

Filsafat, Etika, dan Kearifan Lokal untuk Konstruksi Moral Kebangsaan

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Siti Syamsiyatun / Nihayatul Wafiroh:

Filsafat, Etika, dan Kearifan Lokal untuk Konstruksi Moral Kebangsaan

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Towards a Theology of Forgiveness: An Indonesian Catholic Perspective on Responding to Interreligious Conflicts [Filsafat, Etika, dan Kearifan Lokal untuk Konstruksi Moral Kebangsaan]

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TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF FORGIVENESS: AN INDONESIAN CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE ON RESPONDING TO INTERRELIGIOUS CONFLICTS

B. Agus Rukiyanto

“Do not judge, and you will not be judged.
Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned.
Forgive, and you will be forgiven.” (Luke 6:37)

Abstract

Pope Benedict XVI's lecture in Regensburg University on 12 September 2006, in which he quoted a fourteenth-century Byzantine emperor, Manuel II Paleologos, who criticised some teachings of the Prophet Muhammad as “evil and inhuman”, provoked outrage in the Muslim world and led to the demand for an unequivocal apology from the Pope. The Pope made a statement of regret, welcomed by some Muslim groups, but failed to end the anger. Violence continued to spread all over the world. Julius Cardinal Darmaatmadja, SJ, then President of the Indonesian Bishops' Conference (IBC), took an initiative to apologise to Muslims for Benedict XVI's remark. He asked for forgiveness from those who were offended and hurt. By his action, Cardinal Darmaatmadja showed that offering and accepting an apology is very important in human interactions. By making an apology, reconciliation can be achieved and broken rela-

tionships restored. Forgiveness is God's free gift but also our responsibility in a broken and sinful world. Cardinal Darmaatmadja embodied the local church's approach, which was appropriate and can become a lesson for us in developing the virtue of mutual forgiveness and realising a world of peace and harmony.

Keywords apology, forgiveness, reconciliation, harmony, interreligious dialogue, theology of forgiveness

Introduction

Interreligious dialogue is very important in Indonesia, where many religions and beliefs exist. Interreligious conflicts are still liable to happen because of political, social, economical or cultural factors. In this situation, it is an urgent to create an atmosphere of mutual acceptance and understanding. To be able to accept and understand others, especially during times of conflict, we need to develop the virtue of forgiving others.

In this paper, I offer a reflection on how we need to develop a theology of forgiveness as a new way of being church in Indonesia. I provide an analysis of what happened in Indonesia after Pope Benedict XVI gave a lecture at Regensburg University on 12 September 2006. This lecture provoked many reactions from the Muslim world. In my analysis, I compare and contrast the Pope's response to the Islamic reactions with the response of the Indonesian Church, represented by Julius Cardinal Darmaatmadja, SJ. In conclusion, I offer a theological reflection on this issue in the form of a theology of forgiveness.

An Inculturated Church Is a Humble Church

In recent years, the Roman Catholic Church in Indonesia has articulated an inculturated theology that is characterised as a "theology of harmony". This contextual theology is based on the concept of harmony found in the Indonesian motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (unity in diversity)

and the state ideology *Pancasila*.¹ Indonesian bishops and theologians have endeavoured to integrate this concept of harmony into their teachings and theologies. Frequently, Indonesian bishops refer to Indonesian society as a society based on *Pancasila*, addressing all Indonesian people, not only Catholics, and affirming that Indonesian society is united despite cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity.

Maintaining harmony in society is very important for Indonesian culture. This fact must be understood to comprehend why Julius Cardinal Darmaatmadja, SJ, the Archbishop of Jakarta, acted as he did in response of tensions that arose after the incident at Regensburg University. In the following pages, I compare and contrast how Pope Benedict XVI and Cardinal Darmaatmadja responded to the reactions of the Muslims around the world. In examining their approaches, I hope to illustrate the differences between two ways of proceeding as church leaders and the interactive dynamics of faith and culture.

