

# FINDING THE FACE OF THE INDONESIAN CHURCH AFTER THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

**Fransiska Widyawati, Yohanes S. Lon**

Universitas Katolik Indonesia Santu Paulus Ruteng  
fwidyawati10@gmail.com

Universitas Katolik Indonesia Santu Paulus Ruteng  
yohservatiuslon@gmail.com

## **Abstract**

*The Covid-19 Pandemic has motivated the Indonesian Catholic Church to reflect its presence's significance and improve its performance in carrying out its mission. Using a critical analytical approach, this article will describe the face of the Indonesian Church after the Covid-19 Pandemic. It argues that the Covid-19 Pandemic has encouraged the Church to interpret religious teachings from the perspective of equality, freedom, and independence, as well as the search for human values. The Indonesian Catholic Church should be more assertive in showing its partiality to the poor, weak, and marginalized and be more adaptive and responsive in solving human problems. The Indonesian Catholic Church should reflect a) the face of diversity in ethnicity, culture, religion, and other groups; b) the face of dialogue with the government, other religions, culture, science and technology; c) the face of being responsive to problems of poverty, injustice, human rights violations, ecology, et cetera; d) the face of humanity in building brotherhood, harmonious, just and prosperous nation; e) the face of holiness and apostolic in upholding the Church's magisterium; and f) the face of being adaptive and transformative in serving with heart and wisdom in cooperation and dialogue with governments, cultures, other religions. The Indonesian Church should be a house of mercy and a source of the joy of the Gospel and radiate the holiness and virtue of universal values for the human community.*

**Keywords:** Church, Catholic, Covid-19, Indonesia

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Discussions on the true face of the Church have attracted the attention of Church leaders, philosophers, and theologians. In his encyclical *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG), Pope Francis stated his hopes for the missionary Church, the incarnate Church, the Church of the poor, the inculturation Church, the Church centred on the Word, and the Church in dialogue. Under Jesus' command (Matt. 28, 19-20), the Church is to be a missionary community that proclaims the joy of the Gospel to all humankind, seeks and finds the lost and welcomes the lost (EG 19-24). The Church is the house of the Father that is open and available to everyone with all its problems; it is open to those looking for evangelical truth and goodness (EG 45-47). The Church has an option for the poor, the homeless, those addicted to drugs, refugees, indigenous people, the elderly, children, et cetera (EG 210-213). The Church also expresses its genuine Catholicity and shows the beauty of its varied face in encounters with the culture of each nation (EG 116). The Church, therefore, must dialogue with the state and society, faith and science, and other religions and cultures (EG 238). In this dialogue, the Church always relies on the Word (the Holy Scriptures), God's revelation (EG 175).

The Bishop of Jakarta, Cardinal Suharyo (2009), highlighted the Indonesian Church as a humbly serving Church, a transformative Church (dare to change), a participatory Church (involves more and more people), an incarnation Church (dare to enter in joy and sorrow of the people), and an inclusive Church (open and greets everyone). The Indonesian Catholic Church should not be a rigid and bureaucratic institution. It should not emphasize a hierarchical structure and claim to be the sole representative of God's grace. The Church must humbly serve everyone. The Indonesian Catholic Church should get out of its comfort zone and make breakthroughs according to change demands (*Ecclesia semper reformanda*). The Indonesian Catholic Church should provide equal space for all clergies, monks, and all people to participate and work together to build it into a community of God's kingdom. The Indonesian Catholic Church must involve in the ups and downs of its people and openly greet everyone without any discrimination.

The faces of the Church presented by the Pope and the Cardinal above are a picture of the ideal face of the Church and the expected Church. However, talking about the face of the Indonesian Church is certainly not complete if it only covers the ideal face and ignores the actual face. Like it or not, the face of the Indonesian Church is ambiguous between the ideal face and the actual face (Pandor, 2015), a face that is in tension between the universality and the locality, between the human and the divine. On the ideal side, the Church presents the face of liberation where people find peace, depth of life, sacredness, firm hope and a life filled with a spirit of love and humility. On the other hand, the actual face of the Church is rigid, clerical, and very doctrinal.

