or institution.

Meanwhile, Paul also uses many terms to refer to his church, such as citizens (sumpolitai), part of the household (oikeioi, Eph 2.19) and built on a foundation stone (Eph 2.20). Among them, the most familiar terms in the Corpus Paulinum are "the body of Christ" (1 Cor 12:27) or one body in Christ" (Rom 12:4).¹⁵ These two terms refer to the horizontal dimension of the relationship in which Jesus becomes the mystical force that binds the unity of the church.¹⁶ In addition to these two terms in The Captivity Letters (Col 1:18; Eph 1:21- 23) Paul also adds the description, "Christ as head of the Body." From this term Paul wanted to emphasise the supremacy of Jesus over his people and the communio.¹⁷ That Jesus is the nucleus of the assembly. Without Jesus, the assembly is just an ordinary assembly-a secular institution. The church becomes the mystical body of Christ because it is incorporated with Christ himself (communion with Christ). Thus, in Pauline theology the Church is first of all about relationship, communion with Christ.

¹³ Benoît-Dominique de La Soujeole, *Introduction to the Mystery of the Church*, trans. Michael J. Miller (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2024), 147

¹⁴ Paul Avis, "Introduction to Ecclesiology", in *The Oxford Handbook of Ecclesiology*, ed. Paul Avis (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 3

¹⁵ George Kalantzis, "Patristic Ecclesiology in the Greek East", "Patristic Ecclesiology in the Greek East", in T&T Clark Handbook of Ecclesiology, Ed. Kimlyn J. Bender and D. Stephen Long (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2020), 83

¹⁶ Benoît-Dominique de La Soujeole, *Introduction* 71

¹⁷ The term "head" was used by Paul to correspond to the Hebrew concept of God and the Latin "kephalē, and caput" meaning moral supremacist, authority, and teacher, see Benoît-Dominique de La Soujeole, *Introduction* 71

Peter still uses a similar term, the house of God (1 Peter 4:17). James, on the other hand, continues to use the national identity, "the twelve overseas tribes". In contrast to ekklesia, the terms mystical body of Christ, friends, twelve tribes overseas, saints and temple of the Holy Spirit are more metaphorical.¹⁸ Over time, however, certain terms, such as ekklesia and mystical body of Christ, became the dominant tradition. Others lost influence.¹⁹ A very strong thesis for why the concept of the church as ekklesia is so strong is the influence of the Roman Empire, which gradually merged with the church.

Patristics

In the Patristic context, the concept of the Church as the "Body of Christ" is still strong. However, the debate has become more complex because it has been linked to apologetic actions. For example, many Church Fathers have linked the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ to the nature of Christ. For example, because of the resurrection, all people are united in one body with Christ as its head.²⁰ According to Augustine, the Church is first of all a union born of love.²¹ Thus, union (relationship) with Christ is the primary element of the Church. Secondly, against Pelagianism, Augustine affirmed that union with Christ, the firstborn from the dead, is a free gift of the Spirit who raised Christ. This union with the Spirit, according to Augustine, is established through the door of faith.²² Third, continuing Paul's understanding of head and body, Augustine identified the Eucharist and baptism as the core of union with Christ, just as the bread we share is one, so we, though many, are one body. We all come from the same baptism. Here it still seems that the Church is first of all a relationship with Christ. Ignatius of Antioch also emphasises the communion of those who believe in Christ under the leadership of a bishop.²³

¹⁸ Paula Gooder, "In search of the early 'Church: The New Testament and the development of Christian communities," in *The Routledge Companion to The Christian Church*, ed. Gerard Mannion and Lewis S. Mudge (New York: Routledge. 2008), 12

¹⁹ Paula Gooder, *Routledge*, 15

²⁰ George Kalantzis, *Clark Handbook*, 83

²¹ Soujeole, *Introduction*, 93

²² Soujeole, , *Introduction*, 94

²³ "Letter of Ignatius of Antioch to Polycarp," translated by P. T. A. D. Allen, *Life of the Spirit* (1946-1964), Oct 1960, Vol. 15, No. 172: pp. 172-176

