

# **The Sacrament of Confirmation in the Islamic Majority Country of Indonesia**

## **Case Study of the Parish of Ibu Teresa Cikarang (PITC)-Indonesia**

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**ABSTRACT :** *The parish of Ibu Teresa Cikarang (PITC) is located in the regency of Bekasi, West-Java Province which is an industrial area in the Islamic majority country of Indonesia. The preparatory guidance practice of the sacrament of confirmation is held to facilitate participants to be full members of the church and society with faith maturity. Nevertheless most of the 2016 participants of the sacrament of confirmation in PITC experience a gap between materials, approaches and its societal concrete reality. This research therefore is to examine the preparatory guidance practice of the sacrament of confirmation. The experiential and phenomenological methods are used to analyze the preparatory guidance practice of the sacrament of confirmation in PITC. As conclusion, a new direction of the preparatory guidance practice of the sacrament of confirmation should take into account the context of concrete societal condition. Secondly, the discipleship theology and hospitality theology have to be delivered to make the significance of the sacrament of confirmation relevant to face the concrete societal reality and challenges in the Islamic majority country of Indonesia.*

**Keywords:** *Sacrament of confirmation, Faith maturity, Discipleship theology, Hospitality theology*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Catholic tradition of the sacrament of confirmation is understood in an unseparated understanding of the initiation which consists of the sacrament of Baptism, Eucharist and that of Confirmation (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Part two, Chapter one, art.2, 1285). Furthermore the code of canon law in the Catholic Church states that the sacrament of baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist are complement to one another so that all three are required for full Christian initiation (See The Code of Canon Law art. 842 & 2, 1983:126). With regard to Liem G. Walsh (2011), a careful listening to tradition of rite and word is truly indispensable for sacramental theology. Referring to Ecclesiastical teaching, sacrament in general is understood as sign and mean of salvation (Compare LG 9; GS 45). With refer to the scriptural theology, the sacrament of confirmation therefore is connected to “anointing” as special gift at Pentecost (Acts 8:12-17; 19:1-7). They all are fundamental materials in the preparation of the sacrament of confirmation.

According to Marin Skarinka, two principal aspects of the sacrament of confirmation are the fullness of the Holy Spirit and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Marin Skarinka, 2002: 497-528). The special gift of the Holy Spirit is differentiated from grace that was got in the baptism. It is the church’s special grace to carry out the mission to the world.

The objective of the preparatory guidance practice of the sacrament of confirmation in PITC is to prepare participants to become full members of the church in a faith maturity with its constitutive duty and mission to give witness, to proclaim the gospel and the kingdom of God. Scriptural theology, sacramental theology, pneumatology and ecclesiology are dominant materials in the preparatory guidance practice of the sacrament of confirmation. However, most of the 2016 participants of the sacrament of confirmation still experience a gap between what they got in the preparatory guidance practice and the experiences in concrete society. For this reason, the research is very important to contribute a new direction of the preparatory guidance practice of the sacrament of confirmation in the Islamic majority country of Indonesia.

It is a fact that the church of PITC exists in the societal context which is colored by the existing condition of local culture, religions, industrial atmosphere and people’s tradition. This context becomes arena of practicing the membership of the church and faith maturity in the real diverse society. The existing condition inspires the preparatory guidance practice of the sacrament confirmation. On the one hand, the vision and mission of the Arch Diocese of Jakarta has to be implemented in PITC. On the other hand, PITC also has to

consider the reality of Cikarang as industrial area in which the church has to deal with industrial atmosphere, various backgrounds of new comers, and majority of the local people's Islamic religion as well as multi-cultural societal situation.

The context of PITC's existence necessarily demands a contextualization of understanding of the sacrament of confirmation and its theology as bases in facing societal concrete challenges. A faith maturity, accordingly, becomes relevant to the daily life activities. More than 10 years of effort to get a permission of the worship place building (IMB), PITC undertakes worship and religious activities at Trinitas School. The parishioners celebrate the holy mass and organize religious activities without any building of church. They are an experiential lesson of practicing the meaning of the sacrament of confirmation in the existing contexts of real society in the Islamic majority country of Indonesia. Accordingly, some relevant applied theologies of the sacrament of confirmation are necessary materials to be discussed in the preparatory guidance practice of participants.

