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Portrait of Pastoral Care of Factory Employees in the Industrial Area of the Church of Saint Stanislaus, Girisonta Parish

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Abstract

The Parish of Saint Stanislaus Girisonta, situated in Semarang Regency, is surrounded by numerous industrial factories, attracting a significant number of Catholic migrant workers. However, the Church lacks comprehensive data on these migrants and has not yet developed a dedicated pastoral program to address their spiritual needs. This study examines the current state of pastoral care for factory employees in Girisonta Parish, explores their expectations for spiritual support, and evaluates the implementation of relevant pastoral initiatives. Using a qualitative research approach, data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings reveal that while pastoral care in Girisonta Parish is generally well-structured, it has not been specifically adapted to the needs of factory workers and migrants. Employees express the need for more flexible pastoral services, including the formation of a Catholic employee community, Masses outside regular working hours, and spiritual guidance that accommodates their work schedules. Despite the increasing presence of Catholic factory workers, no structured pastoral program currently exists to provide consistent support for them. This study highlights the urgency of establishing targeted pastoral initiatives to foster a stronger spiritual connection among Catholic migrant workers in Girisonta Parish.

Keywords

Pastoral Care, Catholic Migrant Workers, Industrial workers, Spiritual Needs

INTRODUCTION

The Church of Saint Stanislaus, Girisonta Parish is located in Semarang Regency, which is an industrial center and attracts many migrant workers. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency, the industrial sector in Semarang Regency is dominated by laborers/employees at 45.92%, reflecting the high number of workers

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in this area.[1] Data from the congregation of the the Church of Saint Stanislaus, Girisonta Parish as of September 24, 2024, shows that
laborers are the largest occupational group, with a total of 962 people. This figure is much higher than other job categories. The number of private employees at the the Church of Saint Stanislaus, Girisonta Parish consists of 489 men and 473 women who work as factory employees. This reflects that the industrial worker sector is the main choice or source of employment for the majority of individuals recorded in the data.

Many of them work long shifts, so they have limited time to participate in church activities such as mass in the neighborhood, faith deepening, and group prayer. Factory employees who are parishioners can already participate in faith deepening in the neighborhood, such as the National Bible Month (BKSN), Fasting Development Action (APP), and Advent, because they have become part of the local church. In contrast, migrants face greater challenges in accessing pastoral care due to time constraints and lack of information about church activities. They live in boarding houses, rented houses, or employee dormitories, so they are not always connected to the local community. Migrants in a parish are individuals who live in a parish area with the intention of staying for at least three months without any reason to move, or have lived there for three months. Those who come for a specific purpose, such as study or work, obtain quasi-domicile in the parish and are entitled to pastoral care and involvement in church life.

Ecclesiastical Document Series No. 19 Gaudium et Spes emphasizes that the Church has a pastoral responsibility to be actively involved in the problems faced by the people today, including social, economic, and cultural problems.[2] In this context, the Church has an important role in providing pastoral care that is relevant to them. Pastoral care is a service that not only pays attention to the relationship between fellow human beings but also to the relationship between human beings and God, and places God in the relationship between human beings and others. This makes pastoral

[1] Maria Yoana Kurniawati, *Profil Ketenagakerjaan Kabupaten Semarang 2023,* (Semarang: Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Semarang, May 2024), https://semarangkab.bps.go.id/.

[2] S. R. Hardawiryana, *Seri Dokumen Gerejawi No. 19: Gaudium et Spes* (Jakarta: Departemen Dokumentasi dan Penerangan Konferensi Waligereja Indonesia, 1965), https://www.dokpenkwi.org/sdg-19-gaudium-et-spes/.

care a valuable tool through which the Church can serve human needs holistically.[3] In guiding the pastoral care program in each parish, there is a Basic Pastoral Direction (ARDAS) document in the Archdiocese of Semarang (2021-2025). ARDAS aims to show the function of the Church in a particular social context. ARDAS teaches that the Church must adapt to the social and economic changes that occur around it.[4]

The church is expected to engage in acts of love and justice, helping those in need outside the faith community.[5] This shows diakonia. The field of diakonia refers to the church's attention to each member of its congregation in the joys and sorrows faced and felt, so the church also provides attention through comfort and strengthening of true faith in God.[6] Pastoral care in industrial areas such as the Church of Saint Stanislaus, Girisonta Parish must understand the special needs of factory workers and migrants, such as life balance, family problems, and work pressure. If this is carried out according to need, pastoral care becomes more effective and relevant. This shows that pastoral care must be adapted to the local social context.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Qualitative research is research that analyzes and interprets texts and interview results with the aim of finding the meaning of a phenomenon. This means that researchers have data that is obtained and then processed to find the meaning of a phenomenon. Data acquisition can be done to reveal the meaning contained therein.[7] The selection of research subjects was carried out using a purposive sampling technique by considering certain criteria. The criteria for selecting informants were adjusted to the objectives of the study, including the Parish Priest of the Saint Stanislaus Church,

[3] M. M. B. Wokal and N. Anggal, "Kebutuhan Pasien Akan Pelayanan Pastoral Bagi Orang Sakit," *Gaudium Vestrum: Jurnal Kateketik Pastoral* 3, no. 1 (2019): 26–36, https://stkpkbi.ac.id/ojs/index.php/jgv/article/view/88.