The Incident

On 12 September 2006, Pope Benedict XVI gave a lecture at Regensburg University. During the lecture, he used a quotation from a fourteenth-Century Byzantine emperor, Manuel II Paleologos, which criticised some teachings of the Prophet Muhammad as “evil and inhuman” – such as commanding to spread Islam by violence (*news.bbc.co.uk*; *www.cnn.com*; *www.cathnews.com*). This speech provoked outrage in the Muslim world and led to the demand for an unequivocal apology from the Pope.

Following the protests that took place in many countries in reaction to his speech, Benedict XVI said several times that he regretted the of-

¹ *Pancasila* (pronounced *Panchaseelah*) is the foundation for social life in Indonesia and includes five inseparable and mutually qualifying fundamental principles: (1) belief in one supreme God, (2) a just and civilised humanity, (3) the unity of Indonesia, (4) democracy through deliberation and consensus among representatives, and (5) social justice for all people of Indonesia.

fence caused. On 17 September 2006, Benedict XVI once again expressed his regret in front of pilgrims at Castel Gandolfo: "I am deeply sorry for the reactions in some countries to a few passages of my address at the University of Regensburg, which were considered offensive to the sensibility of Muslims" (*news.bbc.co.uk*). He said that the medieval text he quoted did not reflect his personal opinion, explaining that the speech was an invitation to frank and sincere dialogue with mutual respect.

That statement of regret was welcomed by some Muslim groups but failed to end the anger. Violence continued with the killing of an Italian nun, Sr. Leonella Sgorbati, in Somalia, the killing of Fr. Boulos Iskander, a priest from the Syriac Orthodox Church of the Virgin Mary, whose beheaded and dismembered body was found in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, and the firebombing of several churches in the Middle East. In Iraq, Benedict XVI's speech brought a new level of threat to an already shrinking Christian population (*www.irinnews.org*). There were also further protests in Gaza, Indonesia and Iran.

On 25 September, Benedict XVI invited ambassadors from Muslim nations to the Vatican in an attempt to defuse tension between Muslims and Catholics. During the meeting Benedict XVI expressed his "esteem and profound respect" for Muslims and his wish to continue establishing bridges of friendship with the adherents of all religions. He showed particular appreciation for the growth of dialogue between Muslims and Christians (*news.bbc.co.uk*).

In Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim nation, many protests against Benedict XVI's speech were staged in front of the Vatican Embassy (*www.detiknews.com*; *The Jakarta Post*; *Kompas*, 18 September 2006). The rallies were led by the *Front Pembela Islam* (FPI, Islamic Defenders Front).

Mohammad Machsumi Saloko, the leader of the FPI, said that the Pope only regretted what occurred subsequent to his address but had not apologised for what he said. The demonstrators therefore asked Benedict

XVI to apologise *directly* to Muslims for offending their religious sensibilities.

The government and religious leaders of Indonesia, however, called on the Indonesian people to be calm and to maintain harmony between the adherents of the various religions.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono commented that Benedict XVI's remarks were inappropriate and disturbing and did not contribute to efforts to promote dialogue among religions and cultures. However, he asked the Indonesian people, especially the Muslims, to preserve a sense of unity among the Indonesian people, including harmony between Muslims and Christians.

The House Speaker, Hidayat Nurwahid, also called on Indonesian Muslims not to be provoked by Benedict XVI's address and to maintain harmony with other believers.

Din Syamsuddin, the chair of *Muhammadiyah*, Indonesia's second largest Muslim organisation, asked Indonesian Muslims to accept Benedict XVI's "words of regret" and forgive him. He urged all religious leaders to help develop interfaith harmony on the basis of mutual respect and understanding. He called the incident a sign that genuine interreligious dialogue is not yet a reality. More work needed to be done to accomplish this end.

Similarly, Hasyim Muzadi, the chair of *Nahdlatul Ulama*, the largest Muslim organisation in Indonesia, called on Indonesian Muslims to accept Benedict XVI's "words of regret", saying that it was "an obligation" according to Islamic teachings (*The Jakarta Post*, 19 September 2006).

Muzadi said this at a conference for religious leaders on September 18, 2006 at the *Nahdlatul Ulama* office, Jakarta. On the same occasion Julius Cardinal Darmaatmadja, SJ, then President of the Indonesian Bishops' Conference (IBC), apologised (*mintam maaf* in Indonesian) to

Muslims for Benedict XVI's remarks that had offended the Muslims (*Kompas*, 19 September 2006).