This research, therefore, is designed to contribute a new direction in the preparatory guidance practice of the sacrament of confirmation in the industrial area and Islamic majority country of Indonesia. The materials of discipleship theology and hospitality theology will shed a light on the sacrament of confirmation which brings about the implementation of being full member of the church with faith maturity in the concrete society.

## **II. The Sacrament of Confirmation as Zeal of Faith Maturity**

Erick Rayner et. al. (2005) discuss the human maturity from the perspective of psychodynamic of growth. There are some phases of the human maturity development. Those phases are childhood, teenager and maturity. The first phase of childhood is characterized by dependency, self-orientation to his/her temporary desire and no individual opinion or faith yet. The second phase is the teenager phase which is characterized by a transitional period in which the childhood has been left but at the same time the maturity does not come yet. This is a critical phase of the mature personality growth and individual opinion formation. The phase of maturity is characterized by wise decision, self-reliance, responsibility, considerations of consequences before acting and making decisions, and readiness to carry out all the consequences. Those characteristics show us the attitudes of each phase in the human life maturity development.

Faith maturity in the sacrament of confirmation contains knowledge of the church and faith, the intimate relationship with God and readiness to carry out the witness and mission of the church in the community. Stanislav Prybil reflects the sacrament of confirmation as a faith education to Christian maturity (Compare Stanislav Prybil, 2015: 217-228). An individual who receives the sacrament of confirmation also expresses the faith maturity in individual attitudes, responsibility and compliance of duties as a full member of both the church and society.

A faith maturity provides rational considerations in undertaking religious duties so that an individual has self-control, wise decision and readiness to carry out the consequences. Faith maturity prevents an individual from being too fanatic, too radical and intolerant. Self-control, interpersonal skill, social and emotional quotients characterize a maturity of an individual as the member of the church. For this reason, terrorism, egoism and self-orientation shows immaturity of faith. Understanding, opened mind, mutual dialogue, cooperation and listening skill becomes parts of the faith maturity trait.

Faith maturity is basically constituted in the attitude of surrender to God that takes place in ordinary daily activities and life. In surrendering to God, a human being comes out from himself and trust his/her hope in God. Faith therefore becomes a deep inner motivation of response that creates commitment, endurance and strength in facing challenges and difficulties. Alex R. Mayfield calls it as seal of Spirit (2016:222). This seal of Spirit is expressed in the sacrament of confirmation that brings faith maturity and full membership of the church that cannot be separated from carrying out the mission of the church in the world.

## **III. New Direction of the Sacrament of Confirmation**

The preparatory guidance practice of the sacrament of confirmation in PITC necessarily demands a new orientation in facilitating participants. Firstly, it has to consider the materials of guidance practice of the sacrament of confirmation which take into account the societal context of the church of PITC which is in industrial area, majority of local people's Islamic religion and multicultural atmosphere of Indonesia. Secondly, the guidance practice of the sacrament of confirmation needs foundations of the discipleship theology and hospitality theology to stimulate practice and societal involvement as the member of the church in concrete society. Both of them are very important in making the sacrament of confirmation become more relevant to the participants in coping with their real problems in the societal life.

Materials of the sacrament of confirmation in 2016 include all important topics of the sacrament of confirmation and its contextual reflections. Those topics (Compare Ernest Maryanto, 2005) are (1) Baptism as a reborn to be the member of the church, Putting on Christ, Receiving Holy Spirit and Denial of Satan, Being adopted as children of God, Entering the Kingdom of God. (2) Eucharist as Bread of Life and the Sacrament of

Unity. (3) Sacrament of confirmation: The gifts and Gift of Holy Spirit (Daniel G van Slyke, 2010: 521), Faith maturity, Courage in Defending Faith, Witness of Christ, Responsibility to the Church, Leader as Servant, Choosing the life vocation, Keeping Faith Continuously, People's Unity as Actualization of the Church, Communal Prayer and Repentance, (4) Field Visit to Society surrounding, (5) Recollection of Participants (6) Understanding the Liturgy of the Sacrament of Confirmation and Rehearsal of the Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. Some additional topics are about dialogue and relationship with other religions which are conducted both in class and field visit.