The structure and regulations of the Church often lead to discrimination, corruption, and justification for perpetuating the status quo. According to Magnis Suseno (Pandor, 2015), the Church should prove itself as a force that goes forward and not backward, progressive and not reactionary, humanist and not primordial, positive and not a reservoir of sentiment and hatred, open and not exclusive, humble and not arrogant to claim. On the other hand, the Church must prove its relevance in helping people and solving their problems, not in a negative or closed way but openly, inclusively and willing to learn.

Armada FX Riyanto (2004) argues that, in photographing the face of the Indonesian Church, it is necessary to be aware of the place and space in Indonesia. According to him, the Indonesian Church is a church that reflects religious and cultural diversity, be responsive to the poverty of the Indonesian people, anti-violence, open to dialogue, inclusive and sides with universal values. Similarly, Pope Francis emphasized that "we need to pay attention to the global dimension to avoid narrowness and banality. However, we also need to look at local ones who keep our feet on the ground (EG 234). People should not be trapped in an abstract and globalized universe so that they admire the glittering world of other nations. People also should not be separated from the universe, not dare to face challenges, and cannot interpret the beauty of God's grace outside their territory.

In his Encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*, Pope Paul VI (Pandor, 2015) emphasized the Church as a mystery. The Church is a movement imbued with the Spirit of God Himself. The Spirit of God guides the Church in the journey of human history in concrete areas, in concrete passages of time, and the midst of concrete dynamics of society with all its cultures, potentials and challenges. The Spirit of God who accompanies the universal Church is the same Spirit of God that accompanies the movement of the local Church. This living self-awareness will emerge the true face of the Church, which includes the image of the ideal Church as Christ views and loves her as a holy and sinless bride (Ef. 5, 27) and the actual face of the Church presented to the world today.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has challenged the whole world, including the Catholic Church in Indonesia. The impact is extraordinary for the continuity of the existence and the image of the Church. Abdon Arnoldus Amtiran (2020) noted the implications of the Covid-19 Pandemic on theological schools in Indonesia. Bhanu Viktorahadi R.F. (2021) noted changes in the pattern of sacraments in the Bandung diocese during the Covid-19 pandemic. Alfons No Embu (2020) argues that the Covid-19 Pandemic in the era of disruption of digital communication and information technology gave birth to new ritual practices in the Catholic Church, namely the online celebration of the Eucharist or online Mass. The Covid-19 Pandemic has forced Christian families to worship at home and changed their community life. This situation makes the family realize its role as the principal educator of the spiritual life of family members (Aryanto and Lelono, 2021). However, according to Amos Sukanto (2021), after the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Catholics prefer to choose physical and onsite churches because Indonesian people are very attached to the *Gemeinschaft* type of society.

This article will describe the face of the Indonesian Church after the Covid-19 Pandemic. Using a critical analytical approach, this paper will answer the question: How did the Indonesian Catholic Church look after experiencing the challenges of the Covid-19 Pandemic? Is it back to the old face before the Pandemic? Or is there a new face? The Covid-19 Pandemic has had an enormous learning impact on the life of the Church and its sustainability in Indonesia. The Covid-19 Pandemic should encourage the Indonesian Catholic Church to reflect and ask questions about the significance of its presence and the effectiveness of its role in building the Kingdom of God amid various problems in Indonesian society. Learning moments during the Covid-19 Pandemic may motivate the Church to improve its mission and make it more meaningful. From this perspective, the article will highlight and describe the face of the Indonesian Church, as plural, in dialogue, responsive and solution-oriented, humanist and just, holy and apostolic, participatory and transformative.