[4] Keuskupan Agung Semarang, *Arah Dasar Keuskupan Agung Semarang VIII (2021-2025)* (Semarang: Keuskupan Agung Semarang, 2020), https://kas.or.id/promulgasi-arah-dasar-keuskupan-agung-semarang-2021-2025/.

[5] A. D. Prayitno, H. Hartutik, F. Sugiyana, A. Astuti, and N. Setiyaningtiyas, "Penguatan Kompetensi Para Pendamping Iman Anak Kevikepan Semarang," *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Nian Tana* 2, no. 1 (2024): 171–79, https://doi.org/10.59603/jpmnt.v2i1.326.

[6] A. Y. Gulo and B. K. Putrawan, "Pendampingan Pelayanan Di Tengah Covid-19 Di Gereja Banua Niha Keriso Protestan Pewarta Tangerang," *SERVIRE: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* 3, no. 1 (2023): 15–23, https://doi.org/10.46362/servire.v3i1.127.

[7] Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2017).

Girisonta Parish and the Head of the Community and Brotherhood Division as key informants. In addition, people who work as factory employees as the main informants. In this study, the criteria focused on Catholic employees in the area of the Church of Saint Stanislaus, Girisonta Parish. The study was conducted from October to November 2024. Data collection techniques included literature studies, observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis techniques followed the data reduction scheme, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. To validate the data, source triangulation and time triangulation were used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Description of Pastoral Care for the People and Migrant Employees

Pastoral care at the Church of Saint Stanislaus, Girisonta Parish has been carried out in two main forms, namely sacramental and non-sacramental care. Sacramental care includes the celebration of the Eucharist, Confession, Confirmation, Anointing, and Marriage, while non-sacramental care includes church administration activities and social assistance for people experiencing economic difficulties. However, pastoral care specifically aimed at factory employees is still not a priority in parish activities. The Code of Canon Law (Canon 528 §1) emphasizes that the Parish Priest must know his people more deeply and provide pastoral care that is appropriate to their social conditions. However, the results of the study show that until now pastoral care at the Church of Saint Stanislaus, Girisonta Parish is still territorial and not sector-based, so it does not specifically target factory employees. "As we know, there is no special pastoral care for factory employees. Because it is a different area. The Parish Priest and the Pastoral Council provide services not sectorally, but territorially." As expressed by informant AS.R10.W.21.11/24 in an interview on November 21, 2024.

There was once a labor community that was actively assisted by Fathers, but this community is no longer running. As a result, many factory workers feel that they are not getting enough attention from the Church. "Now there is none at all, there is no attention from the church that has services like that. We used to have something called the South Semarang employee community which was initiated by the MSF Fraters from Salatiga." As expressed by informant PD.R1.W.29.10/24 in an interview on October 29, 2024.

The task of pastoral care is to be with them, to accompany them in facing these situations, to help them reflect on these experiences, and to find meaning in the light

of Christian faith.[8] According to the Church Document Series No. 101 entitled Welcoming Christ in Refugees and Forced Displaced Persons, it is stated that "the situation of people in forced migration requires priests, deacons, religious and laity to prepare themselves adequately for this special apostolic work. It is also appropriate for some ordained persons to dedicate themselves to service among these mobile people".[9] Through pastoral care, we can prevent bad things from happening.[10] Every priest is invited to give himself completely to embrace many people who need a helping hand (Subekti, 2021).[11] Priests are expected to be present with compassion in pastoral care, especially in dealing with the situation of workers and migrants. However, due to the limited number of priests on duty at the Parish of Saint Stanislaus Girisonta, it is necessary to seriously prepare lay personnel to care for these migrants. "Then in the long term, it could be one of the pastoral programs, yes, currently the number of priests on duty is limited, so services for the workers cannot be maximized. If indeed the Diocese later sends a priest to be placed here specifically to accompany the workers." As expressed by informant AJ.R7.W.16.11/24 in an interview on November 16, 2024.