It is important to note that *maaf* in Indonesian has a different nuance from the English word *apology*. *Apology*, derived from the Greek word *απολογία*, means “a written or spoken expression of one's regret, remorse, or sorrow for having insulted, failed, injured, or wronged another” (*dictionary.reference.com*).² *Maaf* is derived from the Arabic word *ayn-fa-wau*, which literally means “to erase”, and refers to “asking for forgiveness”.

Cardinal Darmaatmadja was not just expressing regret for the incident, as Benedict XVI had already done in public. He was asking for forgiveness from the Muslims for the Pope's remarks. Although Cardinal Darmaatmadja believed that what the Pope quoted was not what he personally meant, in fact the address had offended and angered the Muslims. Therefore Cardinal Darmaatmadja asked for forgiveness from those who were offended and hurt. He affirmed that religious leaders should exemplify tolerance by respecting the adherents of other religions and not offend them.

The IBC also made a formal statement of apology to Muslims. It said that the church shared the concerns of Muslims, who thought their Prophet was belittled and that God was blasphemed.

The Indonesian bishops hoped that the incident had not damaged religious harmony in Indonesia, and that the very act of forgiving each other would become the basis for better dialogue in the future. The incident revealed an important lesson: religious leaders must be thoughtful and responsible in their references to the religious traditions of others.

The IBC thanked the Indonesian government and Muslim leaders for their many efforts to keep the society calm. They also expressed grati-

² It can also mean “a defense, excuse, or justification in speech or writing, as for a cause or doctrine”.

tude to the leaders of Muslim countries who had accepted Benedict XVI's "words of regret".

Some Analysis

Cardinal Darmaatmadja's attitude can be analysed from several points of view: Ignatian spirituality, Javanese culture, and Indonesian Muslim culture. First, as a Jesuit, he expressed a spirituality of humility. In the *Spiritual Exercises* (SE) Ignatius teaches all of his followers to imitate Christ in humility (Fleming, 1996). The desire to be humble, as the grace of a greater love, is expressed in the Triple Colloquy to Mary, Jesus and God the Father (SE 147) (Ivens, 1998: 127). Furthermore, Ignatius invites his followers to have the third kind of humility, which is the most perfect humility, compared to the two other kinds: to imitate Christ in poverty and in humiliation (SE 165-168). In apostolic work, humility means being "willing to work with others: with Christians, men of other religious faiths, and all men of good will; willing to play a subordinate, supporting, anonymous role; and willing to learn how to serve from those we seek to serve" (Ganss, 1977:106). Cardinal Darmaatmadja applied this spirituality in his apology to Muslims.

Second, as a Javanese, Cardinal Darmaatmadja applied the principle of conflict avoidance. In Javanese culture, the goal of this principle is "the establishment and maintenance of social harmony", known as *rukun* for Javanese (Magnis-Suseno, 1997: 42-61). *Rukun* is the condition in which all parties find themselves at peace with each other. It is marked by cooperation, mutual acceptance, calm and unity. It is an ideal that Javanese desire in all relationships, in the family, in the neighbourhood, and in the entire society. It requires the continual efforts of all individuals to interact peacefully with each other, along with the commitment to remove and resist potentially divisive and dissonant elements. Therefore all outbreaks of conflict must be avoided in order to maintain social peace and unity.

The *rukun* principle requires personal interests to be set aside and, if necessary, renounced in order to reach an understanding. Opposing interests, which inevitably occur in social groups, are resolved by traditional bargaining techniques – compromising the interests of all parties to seek a solution to which all parties can agree (*mufakat*, i.e. an agreement as a result of *musyawarah*, a process of deliberation, of give-and-take and compromise, in which all opinions should be respected and any decision is made by unanimity) – that are integrated into the existing social order, so that conflict will not lead to a total breakdown in communication or full-scale confrontation (Magnis-Suseno, 1997: 54-55).

Conflicts usually erupt because of emotions and convictions linked to individual and communal interests. Therefore Javanese society has developed norms of conduct to prevent the development of conflict from engendering disruptive emotions. Each one is required to act in a prudent and controlled manner. Each one must take into account everyone's reactions and act so that no clash, conflict, or confrontation can follow. Each one is expected to speak in a calm, emotionless voice. It is particularly important to behave carefully where opposing interests are present.