## 2. PLURAL CHURCH

According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (Badan Pusat Statistik) and the Ministry of Religion (2020), there are 10,060,996 Catholics in Indonesia with the following distribution:

No	Name of Province	Number of Catholics	Percentage in the province
1	Nusa Tenggara Timur	3.255.984	61 %
2	Kalimantan Barat	1.212.516	23 %
3	Sumatera Utara	1.102.850	8 %
4	Jawa Tengah	501.865	2 %
5	Jawa Timur	453.620	1 %
6	DKI Jakarta	438.085	4 %
7	Papua Tengah	349.660	43 %
8	Jawa Barat	311.679	1 %
9	Papua Selatan	259.505	51 %
10	Maluku	209.553	11 %
11	Papua	195.236	11 %
12	Sulawesi Utara	172.657	7 %

13	Kalimantan Timur	170.457	5 %
14	Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta	165.679	5%
15	Sulawesi Selatan	155.559	2 %
16	Banten	145.206	1 %
17	Papua Pegunungan	144.719	13 %
18	Sumatera Selatan	106.299	1 %
19	Papua Barat	89.441	8 %
20	Kalimantan Tengah	87.325	3 %
21	Lampung	77.755	1%
22	Riau	69.867	1 %
23	Kepulauan Riau	52.191	3 %
24	Sulawesi Tengah	49.160	2 %
25	Sumatera Barat	46.773	1 %
26	Kalimantan Utara	43.064	6 %
27	Jambi	40.006	1 %
28	Bali	34.852	1 %
29	Kalimantan Selatan	22.523	1 %
30	Kepulauan Bangka Belitung	19.058	1 %
31	Sulawesi Tenggara	18.152	1 %
32	Sulawesi Barat	17.515	1 %
33	Bengkulu	11.676	1 %
34	Nusa Tenggara Barat	10.021	0,2 %
35	Gorontalo	8.226	1 %
36	Maluku Utara	6.749	1 %
37	Aceh	5.511	0,1 %
Total	Indonesia	10.060.996	4 %

Source: Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (Badan Pusat Statistik) and the Ministry of Religion (2020)  
The Indonesian Catholic Church is spreading throughout the territory of the Republic of Indonesia, which is very diverse in ethnicity, culture, race, religion, politics, and economy. By being incarnated (and inculturated) in this various diversity, the main appearance of the face of the Indonesian Church is pluralist. Institutionally, Catholics are divided into ten archdioceses and 27 suffragan dioceses. Therefore, the face of the Indonesian Church cannot be imprisoned by the face of the Church of one diocese or one tribe or culture or region. Every Christian has the right and opportunity to express their faith according to their culture and environment. There is no room for monopoly in claiming a more beautiful and attractive face of the Church, whether the liturgy is quieter or more vibrant, or more frenetic or sacred and so on. All faces of the Church in every diocese, region, and culture become the face of the Indonesian Church. In the face of the Indonesian Church is the face of the Javanese Church, which may be dominated by shade, peace and harmony; meanwhile, there are also the faces of the East Nusa Tenggara, Papua, Sumatra, Kalimantan and others in the Indonesian Church. Pluralism becomes the existence of the Indonesian Church.

According to Sherlock (1996), pluralism can be a source of wealth if it can accommodate differences reasonably and peacefully. The diversity in the face of the Indonesian Church is undoubtedly an asset of the liturgical strength of the Indonesian Church. This diversity enriches the life and appreciation of faith. This diversity can also be used as an attraction or allure that affects the universal Church. This diversity often gives birth to various leadership styles, models of service, and forms of interaction between the people and their clergy. The diversity of the faces of the Indonesian Church will support each other and perfect the face of the Church of Christ in Indonesia.

However, pluralism can also be a challenge for the Church of Christ in Indonesia because differences have the potential to create conflict and discrimination. The Indonesian Church, whether we like it or not, has to struggle amidst various cultural, social, political and economic diversity. In these struggles, there is often tension because of the group's claims of truth and goodness. In this struggle, accusations and stigmatization can occur. More than that, it takes an effort to maintain, develop and enrich diversity for the betterment and advancement of all parties. Here pluralism becomes an effort and spirit to build God's kingdom for humankind's salvation in all ecclesiastical areas of Indonesia. Pope Francis invites all faithful to develop a culture of encounter that is imbued with the joy of the Gospel. Through inculturation, the Church allows local cultures to enter into the same Church community. The Church is undoubtedly an ordinary home where all people from every culture feel accepted, forgiven and comforted and experience God's mercy. Thus, the Indonesian Church expresses its Catholic authenticity and shows the beauty of its diverse face (EG 116).

