



The Visit of Pope Francis: An Inter-theological Perspective in Strengthening Bilateral Relations and Tolerant Religious Life in Indonesia


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 <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.106.17>

Abstract

Pope Francis' visit to Indonesia was crucial in strengthening Indonesia-Vatican diplomatic relations and religious harmony. This study examines the impact of the visit on pluralism and interfaith dialogue, particularly between Muslim and Catholic communities. Through an inter-theological approach, this study explores theological messages related to love and human dignity and their relevance in strengthening interfaith relations. The results of the study are expected to contribute to encouraging closer and more harmonious cooperation in Indonesia. This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method. Data collection techniques were used to identify and collect relevant literature sources, including journal articles, books, and reports. The data analysis technique was conducted by exploring Indonesia's social and cultural context to understand the dynamics that occur. Pope Francis affirmed the importance of interfaith dialogue, especially between Catholics and Muslims, to strengthen religious harmony. By



promoting love and respect for human dignity, the Pope encourages cooperation in facing social challenges such as poverty and radicalism. The dialogue should go beyond tolerance, creating closer and more peaceful relationships. This initiative is expected to strengthen interfaith brotherhood and encourage a more harmonious and inclusive life amid Indonesia's religious diversity.

Keywords: Pope, Intertheological, Catholic, Muslim, Religious Dialogue, Bilateral Relations.

Introduction

Pope Francis I, the "Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church" and Bishop of Rome's - visit to Indonesia marks a historic moment in diplomatic relations with the Vatican while strengthening religious harmony amid Indonesia's diversity. The Catholic Church, through its teachings and doctrines, emphasises the importance of interfaith dialogue as part of its mission of evangelisation. Interfaith dialogue is one important component of the Catholic Church's mission, but it is not the only focus. The Church's broader mission includes evangelization, promoting social justice, serving the poor, and upholding moral teachings, all of which aim to spread the message of Christianity and build understanding and cooperation among diverse communities. The *Nostra Aetate* document of the Second Vatican Council acknowledges that all religions have elements of truth and goodness, making interreligious dialogue an essential component of the Church's efforts to promote global peace and harmony. In this context, Pope Francis' visit to Indonesia symbolises the strengthening of bilateral relations not only limited to diplomatic aspects but also emphasises the importance of religious harmony in Indonesia's plural society. This visit is in line with his encyclical '*Fratelli Tutti*', which emphasises the importance of social brotherhood and friendship, fostering mutual understanding among the various religious communities in Indonesia (Tinambunan, 2022).

Pope Francis' visit is significant from a theological perspective as a manifestation of the Church's call to build peace and interfaith harmony. Pope Francis, is known for his inclusive approach, and he calls on everyone to create a 'culture of encounter' based on mutual respect and universal love (Francis & Ivereigh, 2020). In Indonesia, which has the largest Muslim population, this message is particularly relevant, given the challenges often faced in maintaining interfaith harmony. The Pope's visit is an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to promoting tolerance and dialogue among people of different faiths. In addition, the signing of the Abu Dhabi Document highlighted a commitment to religious moderation, which is particularly important for Indonesia's diverse society (Daffa, 2023). Pope Francis also affirmed that interreligious dialogue is about respecting differences and recognising the dignity of every human being as a creation of God (Francis, 2015).

In the Indonesian context, this visit reflects the Catholic Church's larger theological mission of building a more peaceful and united world through regular and ongoing interfaith dialogue. Against the backdrop of Indonesia's highly diverse history and culture, the Pope's visit serves as a platform to enhance understanding and collaboration between Muslim and Catholic communities to achieve more profound harmony. Theologically, the Catholic Church understands that God's salvation and love are for all humanity, regardless of religious background. In this context, Pope Francis' visit is expected to strengthen the Church's teachings on inclusivity and recognition of religious plurality (D'Costa, 2009). As a country rich in religious traditions, Indonesia is an ideal place to develop this theological dialogue. Through this visit, the theological message of



inclusiveness can be deepened and serve as a basis for closer cooperation between Catholicism and Islam, which in turn can strengthen the ideal for greater tolerance in religious life in Indonesia.

