

# Laity and the Integration of the Concept of Religious Moderation in Planning Pastoral Work Programs at the Holy Trinity Parish in Paslaten

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## ABSTRACT

Tomohon City, as a multi-religious center with residents adhering to various religions and beliefs, is the background of this study. Christianity, with its various denominations, predominates followed by Catholicism, Islam, Buddhism, and Confucianism. This diversity affects the everyday social aspects of society and important religious events. The potential for intolerance arises without an adequate understanding of religious moderation, particularly in the face of differences in beliefs. Religious moderation is defined as religious attitudes and practices that respect diversity and differences in beliefs. Every individual believer has the militancy to uphold the truth of his religion, and the power of faith can create brotherhood and harmony in society. Religious moderation is essential for maintaining mutual respect, respect, and listening to one another, encouraging the integrity of God's creation and the common good (*bonum commune*). This research implements Community Service Activities (PKM) with lectures, discussions, and case study methods. The final result of PkM is a practical guide that can be adopted by participants to apply the concept of religious moderation in daily life and strengthen harmony in society. This research contributes to a further understanding of the importance of religious moderation in the face of a plurality of religions and beliefs.

## INTRODUCTION

The people of Tomohon City are a pluralist society. From year to year, members of the community are growing. The increase in the number of members of the community lately is no longer limited to the indigenous people of Tomohon City. Still, it comes from various regions, especially after the riots in Maluku and Poso, Central Sulawesi. Another reason is Tomohon City, known as the City of Education and Trade. Many merchants and students who originally came from various regions for trade and study affairs eventually settled down and became citizens after fulfilling citizenship requirements. These sedentary merchants and students had their own religion, beliefs, and culture.

Tomohon City is a division of Minahasa Regency (now Minahasa Induk) which is very thick with the motto "Torang Samua Basudara" (we are all brothers) and 'Mapalus Culture' (gotong royong). These two doxologies are so firmly imprinted as cultural values living together. The practice of living together as brothers and sisters is manifested in almost every life of the people of Tomohon City, especially in social activities such as; On occasions of mourning, thanksgiving celebrations, wedding feasts, religious celebrations, and traditional ceremonies.

The challenge for Catholics, especially pastoral ministers, is how they behave daily in living with others of different faiths. The threat of discord and division can always occur if it is not anticipated and addressed. Another challenge is that newly appointed pastoral leaders and ministers have limited

religious moderation insight. Such conditions concern the Parish Priest and Parish Pastoral Council. After mutual coordination and confirmation, it is necessary to conduct briefings for ministers and pastoral officers on the theme of religious moderation (Abellán, 2023; Feldhaus et al., 2022; Turós, 2023).

Moderation is a word taken from the word moderate. Moderate is an adjective derived from the word moderation, which means not excessive, medium, or mid. In Indonesian, this word is then absorbed into moderation, which in the Big Dictionary Indonesian (KBBI) is defined as reducing violence or avoiding extremes. In the Great Dictionary of Indonesian, the word moderation comes from the Latin *moderatio*, which means moderation (neither excess nor lack). Thus, when the word moderation is juxtaposed with the word religious, it becomes religious moderation, the term refers to an attitude of reducing violence or avoiding extremes in religious practice (Abror & Abror, 2020).

The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia provides an understanding that religious moderation is an appreciation of a just and balanced religious life, both in faith and in community life. The importance of religious moderation in Indonesia is mainly due to differences in views and interests that often occur due to existing pluralism. The state has an important role in ensuring the security of people to profess and practice their religion in accordance with their chosen beliefs and beliefs. This situation requires a necessary and important attitude for every religious believer to maintain integrity and brotherhood. An important attitude that needs to be continuously nurtured and developed is tolerance. (Abror & Abror, 2020)

Religious tolerance includes issues of belief in man related to the creed or divinity he believes in. Everyone should be free to believe and profess a religion of his own choosing and respect the practice of the teachings he professes or believes. Tolerance is the fruit or result of close social interaction in society. In religious social life, humans cannot deny the existence of the association, either with their own groups or with other groups that sometimes differ in religion or belief, with such fact that religious people should try to bring peace and peace to each other within the framework of tolerance so that social stability and ideological friction between people of different religions will not occur (Valencia Caicedo et al., 2023; Wang & Wang, 2021).