In the light of this world view, it is clear that Cardinal Darmaatmadja applied the *rukun* principle, the principle of avoiding a conflict. Islamic fundamentalist groups were angry because of Benedict XVI's remarks. This could lead to conflict between Christians and Muslims. To avoid this conflict, it was appropriate and wise that Cardinal Darmaatmadja made an apology to the Muslims. The stand he took was respected. Indonesian Muslim leaders accepted his apology and called on Muslims to forgive and move on. This meant that they left behind the offence and hurt elicited by Benedict XVI's remarks.

Third, it is important to note that apologising is common in Indonesian Muslim culture. This posture is not found in the same way in other Muslim countries. After *Ramadan* (the Islamic holy month of fasting), the people celebrate *Eid al-Fitr* by visiting family, relatives, and friends,

asking forgiveness of one another. This custom has become a national custom, practiced not only by Muslims, but by all Indonesian people. In fact this custom is rooted in an old Javanese custom of *sungkem* (offering respect on bended knees) to older people, asking for forgiveness for all one's faults. The Regensburg incident happened right before *Ramadan* began. Therefore it was a noteworthy time for Cardinal Darmaatmadja to make an apology to Muslims as they anticipated the beginning of *Ramadan*.

The Regensburg incident demonstrated the power of the media to shape world opinion. Pope Benedict XVI as the leader of the Catholic Church lacked the necessary awareness to recognise that whatever he says on any occasion is not restricted to that event, but is universalised by the media as the opinion as the leader of the Roman Catholic Church. Care must be exercised when giving a speech, writing, or quoting any source, especially when it might not reflect his own opinion.

Some analysts suggested that Benedict XVI might have been criticising Islamic fundamentalists and their use of violence, as well as censuring some Muslim countries where there is no religious freedom for people of other religions. If this was the case, Benedict XVI was making a generalisation about Islam without acknowledging that there are many Muslim groups, many of which are moderate and tolerant of other religions. Therefore, it was unwise to make such a generalisation about Islam. Moreover, in explaining the use of violence in religious history, Benedict XVI could have given examples of violence in Christian history, so as to avoid accusing only one religion, Islam, of spreading the faith by violent means.

What can be learned from comparing the responses of Pope Benedict XVI and Cardinal Darmaatmadja to the Regensburg incident? Benedict XVI was deeply sorry because of the offence caused by his address but did not apologise for the remarks themselves. Cardinal Darmaatmadja apologised for speech because it had offended and angered the Muslims.

In western culture, people will apologise only if they make a mistake. In Indonesia, especially in the Javanese culture, people will apologise even if they do not make any mistake but hurt other people unintentionally.

Cardinal Darmaatmadja used the following story as an example of such behaviour: In a crowded train, when someone steps on another person's foot, spontaneously he or she will apologise, even though the stepping was not deliberate. Asking forgiveness in Javanese culture does not necessarily mean that someone has made a mistake, has done something morally wrong, or acknowledges that some action is wrong. It is concerned with the observable surface of social relationships. It does not deal with subjective intention, but with the attainment of outward harmony within society (Magnis-Suseno, 1997: 43-44).

Thus, the Muslims demanded an apology of Pope Benedict XVI, and it would have been enough for them if the Pope had apologised. They did not need any explanation. The forgiveness for which Cardinal Darmaatmadja asked and the apology that he offered to Indonesian Muslims, on behalf of the Pope and as the leader of the Indonesian Catholic Church, were actions taken to maintain harmony in society. Cardinal Darmaatmadja embodied the local church's approach, an inculturated way of proceeding. These actions were gestures of faith interacting with culture that was different from the approach of the Vatican, in which Pope Benedict XVI did not apologise for offending the Muslims but only expressed regret for the reactions to his speech.

Having provided a brief analysis of the responses by Pope Benedict XVI and Cardinal Darmaatmadja to the Islamic reactions to the incident at Regensburg University, I will now offer a brief theological reflection on this case study.