The Church Pre-Vatican II

After Christianity had merged with the Empire and then interfered with politics throughout the Empire, the Church became highly institutionalised and hierarchical. This model became visible in the reforms of Gregory VII (IX-XII centuries), which began with the unification of the liturgy and the training of priests. Issues of procedural communion were given great prominence. This was exacerbated by Luther's reforms, which threatened the authority of the Church. The Council of Trent (1555-1565), with its famous anathema, would greatly strengthen the model of the Church as an institution. The primacy of the Pope became very strong. The emergence of the Church as *Societas Perfecta* was foreshadowed by Robertus Belarminus.²⁴

The Church's insistence on this institutional model was further strengthened during the French Revolution (1789) and the outbreak of modernity. This was most evident in the Church's response to papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council. Here ecclesiology became very narrow. The Church is seen only as a hierarchically visible institution. The Church has a hierarchy as an authoritative guardian. Adam Möhler cynically sums up ecclesiology: ... God created the hierarchy and it guarantees the continuity of the Church until the end of time.²⁵

The doctrinal development up to this point was seen as a major reconstruction that ultimately favoured the *ekklēsia* as an assembly church and therefore a very strong institution. The Assemblies of God became dominant. As a result, the other models lost influence.²⁶ However, in the next chapter, marked by the Second Vatican Council, especially the dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*, the church underwent a major renewal. Therefore, in the next section the author will compare the ecclesiological models before and after the Second Vatican Council.

The Church of Vatican II

In the Second Vatican Council, ecclesiology was specifically addressed in the first part of the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*. LG. art. 4, which emphasises

²⁴ Trent Pomplun, "Roman Catholic Ecclesiology: From the Medieval Period to Vatican I" in T&T Clark Handbook of Ecclesiology, ed. Bender, Kimlyn J. and Long, D. Stephen (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc., 2020), 104

²⁵ Fransiskus Purwanto, "Pluralitas Pemahaman Akan Identitas Gereja Katolik Perkembangan Pembaruan Eklesiologi Gereja Katolik Roma," *Jurnal Teologi (Journal of Theology)*, 3, no. 2 (2014): 196, <https://doi.org/10.24071/jt.v3i2.465>

²⁶ Paula Gooder, Routledge Companion, 15

the Church as a mystery born of the Holy Spirit. Because it is a mystery, the Church can never be confined to a fixed definition. Instead of giving a strict definition, *Lumen Gentium* defines the Church metaphorically, as in LG art. 6 and 7. The various metaphors culminate in the great metaphor of the Church as God's sacrament of salvation (LG.1).²⁷ As a sacrament it is only a mediator (sign), not the signified (salvation).²⁸ As a mediator, the most important thing is communion (*communio*) with the signified. Otherwise it loses its essence.

This union with Christ then gives rise to two relationships. The first is the relationship between the Church and Christ. Secondly, those who are united with Christ through baptism are thus called to establish communion between them. This aspect of communion is, however, a sensitive subject because it is often associated with hierarchy. For this reason, the post-conciliar synod of 1985 placed special emphasis on "communion." This emphasis was intended to anticipate readings of *Lumen Gentium* that tended to be reductionist. Either to "hierarchical extremes" or to a one-sided "sociological conception of the Church" on the idea of the People of God.²⁹

The Church Post-Vatican II

The concept of communion is no less complex.³⁰ "Communion" is broader than what the Church can imagine and attempt. God is always using new ways to establish communion with him.³¹ Is *communio* a real, visible communion, like an *et presence*, gathering, sitting together, breaking bread, like the early church (Acts 2:46)? Or is *communio* a communicative relationship that is not always "et presence"? If *communio* is a gathering in the form of presence (the gathered church), then it is the same as the term *ekklesia*. This kind of gathering is incapable of reaching the