Employees Expectations for Pastoral Care

Although sacramental and non-sacramental services have generally been running well, factory employees feel that they have not received special attention in pastoral care. The majority of informants expressed that they hope that the Church will provide more inclusive and adaptive assistance to their working conditions. The Church has formed a special pastoral team tasked with assisting them, both spiritually and socially. "I think pastoral care is very important, but if I look at it now, it still feels lacking, especially for me as a factory employee. I am a migrant, so I think pastoral care for factory employees should be available. So that the team that has been formed

[8] R. M. Gula, *Etika Pastoral* (Yogyakarta: PT Kanisius, 2009).

[9] F. X. Adisusanto and B. H. T. Prasasti, Seri Dokumen Gerejawi No. 101: Menyambut Kristus dalam Diri Pengungsi dan Orang yang Terpaksa Mengungsi (Jakarta: Departemen Dokumentasi dan Penerangan KWI, 2016).

[10] A. A. Ruimassa and R. F. Nanuru, "Gereja Dan Cyberbullying Remaja: Pendampingan Pastoral Bagi Remaja Korban Cyberbullying," *Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen* 9, no. 3 (2023), https://sttpb.ac.id/e-journal/index.php/kurios/article/view/843.

[11] G. R. Subekti, "Pastoral Bagi Keluarga Dalam Situasi Khusus Menurut Paus Fransiskus Dalam Anjuran Apostolik Amoris Laetitia," *Media* (*Jurnal Filsafat Dan Teologi*) 3, no. 2 (2021): 185–200, https://doi.org/10.53396/media.v3i2.25.

can embrace us as a Catholic community." As expressed by informant DV.R3.W.02.11/24 in an interview on November 2, 2024.

In accordance with the function of pastoral care,[12] it has several main functions, namely healing, supporting, guiding, improving relationships, and maintaining. This supporting function is very relevant, because people often experience stress due to the shift work system and lack of time to attend mass and spiritual activities in the environment or region. "Usually, the prayer service starts at 7 pm, if it starts in the afternoon, I automatically can't join because I have to work." As expressed by informant MA.R11.W.22.11/24 in an interview on November 22, 2024.

In addition, the congregation also hopes for pastoral care that guides them in understanding the teachings of the Church and relates them to the challenges of the world of work. "Moreover, as factory workers, there are many challenges, we don't know the problems. So, for example, from the priest's sermon, we might be able to get confirmation and guidance in faith like that. Or when we meet fellow employees, then we can strengthen each other, tell each other stories, at least it can reduce the burden a little." As expressed by informant AR.R12.W.23.11/24 in an interview on November 23, 2024. This guiding function is in line with the role of the Church as a shepherd who guides its people to continue living in faith, as stated in Psalm 23:1-3. Another hope expressed by the congregation is the formation of a Catholic employee community as a means of sharing faith experiences and strengthening solidarity among workers. Therefore, pastoral care that is oriented towards the needs of industrial workers must consider aspects of spiritual guidance, emotional support, and integration of faith in daily life.

Implementation of Pastoral Care for Employees and Migrants

Currently, there is no specific implementation in responding to the spiritual needs of the congregation and migrant factory workers at the Saint Stanislaus Church, Girisonta Parish. According to the Code of Canon Law (KHK) Kan. 528 §1, the parish priest has an obligation to provide pastoral care to all the congregation in his

[12] J. L. C. Abineno, *Pedoman Praktis Untuk Pelayanan Pastoral* (Jakarta: PT BPK Gunung Mulia, 2006), https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=D0OiJnHamQ0C&oi=fnd&pg=PA20&dq=fungsi+pelayanan+pastoral&ots=QNaQpSps5W&sig=t236duXzW07wjBmBwpb7uDEfesQ&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=fungsi%20pelayanan%20pastoral&f=false.

territory. [13] This pastoral care includes providing sacraments, supporting faith education, and providing special attention to congregations in special situations, such as factory workers and migrants. Pastoral care in this parish is still territorial, meaning that the Church provides services to the congregation based on their area of residence, without distinguishing between professions or types of work. As a result, there are no sectoral programs or approaches that specifically target factory workers and migrants. "Because the factory's workforce is growing, the person in charge is the company leader, while the Parish Priest and the Pastoral Council team reach out to individuals in the Girisonta Parish. If one day the management of a company asks the Girisonta Parish to hold a pastoral service, the Priest and other pastoral service teams will certainly respond." As expressed by informant AS.R10.W.21.11/24 in an interview on November 21, 2024.

In pastoral care, a more transformative and participatory approach is needed.[14] Although the Church continues to serve the congregation in sacramental services, family life, and social assistance for those experiencing economic difficulties, the pastoral approach for workers has not been a priority. Some factory employees who live in the parish area can still participate in church activities, but those who are migrants have difficulty participating. "I am a migrant from Nias, and I don't really know the division of the environment and don't know the people or congregation of Girisonta Parish." As expressed by informant MG.R6.W.09.11/24 in an interview on November 9, 2024.

