



Translated from the original Bahasa Indonesia document

## LENTEN PASTORAL MESSAGE 2020 "BECOMING AN ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITY BY ACTUALIZING SOCIAL JUSTICE

*(To be read in lieu of Homily during Eucharistic Celebrations  
on Saturday/Sunday, 22/23 February 2020*

Dear Sisters / Brothers, Religious Sisters / Brothers / Seminarians,  
Youths, Teens, and Beloved Children in Christ,

1. On the Epiphany of the Lord at the beginning of last January, we began the **YEAR OF SOCIAL JUSTICE** with the slogan *"Practice Pancasila: We are Just, Our Nation Prospers"*. We hope that by living up to the Year of Social Justice, we Catholics of the Jakarta Archdiocese respond to the Church's mandate to continually renew ourselves. We have summarized the dynamics of the reform in the motto **"More Faithful, More Brother-Sisterhood, More Compassionate"**. The word "more" expresses our hope that the renewal will never stop. Renewal will occur if we together always ask the question: "What must we do, so that our environment becomes more humane?" Environment has a very broad meaning, as wide as the areas of human life both personally and all together, such as social, economic, political, cultural, educational, health, environmental, etc. As our environment becomes more humane, we believe that God's Kingdom is also becoming more real. Or in everyday language, public civilization is increasingly actualized, social justice and the ideals of Indonesia's independence are increasingly becoming actualized as well.
2. When we live the Year of (Social) Justice, God provides a special time for us, which is Lent. Lent, which will be crowned with Easter Day, is a time of grace to carry out repentance and renewal of our life personally and together, to find creative ways in bringing about justice. The Gospel we heard today (Matt. 5: 38-48) invites us to build our lives

together as disciples of Jesus into an **alternative community** or also called a **community of contrast**, i.e. a community or the state of being together imbued and shaped by values of the Gospel that are different compared to the values usually adopted by (in quotation marks) the "world". These contrasts are revealed in Jesus' teaching. Jesus said: "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you 'Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you ... If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?" (Mt 5: 46-47). The first remark reflects an ordinary life, on average. Whereas the second remark expresses a life imbued with other values, which are more than usual, because they are imbued with Christian values, namely the values of love. Further reflection will increasingly convince us that we are called to develop that **alternative communities or communities of contrast**.

Sisters and Brothers,

3. This Gospel quote (Mt 5: 38-48) is part of the Gospel of Matthew 5-7 which is commonly called the Sermon on the Mount. For readers or listeners who are familiar with the language of the Scriptures, this hill or mountain where Jesus delivers His teachings will certainly remind them of Mount Sinai. Mount Sinai is where God gave His ten commandments to Moses. The main message of that Gospel quote, just as Moses led God's people of the Old Testament out of the land of slavery to the promised land, Jesus is the New Moses who freed men from the bondage of sin and gave them the true freedom of being God's children. And just as God gave the law and moral demands in the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, Jesus gave the LOVE command: love God in others (Mt 25: 31-46), even love your enemies (Mt 5:44). All of this happened so that God's people would be "holy" (Le 19: 1) and "perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect" (Mt 5:48).
- 3.1. Before the event in Sinai, God's people of the Old Testament were a nation that lived as slaves in a foreign land. But God did not let His people live in slavery. By sending Moses as a leader, God freed His people out of the land of slavery to be brought to the promised land. It

was on the journey to the promised land that God gave His laws, in the form of the ten commandments of God. The hope is that by adhering to laws, which other nations do not have, God's people will grow to become a great nation, living different moral values compared to those of other nations. In the midst of that nation "love and faithfulness meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other" (Ps 85:10). By living like that they will emerge as a "holy" nation (Le 19: 1) by carrying out God's command to love their fellow humans as themselves "(Le 19:18). In that way they will also become a "light" to other nations as the prophet Isaiah said: "I have called ... and made you into a light to the nations" (Isa 42: 6).

3.2. But apparently when nations became more prosperous, they forgot the call to live differently. They are called to live differently, but they want to live like the others. To their leader, they said, "You are old and your sons do not follow your ways, so appoint a king over us, as in all other nations" (1 Sam 8:5). In the language of the Bible that request is synonymous with not wanting God anymore (1 Sam 8: 7-10). They were indeed finally given a king. But after reaching the peak of glory in the days of King David, the history of God's people of the Old Testament became a history of decline and destruction because of not carrying out justice and truth.

3.3. It was during this time that God sent His prophets. A prophet is a person who is faithful to God's law and sensitive to the situation of the times. They voiced justice and truth which is God's message to His people. One of the prophets who fiercely opposed injustice and false worship was Amos: "I hate, I scorn your festivals ... but let justice roll on like water and righteousness like a never-failing stream." (Amos 5: 21-24).

Sisters and Brothers,

4. The Gospel of Jesus we hear today, which is part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, can also be understood in the same line: we have been freed from the slavery of sin and called to "be perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect" (Mt 5:48). Just as God's people of the Old Testament were given the Ten Commandments to become a holy

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Nation, so are we given the law of LOVE. With the law of love – and because God’s Spirit dwells in us (1 Cor 3:16) – together we are led toward the perfection of life, by building our lives together as disciples of Christ into **alternative communities or communities of contrast**.

5. I would like to end this Lenten reflection by quoting a part of a very famous song called "The Prayer": "Lord, lead us to the path that will lead us to You .... We dream of a world without violence; a world of justice and hope. Let everyone reach out to each other, a sign of peace and brotherhood". Let us build our lives together in our family, environment, categorical communities, parishes, and diocese to be an **alternative community or community of contrast** with mutual respect, mutual acceptance and mutual recognition as well as continuously seeking new ways to bring about justice in all its wealth of meaning, including justice for the entire creation. Hopefully this way, our living together within our families, wards, categorical communities, parishes and dioceses can be a conscience for our environment. Congratulations on entering the Lenten season. Thank you for your many involvements my Sisters / Brothers, Religious Sisters / Brothers / Seminarians, Youths, Teens, and Children in the effort to make the Jakarta Archdiocese become *more faithful, more brother-sisterhood, and more compassionate*. Greetings and the Lord’s Blessings be to all of you, your families and communities

† Ignatius Cardinal Suharyo  
Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Jakarta