In light of this, the author would like to examine how the visit of Pope Francis I not only impacts Indonesia-Vatican diplomatic relations but also as a catalyst for creating a better climate of religious harmony in Indonesia. This visit can be understood as a joint commitment to nurture interfaith relations in the context of growing pluralism. This study explores the meaning and impact of Pope Francis' visit on religious life in Indonesia and its contribution to strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries. Using the perspectives of Catholic and Islamic theology, this research explores how the visit reinforces the Church's teachings on interfaith dialogue. An inter-theological approach analyses the theological messages of love, respect for human dignity, and their relevance for harmonious religious life to support closer cooperation between Catholic and Muslim communities.

Literature Review

Several articles have researched the visit of Pope Francis and its impact on bilateral relations and religious harmony in Indonesia. Pope Francis stresses practical engagement over doctrinal disputes, promoting unity and the importance of reality over ideas (Phan, 2022). The difference in that study is that it focuses on Pope Francis' principles in interfaith dialogue globally. In contrast, this study emphasises the impact of the Pope's visit to Indonesia on bilateral relations and local harmony. Further research explains that Pope Francis' approach encourages collaboration among different religious communities, as seen in the positive media portrayal of his visit to Iraq, highlighting his role in promoting peace and community reconciliation (Al-Sarraj, 2022). That research focused on Pope Francis' global approach to interreligious dialogue. In contrast, this study highlights the Pope's visit to Indonesia, emphasising its impact on religious harmony and Indonesia-Vatican bilateral relations in a pluralistic society.

Another study explains that Pope Francis' interfaith dialogue and cooperation advocates dialogue on pressing global issues, including human rights and education, which can bridge the gap between different religions. has been explored by scholars such as John Borelli, a professor at Georgetown University. Borelli highlights how Pope Francis' approach to interreligious dialogue goes beyond theological discussion, aiming instead to address pressing global challenges through collaboration across religious boundaries (Mchedlova, 2022). The difference in this study highlights the impact of Pope Francis' visit on bilateral relations and religious harmony in Indonesia. In contrast, that study focused more on political threats in interfaith dialogue and cultural security from radical interference. His visits often serve as a platform for fostering interreligious cooperation, as demonstrated in his visit to Romania in 2019, which addressed ethnic and religious identity issues (Hubbes, 2022). The difference is that this research examines Pope Francis' visit to Indonesia, emphasising interreligious dialogue and harmony. In contrast, the research on the Pope's visit to Csíksomlyó focused on national identity and ethnic discourse between the Hungarian minority and the Romanian majority.

Another study explains that the Pope's focus on marginalised communities, such as migrants and the poor, underscores his commitment to social justice, which resonates with historical struggles in Latin America (Levine, 2016). The difference with this study is that it accentuates issues of social inequality, the environment, as well as the role of the Church in political conflicts and



migrant rights, while this study focuses on interfaith harmony and diplomacy. An important aspect of Pope Francis' mission is his focus on refugees and migrants, urging countries to adopt compassionate policies. His public interventions often frame these issues in a humanitarian context, advocating for a humble Church that strives to serve those in need (Guzik, 2018). The difference is that this study as stated before, focuses on interfaith dialogue and harmony. In contrast, that study highlights the Pope's communication strategies to advocate for refugee rights and mobilise global support for humanitarian crises.

When engaging with populist sentiments, Pope Francis reframes them to encourage constructive dialogue rather than division, emphasising the need for a moral foundation in addressing social issues (McCormick, 2020). This research explores how Pope Francis countered the politicisation of religion by populism through political theology and the autonomy of the Church in a global context. His teachings align with the Catholic Church's evolving stance on human rights, advocating the synergy between faith and reason as essential to promoting justice and democracy (Carozza & Philpott, 2012). The main difference between the research studies lies in the focus and the context discussed. The research highlights the convergence and conflict between the Church's teachings and human rights and democracy in global politics, while this research focuses on interreligious dialogue and harmony.