Pluralism in the Church is not only a sociological and anthropological concept but mainly a biblical philosophical one. The Bible shows a pluralist face where God's Word and truth manifest in various faces. Jews and Greeks, both followers of Apollos and followers of Paul and others, share the face of the Church of Christ (Rom. 3, 9-20; 1 Cor. 1, 10-17). Furthermore, the trend of postmodernist philosophy shows a shift from the grip

of a giant (universal) narrative toward a small (local) narrative originating from various cultures. Philosophy must return to specific traditions and cultures, and a philosopher must position himself in his society with all the philosophical values it has. In local philosophy, philosophers will find a plurality of definitions of life, and plurality is seen as truth.

When the Covid-19 Pandemic hit the Indonesian people, the Indonesian Bishops' Conference (Konferensi Wali-Gereja Indonesia = KWI) issued instructions to all dioceses in Indonesia. It urged them to follow government regulations limiting worship activities in the Church (Rante Taruk, 2020). However, the reactions and responses of each diocese differ from one another. There were dioceses which immediately implemented the KWI instructions, but some of them questioned it or followed them very later when Covid-19 had taken a toll on their diocese. Amtiran noted three schools of theology in Indonesia in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Some Church leaders argued and relied on their faith in God in fighting the Covid-19 Pandemic. Some responded rationally without relating it strictly to matters of faith. Some had used a common-sense approach and, at the same time, reflected it in the eyes of faith. Diversity in responding to and dealing with the Covid-19 problem confirms the pluralist face of the Indonesian Church.

### 3. DIALOGUE CHURCH

The spirit, attitude, and value of dialogue are the main elements in living, interpreting, and positively fertilizing pluralism. The natural diversity of the Indonesian Church in terms of ethnicity, race, culture and political choices has the potential for conflict. With the spirit of dialogue, differences can be directed towards harmonization and the spirit of unity. Dialogue is the primary way to build unity in diversity and difference. Dialogue is also the central pillar of the continuity of the pluralist Indonesian Church. In the document *Fratelli tutti* (no 211), Pope Francis emphasized that dialogue is the best way to realize what must always be emphasized and appreciated regardless of any form of temporary consensus in a pluralistic society. In the context of Indonesia, the Catholic Church must establish a dialogue with 1) other religions, including the traditional religion or belief, 2) Reformed churches or Protestant Christian churches, which include all denominations within them, churches belonging to the mainstream or Pentecostal groups, and the Orthodox and Anglican Churches, 3) varied cultures and the reality of poverty.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has encouraged the Church to dialogue with all parties: the government, interfaith communities, and entrepreneurs in dealing with disasters and their impact on all aspects of human life. Almost all countries, including Indonesia, experienced an economic recession and found it challenging to reconcile economic and health interests. Many suffer depression because of job loss, lack of food, or social pressure. The situation became even more tragic when many family members, acquaintances and friends died from Covid-19. In such a situation, cooperation from all parties is needed. Tyler et al. (2020) argue that social support is crucial in increasing resilience in the face of internal and external pressures. Social support is a reciprocal interaction that shows care and assistance from individuals or groups to those who need it (Sarafino and Smith, 2014). This social support makes people experiencing difficulties or sadness feel cared for, respected, and loved (King, 2017). Social support makes individuals feel comfortable and able to control their emotions so they can solve problems well (Liu, 2017). According to Sarafino and Smith (2014), social support consists of four aspects: 1) emotional aspects in the form of attention, caring, motivation, empathy and encouragement; 2) instrumental aspects in the form of money or other tangible assistance, 3) informative support in the form of advice, directions, information and suggestions about what should be done, and 4) collegial or togetherness aspects during times of grief or difficulty.