Towards a Theology of Forgiveness

By his actions, Cardinal Darmaatmadja showed that offering and accepting an apology is very important in human interactions. Apology has

“the power to heal humiliations and grudges, remove the desire for vengeance, and generate forgiveness on the part of the offended parties” (Lazare, 2004: 1). For the offender, an apology can relieve the guilt he or she has engendered. Therefore it is important that the offender acknowledges the offence. Sometimes the offence must be clarified, especially in public apologies, to avoid conflicting interpretations and destructive consequences (Lazare, 2004: 75-77). By making an apology, reconciliation can be achieved and broken relationships can be restored.

An important model of apology was exemplified by Pope John Paul II, accompanied by seven curial officials, during a special Mass of Pardon on Sunday, 12 March 2000, when they asked God’s forgiveness for the sins of injustice committed by Catholics throughout the ages: for the murderous excesses of the Crusades and the Inquisition, for divisions among Christians, for discrimination against Jews, for forced conversions, for wrongs committed against immigrants, gypsies and the weak, for injuring the dignity of women and the unity of humankind, and for sins against fundamental human rights, including abortion and fetal experimentation (Coppa, 2006: 281-82; *Catholic Insight*, May 2000: 10).

In his homily, John Paul II said: “We humbly ask forgiveness for the part which each of us has had in these evils by our own actions, thus helping to disfigure the face of the Church. At the same time, as we confess our sins, *let us forgive the sins committed by others against us*” (www.vatican.va). The papal apology was very appropriate, as it was delivered at the beginning of the new millennium, a Jubilee Year, a year when in ancient Israel reconciliation occurred, slaves were freed, and wrongs were righted. Many non-Catholic Christians and other spiritual leaders throughout the world applauded John Paul II’s attempt to restore healing and unity. The apology was a powerful sign of church leaders humbling themselves, following the example of Christ.

Pope John Paul II, however, apologised only for individual persons or groups, not for the church as institution. Yet when someone makes a

mistake, the whole body he or she belongs to will be affected (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1443-48, 1469). Since Vatican II, the church has developed an understanding that, like all sacraments, the sacrament of reconciliation has a fundamental community dimension (Mick, 2006: 65-66). Someone who sins needs to confess to a priest as representative of Christ and the church community, because sin and reconciliation involve the church as well. Reconciliation with the church community is the sacramental sign of reconciliation with God. Conversion or spiritual growth is not only a private matter between God and the individual but has a community dimension. Conversion and spiritual growth will lead people to a deeper relationship with the church. Conversion is a “conversion to a fuller life in the community of the church” (Mick, 2006: 68).

Cardinal Darmaatmadja not only apologised for Pope Benedict XVI’s remarks. As the leader of the Indonesian church, he apologised to Islamic communities for the whole church, which was implicated in the Pope’s remarks. Thus, it is important to recognise that the individual is part of the church, part of the whole body, the body of Christ. To forgive and to ask for forgiveness, then, needs to include the whole body of which someone is a part. In my opinion, the church needs to continue the process John Paul II initiated, asking for forgiveness whenever the church makes a mistake by commission or omission. Cultivating such an attitude requires church leaders to act humbly and to acknowledge mistakes that are the cause for others’ suffering. By seeking forgiveness, the church responds to suffering incurred by an individual or a group at the hands of the members of the church (Studzinski, 1986: 15-16).

Forgiveness is essential to Christian life. In the process of forgiveness, receiving forgiveness is the starting point for a spirituality of forgiveness (Peters, 1986: 5). In the Lord’s Prayer (Mt 6:9-13; Lk 11:2-4), receiving forgiveness from God comes before the prayer to be able to grant forgiveness to others. However, it is not easy to receive for-

giveness in human relationships, because it means “the recognition of a forgiver as superior and thus the creation of dependence” (Peters, 1986: 8). Once people accept forgiveness, they can move on. They can forgive others or themselves. The ability to forgive others or oneself is a sign of a mature personality (Studzinski, 1986: 13).