²⁷ Przemysław Jeliński. "The Contribution of the Greek Patristic Idea to the Teaching of "Lumen Gentium" on the Nature of the Church." *Studia Theologica Varsaviensia*, (2019): 586, https://yadda.icm.edu.pl/yadda/element/bwmeta1.element.ojs-doi-10_21697_stv_7798

²⁸ Peter De Mey, "The sacramental nature and mission of the Church in *Lumen Gentium*," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, 14, no. 4 (2014): 348, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1474225X.2014.990950>

²⁹ 'Synod of Bishops: The Final Report', *Origins* 15 (1985– 86): 444– 50, 448

³⁰ The complexity can be seen in Bernard S. Balun, *Komunitas Basis Gerejawi Paroki, Gereja yang Hidup*, (Yogyakarta: Lamalera, 2012), 3-25

³¹ Paul Budi Kleden, "Yang Tetap Dalam KBG Sebagai Cara Baru Menggereja" in Bernard S. Balun, *Komunitas Basis Gerejawi Paroki, Gereja yang Hidup*, (Yogyakarta: Lamalera, 2012).

marginalised: the weak, the poor and the excluded. And this kind of church does not heed the advice of *Gaudium et Spes*, which says that the sorrows and cries of the world are also the sorrows and cries of the church.

In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis challenges the Church to get out of the zone of the times (EG. Art. 20). This includes moving away from its rigid, strict, uncompromising model and its highly bureaucratic ministry (EG. 23). But Pope Francis also reminds us that the joy of mission cannot be separated from communion (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 23). This is what O'Malley reads into the two tendencies of the spirit of the Second Vatican Council.³² On the one hand, the Church's culture of communion, which *Lumen Gentium* emphasises (ad-intra). But there is also another dimension, the encounter (ad extra) with others and the friendly attitude that *Gaudium et Spes* emphasises.

The discernment of *Gaudium et Spes* is a starting point for a return to a more authentic and contextual model of the Church. Genuine means a return to the pluralistic character of the Church as described in the New Testament and the patristic writings. The church is not just an *ekklesia* (ek+kaleo) called out of the world and forming a community. "Ekklesia should be read upside down (kaleo+ek), that is, called out of the established community into a richer encounter with the world."³³ Meanwhile, contextual is a church that is able to respond to the challenges of those who have not been touched by the institutional model of the church, such as the weak, the poor and the marginalised.

The insistence on the renewal of the Church emphasised in *Ecclesia Suam* is reiterated by Pope Francis, since the Church is always in tension between the utopia of Christ and the real condition of the Church today. Only then will the Church be able to correct its shortcomings and affirm its identity as God's sacrament of salvation (*Lumen Gentium*, Art. 2; EG. 30). This call for dissolution is also what is now being fought by the synodal Church. In this climate of synodality, the Church wants to return to its origins as a flock that walks together, respects plurality and listens. Only then will no one be left behind.

Continuing to be guided by the spirit of *Lumen Gentium*, synodality refreshed the Church as an inclusive Church. The hierarchy and the People of God have been

³² O'malley, John W. Vatican II: "Did Anything Happen?", *Theological Studies*, 67, no.1 (2006): 13.

³³ Joas Prasetya, "Berhimpun dan Tersebar," 132

reconfigured. They are no longer two completely separate entities. The hierarchy is not just a power, but a pastor who has the only authority, which is to serve (Mat. 20:28). Nor are the people passive recipients. Through baptism they accept Christ's threefold mission. Moreover, because they are guided by the work of the Holy Spirit and have a *sensus fidelium*, they are worth listening to. It is often through them that the Holy Spirit reveals new ways and inspirations. This willingness to listen leads the Church to the heart of synodality, which is unceasing contemplation and prayer. Contemplation in order to search unceasingly for all the possibilities that God wills.