Thus, post-pandemic, the Indonesian Catholic Church's dialogue with other parties is crucial in resolving various social, economic, and religious issues. Through dialogue, the Church acknowledges the truth and positive energy from different parties (LG 16). Through dialogue, the Catholic Church declares solidarity in solving humanitarian problems due to Covid-19 (GS 1). Through dialogue, the Church also testifies about Christian life amid the togetherness and diversity of the Indonesian people. The Church creates a more harmonious, just and prosperous national brotherhood through dialogue. The Church recognizes and respects what is true and holy in other religions and cultures through dialogue. The Church invites all nations with their cultures to join the Church community through dialogue. More than that, through dialogue, the Church declares the authenticity of her Catholicism and simultaneously shows the beauty of her various faces (EG 116). There the Church will be a free place of mercy, where everyone feels welcome, forgiven and comforted with the joy of the Gospel.

Is the Indonesian Catholic Church ready to have a genuine dialogue with the government, other religions and local culture? The answer is not easy because a context of suspicion, stigmatization and arrogance often influences the context of dialogue in Indonesia. Dialogue with the ruling group is often suspected and stigmatized as a form of collusion with the authorities. On the other hand, the authorities often politicize religion and religious leaders. Dialogue with Islam is often disturbed by issues of Christianization or Islamization. Dialogue with culture is also disrupted for fear of syncretism. Dialogue also does not go well because each group claims the truth and negates the truth on the other side. In addition, when a spiritual group

emerges that carries out a prayer ritual that is somewhat different from that of the Catholic Church, the dialogue carried out by the Catholic Church is sometimes repressive.

The Catholic Church should be a pioneer in escaping suspicion, stigmatization and exclusive arrogance. The spirit of dialogue is basically under the nature of the Church, which was sent to save all humanity. The Church was sent to dialogue with all nations and baptized them into followers of Christ. Jesus said: Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations and baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, teach them to do everything I have commanded you (Matt. 28, 19-20). In carrying out its mission, the Church must engage with all human beings from various tribes, cultures and regions. Pope Francis, in his Apostolic exhortation EG (Joy of the Gospel) number 47, emphasized: The Church is called to be the house of the Father, with doors that are always wide open. The Church is invited to keep trying to establish good relations with all people regardless of political, religious, ethnic and cultural choices. Consequently, the Church must not be exclusive and closed but open and inclusive by cooperating and having a dialogue with that outside of herself.

Through Christ and the event of incarnation, God demonstrates a model of saving dialogue. This dialogue model is continued by the Holy Spirit, who unites God's people in His Church. Then the same Spirit moves the Church to dialogue with the world to form a fellowship and bring about the salvation of humankind. In the Document *Nostra Aetate* (NA), the Second Vatican Council stated emphatically that the Catholic Church does not reject anything true and holy in local culture and other religions. The spirit of dialogue certainly demands openness, a willingness to interact with each other, mutual respect and respect for differences and mutual support for togetherness. The dialogue needs to be enriched and illuminated with clear thinking, sound arguments, different perspectives and contributions from different knowledge and points of view. The dialogue seeks to uphold fundamental truths, recognize the existence of specific eternal values and produce solid and sturdy social ethics.

Pope Francis, through EG 238, noted three areas of dialogue where the Church must be present to promote full human development while at the same time seeking general welfare. The three areas of dialogue are dialogue with the state, dialogue with society, dialogue with science and culture, and dialogue with people of other faiths or religions that are not part of the Catholic Church. Dialogue with other religions may include daily-life dialogue (all forms of association and social relations between adherents of different religions), work dialogue (forms of cooperation in various works for mutual progress), theological dialogue (the core teachings of each religion), and dialogue of religious experience (a life of prayer, contemplation, and experience of the Divine).

#### 4. RESPONSIVE CHURCH

The Covid-19 Pandemic has encouraged the Church to have an adaptive, responsive and caring attitude toward health and humanitarian issues. The Church must be responsive to its believers' problems and religious struggles and the problems of humanity as a whole. The Church should be involved in solving human problems such as poverty, injustice, human rights violations, deforestation, stunting, and global warming. After going through the problem of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Church should remain responsive and not turn a blind eye and be ignorant to issues of poverty, injustice, unemployment, the environment and global warming. This statement is in line with the views of Pope Francis, who emphasized the option for the poor, the homeless, refugees, the elderly, the marginalized and other weak people. Without such impartiality, church proclamations will be rhetoric and unheard of (EG 199 and 210). The Central Statistics Agency (Badan Pusat Statistik) in 2020 recorded a very high increase in poverty, social inequality, unemployment, stunting, and school dropouts due to Indonesia's Covid-19 pandemic.