There is goodwill in the process of forgiveness: the forgiver wants the other to become a good person. Thus, “the experience of forgiveness opens up the way towards friendship, towards goodwill, towards co-operation” (Peters, 8). It confirms that “we are not redundant, that we have the possibility of being, that we are not just tolerated” (Peters, 1986: 8). Even more important is the fact that in the experience of forgiveness, “someone comes to the discovery that he or she is not himself or herself the source of his or her life, that his or her life is given.” In forgiveness, this “givenness of life is affirmed and an individual autonomy is affirmed” (Peters, 1986: 9).

Forgiveness is needed to rebuild our relationship with God and with one another. In his reflection on the petition of forgiveness in the Lord’s Prayer, Leonardo Boff writes: “Finally, as with the previous petition of the Lord’s Prayer, we see that this one also has a *social* dimension. We see ourselves as a community of sinners; we are indebted to God and indebted to our fellow humans. The bread for our communal life is forgiveness and a reciprocal demonstration of mercy; if this is lacking, broken ties cannot be repaired. God’s forgiveness reestablishes vertical communion with the Most High; forgiving those who have offended us reestablishes our horizontal communion. The reconciled world begins to flourish, the kingdom is inaugurated, and we begin to live under the rainbow of divine mercy” (Boff, 1983: 95-96).

The biblical foundation for a theology of forgiveness is the forgiveness of God, which is realised in Jesus (Duquoc, 1986: 36-37, 43; Rubio, 1986: 84). In the healing of a paralytic (Mk 2:1-13), Jesus says, “My son, your sins are forgiven”. Some of the scribes begin to murmur,

“Why does this man speak thus? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” Jesus renounces the restriction that God cannot share or delegate the power to forgive. Jesus wants to indicate that “the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” Therefore, there are “testimonies of this transcendent forgiveness in this world” (Duquoc, 1986: 37).

In the story of the woman taken in adultery (Jn 8:1-12), Jesus wants to break the circle of violence. The fact that everyone goes away when Jesus says, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her” indicates that “their sin provokes them to a practical mercy that their purity would have forbidden” (Duquoc, 1986: 37). The law does not require everyone to be sinless before it can bear fruit. The forgiveness given to this woman breaks the circle of violence.

In the crucifixion above all, Jesus breaks this circle of violence. As a victim Jesus begs God to forgive his executioners (Lk 23:34) and finishes his mission in absolute confidence in God (Lk 23:46).

According to the gospel of Luke, by dying on the cross without protest, Jesus breaks the circle of violence and initiates the only true way to life. God’s response to Jesus is evident in the resurrection: God raised him from the dead and confirmed his way as *the only way* for humanity to be delivered from death unto life (Duquoc, 1986: 37-38; Elizondo, 1986:74). Mercy and forgiveness are the only way to put an end to the spread of sin and violence. Forgiveness breaks a system of justice thought of in terms of equivalence. As Jesus says, “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth’. But I say to you, do not resist him who is evil. But if any one strikes you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if anyone would sue you and take away your coat, let him have your cloak as well; and if any one forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to him who asks you, and do not turn away him who desires to borrow from you” (Mt 5: 38-42).

Here Jesus does not say that we do not need to fight against evil, but he shows that “equivalence in evil, even in the name of justice, does not transform human society” (Duquoc, 1986: 40). Forgiveness is not the approval of sin, nor does it tolerate evil; but it overcomes evil (cf. Rom 12:21; Lk 6:34-35). Forgiveness calls for a change of attitude on the part of the offender, who enters into a new relationship with the person who forgives. This is what we call conversion. Thus, the forgiveness of God is the proclamation of the reign of God, which comes about by conversion and not by substituting power for power (Duquoc, 1986: 42-44; Soares-Prabhu, 1986: 63-64).

George Soares-Prabhu provides further insight into the Lord’s Prayer by observing that we are capable of forgiving because of our experience of God’s forgiveness. He said, “All forgiveness, like all love, of which it is a particular form, originates from God, who has loved and forgiven us first (1 John 4:7, 21; Luke 7:47; Matt 18:23-35). When we love (and forgive) our neighbour, God’s love (and forgiveness) is made perfect in us (1 John 4:12)” (Soares-Prabhu, 1986:60). Forgiving the neighbour in response to God’s forgiveness will create new possibilities for forgiveness, making the “movement a spiral of forgiveness”. Thus, human forgiveness is “both a consequence of our being forgiven by God and (at a second level) a condition for it” (Soares-Prabhu, 1986:60).