Every topic of the materials is delivered in the clear learning process and steps as the following: (1) Opening prayer (2) Exploring experience and its message regarding the topic (3) Primary materials of the topic, (4) Assignments in the class, (5) Summary of the session by participants and the announcement of weekly homework (6) Closing prayer that is presided by one of the participants. The same process and steps of the materials' delivery are very necessary, especially when a big number of people participates in the preparatory guidance practice of the sacrament of confirmation. They have to be divided into small classes. For an instance, there were 203 participants in the sacrament of confirmation at PITC in 2016. They have to be grouped into 5 smaller classes. The preparatory guidance practice of the sacrament of confirmation was conducted every week from April 2016 up to the end of October 2016. All the materials are completely delivered to the participants during the guidance practice.

Regarding a new approach in the sacrament of confirmation, traditional approach of the sacrament of confirmation using narrative guidance is not suitable anymore. The traditional narrative approach makes participants become passive and alienated from their real life context, because they are just listening to teachers. The guidance practice of the sacrament of confirmation, accordingly, becomes boring. There is a kind of gap between theological, scriptural or ecclesiastical teaching and the real societal realities that participants face in everyday life.

For that reason, a new approach of the guidance practice of the sacrament of confirmation has to provide a practical guideline for the participants to deal with the real atmosphere and challenges in societal life. In the context of the Islamic majority country of Indonesia, the real challenges are corruption, growth of radicalism, poverty, seeds of intolerance, violent culture and instant and digital lifestyle that disrespect the glory of human dignity.

One of the novelty of materials is the contextualization of materials and involvement of participants in the Catholic communities' activities and society in general. They support the presence of applied theology that should be emphasized so that theological, scriptural and ecclesiastical teaching of the sacrament of confirmation becomes relevant to daily life. Industrial and multicultural atmosphere should be considered in preparing participants of the sacrament of confirmation to be full members of the church with faith maturity. Understanding of the surrounding people's religions is necessary to make the vision and mission of the church come to the earth. Those materials shed a light upon the implementation and practice of faith in the daily concrete life.

Process of learning, field visit and participant's involvement in society reflect an experiential learning of the sacrament of confirmation. This experiential learning, for instance, is practiced in a field visit to an Islamic boarding school so that participants have been confidently accustomed to make dialogues and collaborations with those who have different religions without losing their faith. It is needed the applied theological reflection. Practice makes the understanding, skill and knowledge of the sacrament of confirmation become more perfect and being integrated into the catholic communities and the surrounding society.

#### **IV. The Discipleship Theology**

The discipleship theology provides principles to have a faith maturity in the full membership of the church. This membership of the church cannot be separated from its function as the people of God (Ex. 19:5; Jer.7; 23; 11:4; 24:7; 2 Cor. 6:16), the body of Christ (1Cor 12:12-13; Eph.1:23), temple of Holy Spirit (Eph.2:20-22), sacrament (LG 9), and as the communion with holy people (Acts 2:42; 44-46). Discipleship essentially cannot be separated from following Jesus Christ. Following Him means doing a process of transformation from self-orientation towards an orientation to Christ. When an individual follows Jesus Christ, he gives a special attention to Him as the orientation compass and the center of life. The motif of discipleship is the coming of the kingdom of God and the establishment of the kingdom community (Compare David A. Toth, 2015:38). Accordingly, he or she knows the direction that must be taken in everyday life. The focus in following Christ is Jesus Christ as the directive compass of his discipleship. The characteristics of discipleship are self-denial, carrying the cross, and following Him (Mark 38:34). Self-denial, carrying the cross, faithfulness and walking behind Jesus Christ are main principles in the discipleship theology.