The push for dissolution must finally start from the local Church, and concretely in the parochial neighbourhoods and communities of basic believers. This is because it is there that the Church is truly experienced and lived.³⁴ The parish is not an alien institution, says Pope Francis. Parishes must be flexible. It can accept various forms of renewal and certainly remain a living Church for the sons and daughters of Christ. A parish is an environment for hearing the word of God, for growing in Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, far-reaching charitable action, worship and celebration.³⁵ In many ways Pope Francis affirms that the renewal of our parishes is not yet sufficient to bring them closer to the people, to live communion and participation, and to make them truly mission-orientated (Evangelii Gaudium, 28).

Parochial Communities

Often some base communities, small communities and movements are windows into the fresh air of parochial evangelisation. However, it is also very important to note their communion with the richer parochial reality. This way they are not only focused on the Church and the Gospel, which makes them wanderers without roots (EG, 29). The pastor of the particular church (Bishop) as well as the main respondent of evangelisation must also be the main motor for the incarnation of the gospel message in local realities. The joy of proclamation should manifest itself in evangelisation movements that move to the margins and new sociocultural realities. In the Archdiocese of Semarang, this is in line with the Episcopal motto of Mgr Robert Rubyatmoko

³⁴ Joas Prasetya, "Berhimpun dan Tersebar," 137

³⁵ Bernard S. Balun, *Komunitas Basis*, 44-46

Comunio and communities

The long description above shows a very strong Church with institutional and monotonous forms. Since the Second Vatican Council, however, a pluralistic and dynamic Church has begun to revive. All this is inseparable from the challenges of each changing age. The Asian bishops in the plenary session of FABC V, quoted by Balun, defined ... the church as *communio in communion*. Each church is made up of several communities. The binding force of these communities is faith in Christ. This way of being flows from the way of being of the Trinitarian community, which is different but one. In communion, therefore, difference is a necessity.³⁶ However, this difference in communion should not be interpreted according to a reductionist concept that rejects any form of pastoral care. All communities gather under the ministry of a pastor (bishop).³⁷ A community can only be effective if it lives in communion with its pastor and with other communities. A community that is alone is like a limb that has lost its body.

The particular Church, especially the parish, has an important role to play in ensuring that community fellowship is truly oriented towards the idea of the Trinitarian community. Parish (Greek: *paroikos*) means house or temporary abode. In the New Testament this meaning is associated with the new status of disciples of Jesus in this world (Heb 13:14). To be a disciple of Jesus is to be a pilgrim.³⁸ The term *parokia* is a manifestation of the nature of the church, namely the mission of Jesus - a missionary church. The parish makes the Church truly close to and among all the faithful, both in the centre and in the periphery. Unfortunately, parishes are often reduced to buildings and programmes without a clear purpose. That's why the Church needs a community that is a decentralised parish. In order for this decentralisation of the parish to work optimally, it is necessary to have continuous catechesis, to have a sense of the Church, to discover the potentialities of the people, including listening to the hopes, sorrows and joys of the people in it.

³⁶ Bernard S. Balun, *Komunitas Basis* 7, 31

³⁷ Synod of Bishops, 448

³⁸ Bernard S. Balun, *Komunitas Basis*, 61

CONCLUSION

Listening to stories of faith struggles in grassroots communities calls into question many established things. On the one hand, the Church expects the participation of the people of God in the actualisation of faith, be it in prayer, liturgy or other ministries. In reality, however, grassroots communities collide with realities of life that are often untouched by pastoral ministries. This was evident in the struggles of those interviewed who had joined the Friday Bikers community. From their daily experience, they expect a church that is more flexible, less rigid, that pays attention to the balance between communion and assembly. Church is not just about gathering (gather church), but in their situation church is a relationship that is flexible, fun and promotes a sense of friendship.

It is this expectation that calls for a massive evaluation of the old church model, which tends to be hierarchical and monotonous. A true church is one that emphasises relationship (not assembly). First, between God and his people; then among fellow believers. But as a community of faith, no community is independent of the leadership of its pastor.

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