Its teachings advocate a Church that embodies joy, mercy and solidarity with marginalised people, reflecting a commitment to the 'missionary option' that prioritises outreach over self-preservation (Bevans, 2014). Its vision also includes ecological concerns, advocating for protecting indigenous peoples' rights and environmental sustainability in the Amazon (Souza, 2020). Interreligious dialogue is essential for peacebuilding, especially in conflict-prone regions such as the Middle East, where it is crucial in healing sectarian divisions (Abu-Nimer et al., 2007). The Vatican's engagement with Islam exemplifies the shift from viewing other religions as enemies to recognising them as partners in dialogue, fostering mutual respect and understanding (Pratt, 2010). The Pope's influence has increased awareness and concern for global warming among Americans, especially Catholics, who now view it as a moral and social justice issue. This shift underscores the importance of integrating ethical considerations into environmental discussions (Maibach, 2015).

The Pope's political theology addresses global crises, often intervening when secular institutions falter, thus strengthening the Church's role in international discourse (Genovese, 2015). His focus on human dignity reflects a broader moral framework that transcends national boundaries, urging states to prioritise human values over material progress (Lagon, 2015). Pope Francis supports recognising and stewardship of cultural diversity, which fosters social values and ethical principles (Durán et al., 2017).

Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method to analyse the impact of Pope Francis' visit on bilateral relations between Indonesia and the Vatican and the pursuit of tolerant religious life in Indonesia. This approach was chosen to obtain an in-depth and holistic understanding of the topic under study, allowing researchers to explore the meaning behind the occurring phenomena (Creswell, 2014). The data collection technique identified and collected relevant literature sources, including academic journal articles, books, and reports. After data



collection, data analysis techniques were carried out through several stages. The analysis was conducted by exploring Indonesia's social and cultural context to understand the dynamics that occurred. These stages help ensure that data analysis is systematic, transparent, and leads to valid and meaningful conclusions. Depending on the research type, the specifics of these stages may vary. The research also applied the comparison method to see consistency and variation in the interpretation of the impact of the visit, as well as synthesis to integrate findings from various sources.

Results

Theological Basis for Tolerance Between Catholicism and Islam

Both religions, Christianity and Islam, have theological principles that underlie the importance of building harmonious and respectful relationships between religious communities. Roman Catholic Christian teachings, mainly through the doctrine of *Nostra Aetate*, highlight openness towards other religions, including Islam, recognising that every religion contains elements of truth and goodness that must be respected. On the other hand, in Islam, the concepts of mercy and justice contained in the Qur'an encourage Muslims to interact with an attitude of compassion and justice towards all human beings, regardless of religious differences. In some Islamic countries, the prohibition of non-Islamic religious practices in public places and the absence of separation between state and religion are due to the state's strict interpretation of certain Islamic groups. This interpretation emphasises religious unity and the application of Sharia law, which guides governance and social norms.

The government, in collaboration with religious authorities, enforces policies that favour Islamic values and prevent the practice of other religions in public places. Despite a growing discourse on tolerance, the intertwining of religion and politics continues to shape the legal framework, which limits religious pluralism in the public sphere (Fauzan et al., 2024). These two views complement each other in strengthening interfaith dialogue, which can strengthen tolerance and harmony amid diversity, as presented by Pope Francis' visit to Indonesia.

The doctrine of *Nostra Aetate*, passed in 1965 during the Second Vatican Council, became one of the main pillars in the Catholic Church's efforts to establish dialogue with other religions, including Islam. This dialogue was essential to the Church's missionary nature and ecumenical commitment, encouraging Catholics to engage with others respectfully (Gaillardetz, 2023). The doctrine of *Nostra Aetate* significantly advances the Catholic Church's approach to interreligious relations and tolerance.

The document emphasises the unity of humanity and acknowledges the spiritual truths present in other religions, encouraging a more inclusive Catholic theology towards religions (Merwe, 2017). The document underlines the importance of appreciating the elements of truth and goodness that exist in various religious traditions. By referring to the core teachings in *Nostra Aetate*, we can see how these principles can be applied in the context of religious life in Indonesia, thus supporting the creation of a more tolerant and harmonious society.