If there is a request from the company, such as a Eucharistic celebration or a deepening of faith, the parish is willing to respond, but there is no proactive initiative from the Church to reach this group specifically. "We can provide spiritual services such as worship or a Eucharistic celebration if the factory employees need a deepening of faith, we can do that but as far as they are in the Girisonta Parish and as far as they need it" As expressed by informant AS.R10.W.21.11/24 in an interview on November 21, 2024. The absence of proactive initiatives indicates a pastoral structure

[13] A. Triatmo, *Iman Katolik: Kitab Hukum Kanonik* (Jakarta: Media Informasi Dan Sarana Katekese, 2024), https://www.imankatolik.or.id/khk.php?q=510-522.

[14] S. I. Raharjo, A. J. Prayitno, and N. Setiyaningtiyas, "Pemberdayaan Pemandu Lingkungan melalui Workshop Persiapan Katekese: Implementasi Model Pembelajaran Transformatif di Paroki Santo Krisologus BSB Semarang," *Jurnal Pengabdian Dalam Negeri* 1, no. 6 (2023): 181–90, https://doi.org/10.61132/ardhi.v1i5.798.

that is more responsive than missionary. Within such a model, groups that lack a strong voice, such as migrant workers, receive pastoral care only "when there is a request" from parishioners or from the company.

Based on the Ecclesiastical Document Series No. 142 entitled Pastoral Guidelines on Cross-Cultural Migrant Ministry, it is stated that "Particular Churches are called for the sake of the Gospel to better welcome migrants through pastoral initiatives that include encounters and dialogue with them, as well as helping the faithful overcome prejudice and bias".[15] Thus, particular churches are called to better welcome migrants through a pastoral approach that prioritizes encounter and dialogue. This aims to overcome prejudice and build more inclusive and harmonious communities. In accordance with the Ecclesiastical Document Series No. 142 Pastoral Guidelines on Cross-Cultural Migrant Ministry, the pastoral service of the Church of Saint Stanislaus, Girisonta Parish needs to adapt to the conditions of migrants and industrial workers so that they continue to feel accepted and involved in church life. The Pastoral Guidelines for Cross-Cultural Migrant Ministry (Series of Church Documents No. 142) calls particular Churches to foster encounters, dialogue, and deep hospitality toward migrants. However, the relationship between the Church and factory migrants in Girisonta remains minimal and merely informative. The absence of reflective encounters means that, theologically, the Church has not truly regarded laborers as "the face of Christ present in the vulnerable," as emphasized by Pope Francis.

Based on a combination of structural and theological factors, the Church has not responded to factory workers and migrants in a systemic manner because the parish pastoral structure is still focused on territorial areas rather than sectors. As a result, groups with high mobility do not fall within the parish's pastoral radar. The Girisonta Parish does not have a dedicated pastoral team and remains dependent on the priest. Without pastoral workers specifically assigned to this ministry, there is no guarantee of program continuity. There is a need to shift the pastoral paradigm, which has been more sacramental-administrative than contextual. The Church still understands ministry primarily as fulfilling sacramental obligations rather than providing transformational accompaniment. There is also a lack of deep theological reflection on laborers as a priority pastoral subject, even though Church documents

[15] Pope Francis, *Pedoman Pastoral tentang Pelayanan Migran Lintas Budaya* (Vatican City: Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, 2022).

acknowledge migrants and vulnerable groups as those who must be welcomed with great care. The Church tends to act only when requested, rather than recognizing industrial workers as a new field of apostolic mission.

CONCLUSION

Pastoral services at the Church of Saint Stanislaus, Girisonta Parish have been carried out in the form of sacramental and social services, but have not specifically reached factory workers and migrants. Previously, there was an active labor community accompanied by a priest, but this program is no longer running, so many industrial workers, especially migrants, have difficulty accessing church services because of their busy work schedules. Factory workers and migrants hope that the Church will form a special pastoral team and community for them, and provide more flexible services such as mass and faith deepening outside of working hours. This spiritual accompaniment is expected to help them face challenges in the workplace and strengthen their involvement in church life. Currently, there is no special pastoral program that routinely accompanies factory workers and migrants. Factory workers from outside the parish area often do not know that they are entitled to pastoral services, while parishioners continue to receive services like other people in the Church area.

The establishment of an Industrial Workers Pastoral Team is necessary to help the parish reach laborers and migrants through data collection, visitations, and a more focused communication of their spiritual needs. In this way, pastoral ministry is no longer limited to a territorial approach but is able to reach groups that have previously been underserved. In addition, digital pastoral ministry enables the Church to accompany migrant workers who find it difficult to be physically present, through the sharing of information, short reflections, and online data collection. This approach ensures that the faithful remain spiritually connected while also demonstrating the Church's ability to adapt to the needs of the times.

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