Speaking of Moderation, the Catholic Church has the idea of religious moderation that was already implied in the Second Vatican Council. That view is in the document *Nostra Aetate*. Article no. 2 of the document states: "The Catholic Church does not reject anything, which in religions is all true and holy," so religious moderation must be well understood and implemented, especially in school units, and be the responsibility of religious teachers and all of us citizens. In the Catholic tradition, religious moderation is a way of looking to mediate the extremity of the interpretation of Catholic teaching that is understood by some of our people, one of us to strengthen religious moderation is to interact as much as possible between one religion and another, one stream with another. Religious models have the meaning of promoting balance in terms of moral beliefs and character as an expression of religious attitudes of certain individuals or groups in the midst of diversity and diversity of social facts (Liquin et al., 2020). Moderation means not taking sides with any party, being fair, and not hating other groups, this is in line with the values of Pancasila. Mutual respect, respect between religious believers, is very important for the creation of harmony and peace in society. The moral value of religious moderation is closely related to maintaining togetherness by having tolerance, understanding each other, and feeling each other who are different from us regardless of their minorities. The majority do not think the earth belongs to them alone, dulling their sense of tolerance (Kramer et al., 2021). So we must try always to be moderate, not excessive or extreme. Always practice the principles of fairness, balance, and tolerance (Hardawiryana, 2013).

The PKM program, which was launched with the theme of religious moderation, is considered important and urgent to maintain and increase tolerance between religious people and to improve further the quality of the faith of people and pastoral officers in the Parish of the Holy Trinity Paslaten to create a harmonious life. The same goal has also been achieved by Darmayanti and Maudin, Lecturers

of the Islamic Education Study Program, Faculty of Islamic Religion, University of Muhammadiyah Buton. In the PKM entitled "The Importance of Understanding and Implementation of Religious Moderation in the Life of the Millennial Generation," it is said that the application of religious moderation among the millennial young generation makes it a very important thing and must be done, which has the aim of creating a harmonious life and free from all forms of threats. A harmonious life is if the surrounding environment and community feel safe, comfortable, peaceful, and free from threats. That is why the concept of moderation is very important to implement. It means balanced, not excessive, in the middle, not extreme to the right, and extreme to the left, not using extreme ideological and theological legitimacy (Darmayanti, 2021).

The expected result of the implementation of this PKM is the existence of a parish work program in the field of Interfaith Relations and the field of community organizations to implement the concepts of religious moderation both within the internal scope of the church and especially with the general public and other religions or churches in the Paslaten I and II Village Areas of East Tomohon District, Tomohon City.

## METHODS

This Community Service activity uses the Participatory Action Research (PAR) method. The PKM approach with PAR is an approach whose process aims to learn to overcome problems and meet the practical needs of the community, as well as the production of PKM knowledge. This is because it is a research process oriented towards empowerment and change.

In detail, the principles of PKM work oriented towards social change are elaborated as follows: 1) Enable oppressed groups and classes to gain sufficient creative and transformist leverage as revealed in specific projects, activities, and struggles, 2) Generate and build socio-political thought processes that can be used as a means of identification community bases are potential groups that can be encouraged in the process of social change, 3) Develop research together. Such as PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) or PAR (Participatory Action Research), must be done jointly between social change facilitators and communities 4) Siding with the most helpless communities. Often community development programs do not involve neglected communities. Although politically rhetorical, the program is structured on the suffering of neglected communities, 5) Ensuring the Critical Rediscovery of History, it is an attempt to selectively rediscover, through shared memory, elements of the past that have proven useful in defending the interests of the exploited classes and which can be used in the struggle of the present to raise awareness. This pattern is commonly known as learning from experience, 6) Assessing and Applying Community Culture. It is based on the recognition and understanding of essential and core values among communities in each region, 7) Participation always starts small with small-scale changes. Once social groups and individuals have managed and controlled the change, then work towards broader patterns of change, 8) Start with a cycle of planning, action, evaluation, and reflection on a small scale to help the people involved in formulating issues, ideas, views, assumptions more clearly. So that they can formulate more powerful questions for their own situation and the development of their work, 9) Build mechanisms of "self-critical communities" from people who participate and cooperate in the research process of planning, implementation, evaluation, and reflection. It is intended to build people who care about the process of enlightening themselves for the pattern of relationships between circumstances, actions, and consequences, as well as for emancipating themselves from institutional and personal shackles that limit their power to live more humanly than the social values they choose and believe in. The process of enlightenment gives birth to critical consciousness, and 10) This critical awareness must occur towards both parties, both the person who does the enlightenment and the enlightened community.

These ten working principles are inseparable parts, integrated into a collective work between the PKM team and the community. They collaboratively build knowledge for social action and social

change. This social action and social change starts from the emergence of critical awareness between the PKM team and the community on the knowledge of the social situation that occurs. Thus, among them, they developed an effort to analyze and carry out social movements, technically solving the basic problems that befell them. From here grows new knowledge, both technical and non-technical. This process builds more valid community knowledge because knowledge is not dominated by PKM researchers or facilitators but is built together.