Key Points	Content and Explanation	Relevance to Interfaith Tolerance
The Unity of the Origin of Mankind (Article 1)	<i>Nostra Aetate</i> emphasises that all humanity comes from the same God, making all human beings part of one great community.	Encourage Catholics to see other human beings as brothers and sisters, regardless of religious, cultural, or ethnic differences.
Respect for the Truth in Other Religions (Article 2)	The Catholic Church recognises the truth and sacred values in other religions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and other major religions.	Create a basis for respectful dialogue and work together to find shared values for peace.
Recognition of Islam (Article 3)	The Catholic Church emphasises the similarities of faith with Islam, such as worshipping the One God, honouring Jesus and Mary, and the Abrahamic tradition.	Encourage peaceful dialogue and cooperation between Catholics and Muslims, especially in building mutual understanding and tolerance.
Rejection of Discrimination and Intolerance (Article 5)	<i>Nostra Aetate</i> rejects any form of discrimination based on religion, race or ethnicity as incompatible with the Christian spirit.	Promote peaceful coexistence without discrimination, especially in religiously diverse societies.
Dialogue and Collaboration for Peace (Articles 2 & 5)	The church calls for interfaith dialogue and interfaith collaboration to confront global social challenges, such as injustice and conflict.	Encourage Catholics and other religions to work together for social justice and world peace.

Table 1. Foundations of Interreligious Tolerance in *Nostra Aetate*
 Source: Author's own

The table illustrates the key points of the doctrine of *Nostra Aetate* that underlie the principles of interreligious tolerance in Catholic teaching. First, it emphasises the unity of humanity's origin, encouraging Catholics to see others as brothers and sisters regardless of religious or ethnic differences. Next, respect for the truth in other religions creates the basis for respectful dialogue and cooperation for peace. Recognition of the faith's similarities with Islam, such as in the recognition of the One God and the Abrahamic tradition, strengthens the potential for peaceful dialogue between all Christians and especially Roman Catholics and Muslims. Moreover, rejecting discrimination and intolerance demonstrates a commitment to peaceful coexistence in a diverse society. Finally, the call for dialogue and collaboration for peace shows that the Roman Catholic Church encourages interfaith cooperation in facing global social challenges, affirming the importance of joint efforts for justice and peace.

In Islam, the concepts of mercy (compassion) and justice are central to the teachings of God and form an essential basis for mutual respect among religious communities. Mercy is the primary attribute of God, emphasised in the Quran and Sunnah, which form the identity of Islam. Muslims are encouraged to embody compassion, cultivating love and benevolence in their interactions with others (Malik, 2024). Justice is a fundamental aspect of Islamic law, emphasising fairness, equality and rights protection (Ibrahim & Amin, 2024). These concepts of mercy and justice are not limited to the relationship between God and His servants. However, they should also be reflected in human relations within the Muslim community and with adherents of other religions. In interfaith interaction, mercy encourages people to understand and appreciate differences and create a harmonious environment amid diversity. In addition, justice encourages people to uphold the rights of every individual without discrimination, provide protection to the weak, and contribute to social welfare.



Points	Description
God's Compassion	Allah as Ar-Rahman and Ar-Rahim shows His compassionate and understanding nature towards His creation (QS. Al-Fatiha: 1-7).
Justice in Law	The importance of justice in every aspect of life, including law and decision-making (QS. An-Nisa: 135).
The Importance of Mutual Respect	Encourage mutual respect between fellow Muslims and adherents of other religions, and avoid hostility (QS. Al-Hujurat: 13).
Protection of the Weak	A call to protect the marginalised, such as orphans, widows and the poor (QS. Al-Baqarah: 177).
Dialogue and Cooperation	Inviting people to dialogue and work together in goodness and piety (QS. Al-Ma'idah: 2).
Forgiveness and Reconciliation	Encouraging forgiveness and seeking peace as a value of compassion in social relations (QS. Al-A'raf: 199).

Table 2. Values of Mercy and Justice in the Qur'an
 Source: Author

This table emphasises the Qur'an's values of mercy and justice as the ethical and moral foundation of society. Allah, as Ar-Rahman and Ar-Rahim, shows His compassion (QS. Al-Fatiha: 1-7), while justice in law and decision-making is a crucial principle (QS. An-Nisa: 135). The importance of mutual respect between religious communities (QS. Al-Hujurat: 13) and protecting the weak, such as orphans (QS. Al-Baqarah: 177), creates social harmony. In addition, dialogue and cooperation in goodness (QS. (Al-Ma'idah: 2) as well as forgiveness and reconciliation (QS. Al-A'raf: 199) are vital to creating peace. This table reflects the Qur'anic teachings that encourage a life of love, justice and mutual respect.