Application of the discipleship theology has to consider the context of believers' life which is the industrial area, majority of Islamic adherents, and multi-cultural society of Indonesia. A faith maturity demands a firmness of faith in following Christ. There are so many temptations and seductions in society because of the

impact of digital era which is characterized by the flood of the very fast information and lack of reflective moments. A firmness of faith is helpful in keeping purity, sanctity, mindfulness, spiritual discipline and Christian lifestyle. For this reason, firmness of faith becomes a basis of faith maturity in dealing with contextual challenges and recent problems in daily life. It contains a close relationship with Jesus Christ so that an individual is ruled by the strengthening Holy Spirit (Compare Gal.2:20; John 15:26) and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They become special strength to defend and enliven faith in the industrial and digital era.

An individual with faith maturity will give witness of faith, gospel and the kingdom of God in the works and daily activities. Accordingly, his daily life proclaims God's presence and divine salvation as well as a culmination of the personal faith maturity manifestation. Discipleship is always characterized by personal discipline of following Christ, firmness of faith and various works in a declarative presence. Wherever she or he is, the divine love is also there. Accordingly the presence of God and His works can be felt, seen and experienced so that the society will know and recognize the disciples of Jesus Christ from their life.

## **V. The Hospitality Theology**

With refer to Santa Teresa from Calcutta as the patron of PITS, socialization and spreading her spirituality among parishioners should be continuously conducted. Her spirit and works should characterize faith maturity and full membership of the church in PITS. Being close to the poor, solidarity, charity, mercy and social works should color the pastoral policy and people's lifestyle. They are all important in the hospitality theology which is relevant to the preparatory guidance of the sacrament of confirmation in PITS.

Principles of the hospitality theology is expressed in public service, solidarity, love and charity works with joy. There are physical and spiritual charity. Physical charity is giving food for those who have no meal, clothes for the naked, visit the sick or prisoners, stay for homeless and so on. Spiritual charity is in term of looking for the poor souls, praying for the poor, the unwanted people, the poor families and bring the poor souls in the adoration of the Holy Heart of Jesus. All of them are the manifestation of divine care and providence in concrete societal situation. To go beyond groups of ethnics and religions, the participants should enliven life as a token for others generating kindness and hospitality to others. Hospitality accordingly can go beyond borders of religions, ethnics and cultures.

Sensitivity to the common needs of the society surrounding and works for the poorest of the poor in society will be a form of the applied hospitality theology. Through this practice, hospitality theology furthermore becomes relevant for the believers and participants of the sacrament of confirmation who have to deal with people in the Islamic majority Country of Indonesia. The people and church have to make association, life dialogue, and mutual cooperation with the acceptable attitude by all parties. All expressions of hospitality can go beyond various limitation and borders since every good thing comes from divine power and God. God is source of all good things. Hospitality should be applied by every members of the church with honesty, love, good will, joy and sincere heart. Love is ecclesiastical service to meet the suffering and the needy, because all ecclesiastical works are the love expression which cannot be separated from humankind (Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, 2005, art 19)

## **VI. Conclusion**

As a conclusion, the preparatory guidance practice of the sacrament of confirmation has to consider the societal context of PITS which is located in the industrial area with both multi-cultural situation and the Islamic majority country of Indonesia. Contextual approach and societal involvement should be taken into account in the guidance practice of the sacrament of confirmation. Those considerations constitutes a new approach that provides concrete societal involvement and experiential learning of the participants.

Some relevant theologies in such a context are the discipleship theology and the hospitality theology. They reflect how to practice a full membership of the church in the concrete societal life with faith maturity. The discipleship implies spiritual discipline in following Jesus Christ and place Him as directive compass of life. It prepares our readiness to carry out the potential consequences and faith maturity in the concrete condition of society. The hospitality theology constitutes materialization of divine mercy to society. The faith maturity of the members of the church as the disciples of Jesus will be recognized by their practice of charity, mercy and hospitality.

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