The Church represents God, who is merciful and cares about the safety of humankind. Jeremiah (29, 7) calls out to God's people in Babylon: Seek for the welfare of the city into which I banish you, and pray for the city to God, for its welfare is your welfare. In Deuteronomy 15 11, God says: ... you must open your arms wide for your brothers who are oppressed and poor in your country. God also says: ... so that you will open the shackles of tyranny and let go of the yoke; so that you will set free those who are persecuted and break every yoke; so that you will break your bread for the hungry and bring to your house the poor who have nothing, and when you see a naked person, you clothe him and not hide from your brothers (Isa. 58, 6-7). In the New Testament, Jesus reaffirms the merciful face of God. Matthew 25, 42-45 notes that everything we do not do to love one of the least of these, namely those who are hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, who live as foreigners and prisoners, we do not do it for God. God listens to the poor and does not despise prisoners; he loves the weak and oppressed (Ex. 23, 6; Ps. 72, 13; Amos 14, 31).

Just like the people in Babel, the Church has a mission to prosper the people of Indonesia. The Magisterium of the Church, especially the Second Vatican Council, emphasized that the joy and hope of the world are the joy and hope of the Church. Pope Francis, in the encyclical *Gaudium Evangelii*, highlighted the Church's concern for the problems of poverty and human suffering due to injustice, violence, human rights violations, drugs, and other crimes. If you look at the current state of Indonesia, social problems that dominate the majority of society are problems of poverty, injustice, persecution, coercion, harassment, manipulation and corruption. In this reality, the Church needs to be present and involved in explaining the problem. Facing poverty, injustice and oppression, the Church should side with the weak, the powerless, the poor and the marginalized. The meaning

of the presence of the Church lies precisely in its attitude and efforts to obtain justice, liberation from various oppressions and uphold human rights. The Church must voice justice and promote human dignity. The Church needs to respond immediately to these problems with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Church exists to stand on the side of the weak, powerless, poor and marginalized. The Church is called to voice injustice and the oppression of the weak. The Church must continue to voice its prophetic mission indiscriminately against various cases of abuse of power, injustice, the usurpation of people's rights and against systems that oppress and impoverish humans. The existence of the Indonesian Church will be meaningful and effective if it is responsive to the ups and downs of the Indonesian people.

It remains an important note that the Church's response to problems of social life, humanitarian issues and human rights violations and upholding justice has not become the primary and simultaneous movement for all dioceses in Indonesia. Some dioceses are more responsive to poverty issues; some dioceses are more responsive to mining issues. Some dioceses are more responsive to environmental issues. There has not been a joint movement, so the Indonesian Church's alignment with the poor, weak, and marginalized has not become a force capable of changing the face of poverty or arousing the enthusiasm to get out of poverty. Poverty is very closely related to mental problems, and it seems that the role of the Church still needs to be increased to change this mentality. Likewise, with the issue of justice, the Church has not become an influential force. The Church is embracing the rich and the poor more by encouraging the rich to donate to the poor. However, the root of the problem is not resolved, which is an unfair system. Injustice by rulers and business people reinforced by a capitalist economic system should become the concern of the Indonesian Catholic Church.

The Church's response is not just meeting the physical needs of the poor for food, shelter and protection but also acknowledging their human value. This responsive attitude should appear in the hospitality of the Church as a form of love to welcome and sincerely accept the weak. A survey conducted by AOSIS in 2013-2019 stated that self-recognition as a Christian decreased by 14.2% yearly. This data is closely related to the Church's rigid attitude and unresponsiveness to the needs of people experiencing post-modern spirituality (Pohl, 1998).