Several Catholic and Muslim leaders have emphasised the importance of dialogue and cooperation between people. Through their thoughts and actions, these figures have contributed significantly to strengthening tolerance in society. The thoughts of religious figures, such as Pope Francis and Kiai Haji Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), emphasise the importance of dialogue and cooperation between people as the foundation for creating tolerance in society. Pope Francis encourages creating a culture of interfaith encounters, emphasising that all religions have a role in promoting peace and love in the world. On the other hand, Gus Dur, as a moderate Islamic figure in Indonesia, strongly supported mutual respect and celebrated religious diversity as a wealth, not a source of division. Gus Dur emphasised the importance of pluralism in education, advocating for a curriculum that encourages understanding and respect for diverse beliefs (Khoiruddin & Prasetya, 2024). These two figures contributed significantly to strengthening tolerance and harmony in society through their teachings and actions.

A comparison of the values of tolerance in Catholicism and Islam shows fundamental similarities in the two religions' approach to interfaith interaction. In the Catholic tradition, Pope Francis emphasises the importance of love, understanding and dialogue as the core of interfaith relations, encouraging his followers to build bridges rather than walls between different communities. Meanwhile, in Islam, Gus Dur emphasised the teachings of the Qur'an that encourage people to respect and value differences, seeing diversity as a gift from God that enriches life together. This view was central to his leadership, especially during his presidency from 1999 to 2001 (Nasution et al., 2024). Both leaders urged their people to see universal values, such as love and respect,



as the basis for harmonious cooperation. Thus, despite differences in dogma and practice, tolerance in Catholicism and Islam complement each other, creating space for constructive dialogue and the realisation of interfaith harmony.

Aspects	Catholicism (Nostra Aetate and the Bible)	Islam (Qur'an and Hadith)
Grace	Recognising the truth in other religions.	<i>Qur'an</i> : "Dan tiadalah Kami mengutus kamu (Muhammad), melainkan untuk (menjadi) rahmat bagi semesta alam. (QS. Al-Anbiya: 107).
	The <i>Bible</i> : 'For our God is a God of love and mercy, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.' (Psalm 103:8).	
Justice	Dialogue and collaboration to create peace.	<i>Qur'an</i> : 'O you who believe, be ye upholders of justice...' (QS. An-Nisa: 135).
	<i>Alkitab</i> : "Tuhan mencintai keadilan dan tidak meninggalkan orang-orang yang setia kepada-Nya." (Mazmur 37:28).	
Dialogue	The importance of establishing dialogue for mutual understanding.	<i>Hadith</i> : 'The best of men are those who are most beneficial to others.' (HR. Ahmad).
	<i>Bible</i> : 'Be wise in your dealings with outsiders.' (Colossians 4:5).	
The Value of Kindness	The element of goodness in every religion.	<i>Qur'an</i> : 'Verily, those who believe, the Jews, the Shabi'in, and the Christians, whosoever of them truly believes in Allah and the Last Day and does righteous deeds, there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve.' (QS. Al-Maidah: 69).
	<i>Bible</i> : 'But everyone who loves is of God and knows God.' (1 John 4:7).	

Table 3. Comparison of Tolerance Values in Catholicism and Islam
 Source: Author's own

The table shows fundamental similarities in the approaches of these two religious traditions despite differences in dogma and practice. Regarding grace, Catholicism recognises the truth in other religions by emphasising God's love and mercy, while Islam states that the Prophet Muhammad was sent as a mercy to all nature. Justice is a fundamental value, with Catholicism encouraging dialogue and collaboration for peace, while Islam teaches people to be upholders of justice. Dialogue is also emphasised as a means of mutual understanding, with both traditions underlining the importance of positive interactions between people. Finally, both recognise the element of goodness in every religion, with Catholicism asserting that people of different religions who have faith and good deeds have nothing to worry about, and Islam stating that anyone who loves is from God. Thus, the values of tolerance in Catholicism and Islam are complementary, creating a foundation for constructive dialogue and interfaith cooperation in a pluralistic society.