## RESULTS

### Implementation Process

In principle, this community service activity is carried out to implement the concept of religious moderation for pastoral officers (laity) in the Parish of the Most Holy Trinity Paslaten. The need in question is about correctly understanding religious moderation and how to implement it in daily pastoral work. For this reason, the right process is needed for the activity to be achieved. Data on participants' understanding of religious moderation is needed. Participants openly share their experiences of living together with people of other faiths. Participants are given affirmation, praise, and encouragement to continue the good things that have been done and avoid things that are still not right. Participants were then enlightened through explanations and explanations of religious moderation from the material that had been prepared. After the discussion, the activity ended with drafting guidelines or practical guidelines for implementing religious moderation.

### Discussion

#### 1. Laity as Guardians of Religious Moderation,

The Laity of the Catholic Church are called and sent into the midst of the world to be the vanguard of peace and harmony. Religious moderation is one way for the laity to create, maintain, and develop the right and appropriate attitudes and ways of life in society. The laity must be the guardian of religious moderation with a balanced religious attitude towards the practice of their own religion and respect for the religious practices of others of different faiths (Darung & Yuda, 2021).

The Church (Laity) must understand and recognize the common value of moderation from every religion and group in Indonesia. This similarity in the value of moderation will also be the energy that drives the historic meeting of two major world religious figures, Pope Francis with the Grand Imam of Al Azhar, Sheikh Ahmad el Tayyeb, on February 4, 2019. The meeting produced a human fraternity document, which among its main messages, affirmed that our common enemy today is fanatic extremism, destruction, war, intolerance, and hateful attitudes among fellow human beings, all in the name of religion (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2019).

In the context of the Parish of the Most Holy Trinity, Paslaten Tomohon, North Sulawesi Province, religious moderation can be implemented through pastoral activities in the social sector. The right concrete activity to carry out is partiality for the poor and marginalized. The face of the Church is seen through the activities of the people, which are manifested through social works, including assistance to the poor, sick, and suffering. Through the fast-building action, the Church raises funds to help sick, poor, and abandoned brothers.

#### 2. Meaning and Concept of Religious Moderation,

One of the basic principles of religious moderation is always to maintain a balance between two things, such as the balance between reason and revelation, between the physical and the spiritual, between rights and duties, between individual interests and communal benefit, between necessity and voluntariness, between religious texts and ijihad of religious figures, between ideals and reality, and a balance between past and future. The essence of religious moderation is fair and balanced in viewing, responding to, and practicing all the concepts paired above. In KBBI, the word "fair" means: 1) not partial/impartial; 2) side with the truth; and 3) duly/not arbitrarily. The word

"referee," which refers to someone who officiates a match, can be interpreted as someone who is not partial but rather sides with the truth.(Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2019)

The second principle, balance, is a term to describe perspectives, attitudes, and commitments to always stand on the side of justice, humanity, and equality. The tendency to be balanced does not mean having no opinion. Those with a balanced attitude mean firm but not harsh because they always side with justice, it's just that their partiality does not deprive others of their rights so that they are detrimental. Balance can be considered a form of perspective to do something in moderation, neither excessive nor lacking, neither conservative nor liberal.(Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2019)

### 3. Implementation of Religious Moderation,

The Catholic Church, through its teachings, emphasizes the importance of views, attitudes, behaviors, and ways of acting, reflecting religious moderation oriented towards national commitment. This can be found in the statements of the Magisterium of the Church, the Pastoral Memorandum of the Indonesian Bishops' Conference (KWI), and the Pastor's Letter by the leader of the Diocese Local Church. In addition to its teachings, the Catholic Church is also directly involved in supporting the strengthening of religious moderation and realizing national commitments, both Catholic Church leaders are externally involved in national and ideological forums, religious communication forums, and other institutions or organizations as well as Catholics who are internally involved in various forms of activities organized by the Catholic Church (Lio et al., 2020).

### 4. Interreligious Cooperation

Tomohon City is said to be a religious city. Religious pluralism in Tomohon City is very influential on the way of life, outlook on life, behavior, and even on social life of the community. In response to this situation, in Tomohon City, a fraternal group was formed known as the Interreligious Cooperation Agency (BKSAUA), the Religious Communication Forum (FKUB), and the Interreligious Consultative Body (BAMAG). The purpose of these official institutions is to continue to create, maintain, and strengthen the spirit of life of the people of Tomohon City, known as "Torang Samua Basudara" (we are all brothers). Through and in these institutions, leaders from each religion deliberate and reach a consensus on real efforts of inter-religious cooperation that are not only within the scope of religious leaders but are implemented in a real, permanent, and sustainable manner in society. Forms of cooperation between religious communities that are actually carried out include dialogue between religious leaders, mutual cooperation in environmental love works, helping each other at religious celebrations, helping each other in joys and sorrows, maintaining and maintaining security and comfort in their respective environments and helping each other when disasters occur due to natural events. The purpose of all this is for the common good (bonum commune).