Our relationships with God are mediated through our relationships with our neighbours. We love God by loving our neighbours (Mk 12:28-34). History is the locus of our encounter with God. We seek reconciliation with God when we have been reconciled with those whom we have injured, whether intentionally or *unintentionally* (cf. Mt 5: 23-24; Mk 11: 25). Forgiveness comprises both a readiness to forgive those who have injured us and a readiness to seek pardon from those we have injured. Both are necessary for genuine forgiveness. By asking for and accepting forgiveness from our neighbours, we allow ourselves to experi-

ence God's forgiveness, acknowledging our own sinfulness (Soares-Prabhu, 1986:61).

Failing to ask for forgiveness from those we have offended can engender anger. The price of this failure is sometimes too high, as happened after the Regensburg incident: the killing of innocent people (Sr. Leonella Sgorbati and Fr. Boulos Iskander), the firebombing of churches, and the threats to a lot of Christians in many countries. Therefore, it is important to ask for forgiveness and to be reconciled with those whom we have injured, even if unintentionally. We are responsible for innocent people who suffer because of our sins or failures. It is important that we should not let our sins or failures make innocent people become victims.

We have a capacity to forgive others only when we have learned to forgive ourselves. We need to cultivate a non-judgmental attitude towards ourselves and others, as we find in Luke 6:36-38: "Therefore be merciful, even as your Father is also merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you." Jesus invites us not to judge others, because we cannot read their hearts. Only God knows the heart where the ethical quality of an action is determined (cf. Mk 7:14-23) (Soares-Prabhu, 1986: 61-63). Even if we come to some judgments that may be accurate, we need to develop a willingness to let go of those judgments to come to a place of reconciliation.

Forgiveness is part of the church's participation in the mission of God, called a "ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor 5:18) (Rubio, 1986: 91; Schreiter, 2004, 53). In the Catholic Church, this ministry finds a special place in the sacrament of reconciliation, although baptism and eucharist are sources of reconciliation as well. The goal of God's mission is to build up the reign of God (Amaladoss, 2002: 228-29). The church as a servant of the reign of God has a responsibility to promote reconciliation

and to restore harmony among people and nations. Thus, forgiveness as a way to attain universal reconciliation and harmony is a very significant task of the church for the realisation of the reign of God (Amaladoss, 2002: 231). In this paper, I have examined the approach taken by Cardinal Darmaatmadja in relation to this task of the church, asking for forgiveness from Indonesian Muslims to attain reconciliation between Christians and Muslims and maintain harmony in Indonesia.

Conclusion

The church by its nature must exemplify humility, acknowledging its past sins of commission and omission and other failures in carrying out the mission of God, and being aware that sometimes it continues to make mistakes, to sin and to fail. Asking for and accepting forgiveness is part of the church's participation in God's mission in bringing reconciliation with God and with one another. Forgiveness is God's free gift but also a permanent Christian responsibility in a broken and sinful world (Rubio, 1986: 86).

The spiritual attitude of forgiveness must be in following Christ in his humility to bring reconciliation with God and with one another. Consequently, we need humble leaders who can exemplify Christ in their lives. The example of Cardinal Darmaatmadja who asked for forgiveness to Muslim communities in order to maintain harmony in society was a very significant gesture of inculturating the faith in the Indonesian context. Cardinal Darmaatmadja embodied the local church's approach, which, in my opinion, was appropriate and can become a lesson for us in how the church and its leaders need to develop such an attitude in bringing God's mission in this world. Church leaders need to set aside their pride and begin to learn how to be humble, imitating Christ's humility.

Furthermore, Cardinal Darmaatmadja's example was noteworthy because of the fragility of relationships between Christians and Muslims in

Indonesia after religious conflicts in Ambon (Maluku), Poso (Central Sulawesi), and other parts of the country. The Cardinal's efforts exemplified how the theology of harmony was concretised in Indonesia, so that people can live in harmony. Living in harmony as children of God is a value of the reign of God that needs to be fostered and promoted to realise God's mission in this divided world.

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