Practices of Dialogue and Cooperation Between Catholic and Muslim Communities in Indonesia

Prior to the visit of Pope Francis in 2024, the Catholic and Muslim communities in Indonesia had undertaken various dialogue initiatives to strengthen interfaith relations. One example is the interfaith forums held in various regions, including Jakarta and Yogyakarta. In these forums, leaders of both communities discuss social and humanitarian issues, such as tolerance, education, and social justice. Interfaith dialogue is crucial in combating intolerance and fostering the spirit of nationalism. In Indonesia, for example, these dialogues help prevent conflicts related to religious differences and strengthen pluralism by instilling the values of tolerance among communities (Artamevia et al., 2023). Interfaith dialogue also plays a vital role in international



diplomacy, facilitating cooperation between countries and reducing religious tensions. Successful peace agreements often stem from such dialogues, highlighting their importance in a global context (Siahaya et al., 2023).

Organisations such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama actively engage in interfaith dialogue with Catholic churches, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation. The Catholic community of Sant'Egidio and Muhammadiyah have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that includes mutual commitments to humanitarian aid and the promotion of global peace. This includes projects to support communities affected by disasters and conflicts. This engagement is rooted in theological principles and a commitment to social harmony. Muhammadiyah emphasises universal humanism and mutual recognition, which guides its interactions with other religions, including Catholicism (Baidhaw, 2015). This interfaith cooperation is not only limited to verbal dialogue but also manifests in various social initiatives involving Catholic and Muslim communities. Interfaith dialogue initiatives have proven to counter radicalism and promote tolerance, emphasising the importance of inclusive education that fosters understanding among students of different religions (Isnawati et al., 2020).

Pope Francis' 2024 visit to Indonesia marks a new momentum for dialogue and cooperation between Catholic and Muslim communities. This momentum is expected to create space for meetings and discussions, where the Pope's message of tolerance and unity is particularly relevant in the face of increasingly complex social and humanitarian challenges. Several initiatives, such as seminars and social projects involving both communities, have been planned to deepen this relationship, including joint scholarship programmes offered by Catholic and Muslim educational institutions. However, although progress has been made, challenges still need to be addressed, especially in addressing differences in theological views and socio-political issues that may hinder constructive dialogue. Therefore, sustained efforts are needed to educate the public on tolerance and mutual respect. By taking advantage of this momentum, Catholic and Muslim communities can contribute to building a more inclusive and peaceful society, making interfaith dialogue a shared responsibility to create a more harmonious world.

To achieve this goal, the Catholic and Muslim communities need to continue their close collaboration through education and training programmes that focus on building the capacity of religious leaders and community members. Initiatives such as workshops, seminars and cultural exchanges can provide a platform for mutual learning and experience sharing, strengthening mutual understanding between the two communities. In addition, social media and information technology can also be utilised to disseminate messages of tolerance and unity, reaching an increasingly connected younger generation. By creating spaces for inclusive dialogue and building awareness about the importance of diversity, Catholic and Muslim communities can prevent conflict and contribute significantly to sustainable social development. Through these joint efforts, they can realise a vision of peaceful and harmonious religious life in Indonesia, where differences are celebrated as richness, not as a source of division.

The Role of Pope Francis' Visit in Strengthening Interfaith Tolerance

Pope Francis' visit to Indonesia has played an essential role as a catalyst in strengthening interfaith tolerance in a country of great religious diversity. In addition to its diplomatic dimension, the visit conveys profound theological messages of love, friendship and interfaith cooperation.



Through his speeches and interactions with various religious leaders, Pope Francis emphasised the importance of these values as the basis for building a harmonious religious life. These messages aim to strengthen interfaith relations and create more peaceful and inclusive societies.

One of Pope Francis' key messages that he continues to echo is universal charity. In his meetings with religious leaders in Indonesia, the Pope emphasises that love is a core value in all religions, including Islam and Catholicism. In Islam, God's love is reflected in His concepts of mercy and compassion (Ar-Rahman and Ar-Rahim), while in Catholicism, God's love is manifested in Jesus' teachings on the love of neighbour (Agape). According to the Pope:

“Another beautiful parable of fraternity is a great tapestry of threads of love that crosses the seas, overcomes obstacles, and embraces all differences, making all people one heart and soul.”
(National.kompas.com, 2024).