## 5. HUMANIST AND JUST CHURCH

The essence of the presence of the Church is humanity. Therefore, the Church should never stop interpreting her religious teachings from the perspective of equality, freedom and independence and the search for human values. The Second Vatican Council emphasized: "...we cannot invoke the name of God the Father of all people if we do not want to act as brothers towards certain people, who were created in the image of the likeness of God. The relationship between man and God and his fellow brothers is so close that whoever does not love his neighbour does not love God (NA 5). This statement means that the Church must act humanely and respect and love the noble dignity of every human being. The Church, in its task of bringing people to God's salvation, should respect the fundamental rights of every human being. Human rights are God's almighty gift inherent in every human being. Everyone should be recognized and respected regardless of skin colour, gender, nationality, religion, age, political views, social status, language, and ethnicity. Here the Church's approach should no longer be doctrine-uniform but humanistic and contextual.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has inspired the Church to prioritize humanity over traditions in the Church or its doctrinal teachings. In his Apostolic address *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis expressed the Church's concern for universal human problems. He spoke about the common interests of all humankind which are threatened by problems of corruption, desecration of human dignity, wars between countries, hunger, poverty, and injustice. He invited all parties to be involved in humanitarian interests. The history of the salvation of humankind in the Holy Scriptures explicitly states in favour of equality, freedom, and human independence. There it is stated that God's power upholds human values and dignity.

Pope Francis also expressed self-criticism against the Catholic Church. He said: Often, we act more as administrators of grace than facilitators of grace. The Church is not a tax house. The Church is the Father's house, where there is always a place for everyone with all their tiring life problems (EG 47). It must be admitted that the Indonesian Catholic Church is also often trapped in the arrogance of the owner of the truth. For the sake of this truth, the Church (hierarchy) does not behave humanely towards its followers or people of other religions. The Church is more focused on maintaining its traditions than solving the people's real problems. The Church is more focused on its internal affairs and less involved in the realities of human struggle. The Church is busy with Mass or liturgical activities rather than dealing with the problems of poverty and injustice.

## 6. HOLY AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH

The Covid-19 Pandemic has increasingly pushed humans to seek the source of holiness, namely God. Žižek (2020) argues that the Covid-19 Pandemic can help humans find a more meaningful life. The Covid-19 Pandemic can be a special moment to rebuild harmonious and productive relationships with nature, fellow humans and God. Widyawati and Lon's research (2020) found that during the Covid-19 Pandemic, the ritual of honouring the bodies was not primarily carried out to get social support (from extended family and friends)

but mainly to ensure belief in the safety of the deceased and the peace of the bereaved family in the future. The Covid-19 Pandemic encourages people to get closer to God, the eternal saviour.

Therefore, after the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Church should reflect more on the holiness or sacredness of God. The Church is not only a human organization but a sacred institution where people gain spiritual strength. The Church is a holy institution because Jesus Christ himself is holy. Jesus loves His Church and gave himself up for the Church's holiness. Man's sanctification in Christ is the goal of all the Church's work. The Church becomes holy because the source from which it comes is holy. Christ founded the Church, so the Church received her holiness from Christ (John 17, 11). The Church is holy because the goal towards which it is directed is holiness; that is, the Church aims for God's glory and humankind's salvation. The Church is holy because the soul of the Church itself is holy, namely the Holy Spirit. The Church is holy because its authentic divine elements, such as teachings and sacraments, are holy. In the Church, all members are directed to holiness, which baptism signifies. Therefore, the Church must become the embodiment of the will of the Most Holy God to unite with humans and unite humans in His holiness (LG 8, 39, 41 and 48).

The Church is also apostolic because it comes from the apostles and still holds fast to the testimony of their faith. It was built on the foundation of the apostles, and Christ has been the cornerstone since the early Church (Ef. 2, 20). The Church is called apostolic because it is related to the apostles sent by Christ. The function, power of the hierarchy, teachings, worship, and structure of the Church are derived from the apostles. In the New Testament, the word apostle refers not only to the twelve apostles (Matt. 10, 1-4).