The Catholic Church teaches that the general welfare of society, that is, the overall conditions of social life, which enables people to achieve their perfection more fully and more easily, lies primarily in enforcing the rights and duties of the human person. There is, then, an obligation to safeguard the right to religious freedom to citizens, social groups, governments, the Church, and other religious congregations, each in their own way, to preserve the common good. (Hardawiryana, 1990).

### 5. Practical Guidelines for Implementing Religious Moderation

For the consistent and effective implementation and implementation of religious moderation, the Church provides several basic guidelines as a reference and direction for the implementation of religious moderation. The first guideline for religious moderation is the teaching of shunning evil, doing good, and continually striving for peace (Psalm 34:12-15). In the Holy Kitan, King David passed on the teachings and examples of religious moderation. He taught his children that one must guard his tongue if he wants to have a long life and see good and good days. He must

guard his tongue against evil words, lies, and swearing. Because a tongue that usually deceives someone can create conflict, and quarrels that cause chaos with all evil work.

More or less, the same thing is taught in the New Testament through the Apostle John. According to the Apostle John (1Jn.2:9-10; 4:19-21), living peacefully means not hating one's neighbor. Not hating your neighbor is a visible form of faith. If a person says that he believes and loves his brother, he is righteous, and if it is the other way around, he is a liar. Thus, when believers realize fraternal life, religious moderation is created. Thus, the same thing was taught by the Apostle Paul, that evil should not be rewarded with evil but do what is good for all (cf. Romans 12:17). For the Apostle Paul, Christians should keep away evil and maintain peace, not pretending to live with others. Romans 12:19). If every Christian has the principle of love as the apostle Paul counseled, then we always make peace with everyone wherever we are.

The culmination of all doctrine and works of love is the Love of Jesus Christ. Jesus showed boundless love for all, even though they themselves had to suffer. On the cross, Jesus showed the most incredible love to redeem humanity regardless of background. Jesus did not repay the chastening and torture received to defeat the concept of the law that says a tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye and to defeat it with the logic of love. According to Nathan Setiabudi, Jesus' attitude above is not to give up defeat but to complete violence with passion. This attitude is also a way of breaking the vicious cycle of violence and replacing it with kindness. This attitude is an attitude of religious moderation taught not only in Christianity but all religions, including Islam, as stated by Suprpto, Islamic moderation opposes all forms of violence, fanaticism, extremism, intimidation, terrorism, and hate speech but on the contrary, Islamic moderation is tolerant, peaceful and polite (Luji, 2022).

#### 6. Integration of Religious Moderation in the Preparation of Parish Pastoral Programs/Works.

In its pastoral works, the Church of Manado Diocese refers to the Basic Pastoral Direction of Manado Diocese in 2019-2033. The Basic Direction contains identifying and articulating the points of long-term development (15 years). In turn, achieving the primary direction is arranged gradually in a pastoral strategic plan, a medium-term development plan (5 years) containing the vision, mission, strategic goals and objectives, programs and activities, and achievement indicators. The areas of pastoral work that become a milestone to illuminate the world and society in Manado Diocese are 1) Maintaining communion and servant leadership, 2) Safeguarding the treasury of faith, 3) Service of the Word and sacraments, 4) Promoting the dignity and celebration of the laity peculiar to the mission of the church, 5) Catholic education and 6) Management of church property. Each Church Base Community is required to organize and carry out activities based on these milestones to answer the needs of the people and society. Through adequately and appropriately programmed activities, it is hoped that the presence of the church in the community will indeed be light as the vision of Manado Diocese, "In the Light of the Word of God, the Catholic Communion of Manado Diocese Develops Its Identity and Dignity to Illuminate Common Life in the World" (Puspaskup, 2018).

## CONCLUSION

The Parish of the Most Holy Trinity Paslaten community service initiative aims to instill religious moderation among pastoral officers, focusing on its understanding and implementation in daily pastoral work. This involves gathering data, fostering open sharing of experiences, and providing guidance, culminating in creating practical guidelines. The broader discussion underscores the laity's role as guardians of religious moderation, emphasizing balanced attitudes and respect for diverse faiths. The concept's meaning is outlined, highlighting the importance of balance in various aspects of life. The implementation is demonstrated through the Catholic Church's support for national commitments and involvement in interreligious cooperation, with practical guidelines drawing from biblical teachings. Integrating religious moderation in Parish Pastoral Programs aligns with the Manado Diocese's long-

term development goals, aiming for the church to illuminate the community through communion, faith safeguarding, service, laity promotion, education, and property management. In essence, the comprehensive approach underscores the significance of religious moderation in both individual and communal aspects of Catholic faith and practice.

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