Pope Francis said that this value of love is the foundation for building respectful relationships between people of different faiths. He emphasised that charity means respecting differences and must be manifested in concrete actions to create harmony and solidarity. In the context of a pluralistic Indonesia, the Pope invited Muslims and Catholics to make love the primary motivation in their daily interactions, both at the religious level and in life as citizens.

Pope Francis also delivered an important message on interfaith friendship as a means to achieve peace and social stability. According to the Pope, this friendship must transcend theological differences and place humanity as the most fundamental meeting point. In his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, the Pope called on all humanity to see each other as 'brothers' and 'friends', regardless of religious background. During his visit, the Pope held meetings with Islamic leaders in Indonesia, including Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah. On this occasion, he emphasised that interfaith friendship is not just passive tolerance but must translate into active cooperation to face global challenges such as poverty, social injustice, and climate change.

In addition to the message of love and friendship, Pope Francis encouraged interfaith cooperation to solve various social problems. In each of his speeches during his visit to Indonesia, Pope Francis emphasised that religions not only play a role in spiritual life but also have a social responsibility to improve the welfare of humanity. In this regard, interreligious dialogue must be translated into concrete actions that benefit society directly. The Pope emphasised that joint projects, such as humanitarian aid, education, and efforts against radicalism, are concrete examples of how religions can collaborate for the common good. In the Indonesian context, where there are challenges related to intolerance and extremism, cooperation between Catholic and Muslim communities, as already initiated by organisations such as Muhammadiyah and Sant'Egidio, is essential to promote religious moderation and prevent conflict.

Pope Francis' visit also opens up opportunities for increased interfaith cooperation in education, where Catholic and Islamic institutions can collaborate to create curricula that teach young people the values of tolerance and togetherness. Interfaith education that emphasises understanding differences and appreciating diversity is one of the long-term solutions to creating a more inclusive and peaceful society. Pope Francis' visit to Indonesia strengthened diplomatic relations between Indonesia and the Vatican and significantly strengthened interfaith tolerance. The Pope's messages of love, friendship, and interfaith cooperation provide a strong foundation for building harmonious relationships among followers of different religions. In the context of a pluralistic



Indonesia, these values are essential for facing social challenges, preventing conflict, and promoting sustainable peace and harmony.

Conclusion

Pope Francis' visit to Indonesia has significantly reinforced the Catholic Church's teaching on the importance of interfaith dialogue, especially in the context of relations between Catholic and Muslim communities. In the teachings of the Church, interfaith dialogue is not only a means to understand other faiths but also part of the mission of evangelisation to create world peace and promote needed harmony. Through the document *Nostra Aetate*, the Church acknowledges that all religions contain elements of truth and goodness, and therefore, interfaith dialogue becomes a moral obligation to promote love, brotherhood and mutual understanding. Pope Francis' visit to Indonesia emphasised the importance of these principles, especially in a country with the largest Muslim population in the world. In various speeches and interactions during his visit, the Pope emphasised that love and respect for human dignity are universal values that must be embraced not only by Catholics but also by all religious communities, including Islam. This message provides a solid theological foundation for strengthening interfaith relations and building bridges between religious communities in Indonesia.

Pope Francis' theological message of love, respect for human dignity, and interfaith brotherhood is highly relevant to creating a harmonious religious life in Indonesia. Indonesia faces challenges maintaining interfaith harmony as a country with complex religious diversity. The Pope's visit affirms the Church's commitment to peace through interfaith dialogue and cooperation. The love the Pope emphasises goes beyond passive tolerance, inviting religious people to embrace each other and work together to face social challenges such as poverty, injustice and radicalism. Inclusive interfaith dialogue is expected to be the foundation of close relations between Catholics and Muslims in creating peace. This message is relevant for interfaith relations and sustainable social development, promoting moderation and harmony in Indonesia and globally. This visit will hopefully encourage closer cooperation for a peaceful and inclusive life for all peoples.

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Conflict of Interest Statement: *The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.*



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