According to Pope Francis, the Church filled with the Holy Spirit is always open and fearless to become heralds of the Good News. The Holy Spirit bestows freedom and courage to proclaim aloud the newness of the Gospel whenever and wherever, even when facing opposition or opposition (EG 259). However, to realize this courage, the Church needs a process of purification, namely cleaning and purifying the face of the Church from formalism, mental dullness, closedness, comfort, and worldly spirituality. Pope John Paul II said: All renewal in the Church must have a mission as its goal if you do not want to become a victim of the closedness of the Church (EG 27). The mission of the Church must focus on the essentials, the most beautiful, the greatest, the most interesting and at the same time on the most important (EG 35). The Church must stay away from worldly transactions and inculcate the nature of humility and serving others. The Church is aware that its glory lies in its holiness and in maintaining God's image by respecting everyone's rights. Therefore, the Church must be willing to learn from others, share views and values, and reflect and purify its doctrinal contents from contamination of God's monopoly of truth.

## 7. PARTICIPATORY AND TRANSFORMATIVE CHURCH

The Covid-19 Pandemic confirms that the Church does not depend solely on the clergy. The Church survived during the Covid-19 Pandemic because every member, both lay and clergy, performed their respective roles. During the Covid-19 Pandemic, the role of the clergy was minimized, and the role of the laity was further strengthened. Layman's participation becomes much more real during the Pandemic. The impact of Covid-19 Pandemic has made Church leaders open to new perspectives to see the dynamics of Church life in the family. The Covid-19 Pandemic has made the family the centre of spiritual life (domestic Church). The Covid-19 Pandemic also requires the Church to always be ready to transform or make changes. In this way, the Church will get out of its comfort zone, which has always been its habit. If the Church does not change, then the Church will not be relevant and significant for the change and progress of humankind. During the Covid-19 Pandemic, the relationship between humans and God was intertwined with the help of social media. Sacraments are also mediated online, and social media based on internet access is part of religious and faith life (Viktorahadi, 2021). The Church becomes a digital Church.

Changes in digital technology and information technology increasingly demand the Church renewal movement. Facing change, the Church is often afraid, stiff and does not dare to take risks. When a spiritual prayer group movement carries out a somewhat different way of praying, it is often suppressed and claimed to be non-Catholic. The movement of the spirit is not well-accommodated in the Catholic Church. Likewise, in facing the accelerating pace of technological change, the Church is often left behind. The Church is afraid that scientific and technological advances will undermine the Church's magisterium order. As a result, the Church becomes less agile in responding to the times; instead of being a reformer agent, the Church often becomes a victim, an object of the times.

The Church renewal movement is primarily a repentance movement, in which the Church is aware that she is a sinner who has not yet presented the face of the Church that is human and, at the same time, holy like the Lord Jesus. The Church should be lived as something that becomes and continues to be renewed in our daily experience, *hic et nunc*. The Covid-19 Pandemic has forced the Church to make unimaginable changes. The Covid-19 Pandemic has become an emergency that encourages people to pray and worship from home. Online Mass certainly provides a new, exciting and unique religious experience of rituals mediated by online social media. Prayer at home and online Mass certainly change the mindset about Mass rituals which emphasize direct experience in the real presence of a community that gathers in the Church at the same time and place. Online Masses can guarantee togetherness and spiritual unity. Therefore, it is not only togetherness and

physical unity that guarantees spiritual unity among the people. Here it becomes clear that rituals in physical union or virtual union are both a means and a medium for cultivating people's spiritual life.

## 8. CONCLUSION

The Indonesian Catholic Church is still on a journey and striving to become the ideal Church of Christ. In this pilgrimage, one can still find the face of the Church that does not want to get out of its comfort zone. However, the Covid-19 Pandemic has inspired the Indonesian Catholic Church to reflect its presence's significance and improve its performance in carrying out its mission. The Indonesian Catholic Church should reflect the face of diversity in ethnicity, culture, religion, and other groups. It must dialogue with the state, society, faith, science, and other religions and cultures. It must be responsive to problems of poverty, injustice, human rights violations, ecology, deforestation, and other problems. The Indonesian Church should be a house of compassion and a source of gospel joy for the poor, weak, and marginalized. The Indonesian Catholic Church should also be holy, apostolic, participatory and transformative. It should be more assertive in upholding the Church's magisterium. Meanwhile, it must be more diligent in serving with heart and wisdom in voicing the holiness and virtue of universal values, justice, and human dignity.

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