

Participatory Action Research Strategy: The Role of Culture in the Transformation of Religious Development

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Kata Kunci

Ritual budaya beola, doa-doa Katolik, komunitas Riangkemie.

Keyword

The cultural ritual of beola, Catholic prayers, the Riangkemie community.

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan strategi pendekatan budaya yang efektif dalam pengembangan agama Katolik di Paroki Santo Herman Yoseph Riangkemie, Keuskupan Larantuka. Pendekatan dimulai dengan mempelajari nilai-nilai budaya masyarakat setempat dan mengintegrasikannya dengan nilai-nilai agama Katolik untuk diterapkan dalam kehidupan masyarakat, sehingga dapat mengubah persepsi masyarakat terhadap agama. Metode penelitian yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan riset aksi partisipatoris. Hasil pembinaan keagamaan dengan menggunakan pendekatan budaya ini telah menunjukkan keberhasilan dalam meningkatkan kesadaran masyarakat untuk terlibat dalam kegiatan keagamaan dan meningkatkan rasa tanggung jawab dalam pembinaan keagamaan. Pendekatan ini secara signifikan telah membantu meningkatkan jumlah anggota Gereja Katolik di daerah tersebut.

Abstract

This paper aims to explain the effective cultural approach strategies in the development of the Catholic religion in St. Herman Yoseph Riangkemie, Larantuka Diocese. The approach begins with studying the cultural values of the local community and integrating them with Catholic religious values to be applied in the community's life, to change the local community's perception of the religion. The research method used in this study is qualitative with a participatory action research approach. The results of religious development using this cultural approach have shown success in increasing the community's awareness to engage in religious activities and enhancing their sense of responsibility in religious development. This approach has significantly helped increase the number of Catholic Church members in the area.

1. Introduction

In essence, humans are inherently intertwined with culture itself. In other words, humans are synonymous with culture because only humans can cultivate it through their intellectual creations. Only humans can create and develop culture as a

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form of self-expression. Culture, as commonly stated by many experts - such as Clyde Kluckhohn - in analyzing culture, presents at least seven fundamental elements, one of which is the religious system and ceremonial rituals (Rede Blolong 2012). Religious systems and patterns of belief are essentially formed within a society when people become aware that there is a higher power above them that they must worship.

Unlike Kluckhohn, Clifford Geertz in Nasruddin (2011) defines culture as a complex system consisting of meanings and symbols used by individuals to interpret the world, convey emotions, and evaluate their experiences. These are patterns of meaning transmitted from generation to generation through symbols, and used in communication, knowledge storage, and the development of attitudes toward life. Culture also encompasses symbolic tools used to regulate behavior, as well as serving as an important external source of information

The concept of culture articulated by Kluckhohn and Clifford Geertz can also be found in the Riangkemie society, which has several rituals to approach the Transcendent or ancestors, one of which is the beola ceremony. This ceremony is performed when the Riangkemie community makes mistakes and seeks repentance. The ritual is an integral part of the cultural heritage that has been passed down through generations in the Riangkemie community before religion was introduced, and it continues to exist today even though religion has entered the Riangkemie region.

The Riangkemie community always holds traditional ceremonies as a form of respect to their ancestors when calamities strike the surrounding areas. Led by the traditional leaders, the Riangkemie community performs the beola ritual by visiting the sacred site believed to be the dwelling place of their ancestors. In this ritual, they acknowledge the mistakes that have violated local cultural norms, seek forgiveness, and commit to making positive changes within themselves.

With the presence of the Catholic Church in Riangkemie, the Church introduces valuable religious practices to the community, one of which is the sacrament of confession. Confession becomes an important means for the faithful to strengthen their repentance and purification of their hearts. Through communal confession, the Church clearly depicts that despite being holy, its members remain human and vulnerable to sin, necessitating communal repentance and forgiveness from God (Doraman 2006).

With this situation, there arises a distinction in the faith of the people between the God they believe in through their ancestral culture and the God brought by European missionaries during the colonial period in Indonesia. As a ritual of repentance, the nuance is that of repentance and reconciliation (Kusmaryanto 2006). As adherents of the Catholic faith, the Riangkemie community also has the sacrament of confession and receives the sacrament of penance as an expression of regret,

repentance, and reconciliation. Repentance is a stage of salvation in which believers express remorse and seek forgiveness for their sins, as well as seek to be reconciled with God (Marius Tangi 2019). As believers, before receiving the sacrament of penance or confession, they always begin with communal repentance worship. Communal repentance worship is highly valuable because it is a celebration of the community, in which the role of the Word of God greatly aids the faith of the people in understanding the work of God in receiving the sacrament of penance (Doraman 2006). A situation like this results in segments of society, especially among the elderly, questioning the differences between cultural aspects and religion. This leads to a tendency for greater participation of the faithful in cultural aspects.

With this, in the author's opinion, the Riangkemie people who adhere to the Catholic faith play two important roles in confession, namely as part of a community with local culture and as Catholic believers. Therefore, the purpose of this writing is for the author to attempt to present the results of collaboration with the Riangkemie community in order to find a common thread that connects these two roles.

the other hand, the purpose of this writing is to serve as an important bridge for the Riangkemie people, especially in their efforts to understand and comprehend the sacrament of confession and its inculturation so that eventually the sacrament of confession is not seen as foreign. Inculturation itself, according to Pope John Paul II, is the incarnation of the Gospel in various autonomous cultures while simultaneously incorporating these cultures into the life of the Church (Bernardus Boli Ujan 2012). In this regard, the tradition of the beola ritual can be used as a means to explain the sacrament of confession and its inculturation in the Catholic faith. In other words, the beola ritual can serve as a guiding tool to understand the essence of the sacrament of confession's inculturation within the Catholic Church.

The research method used in this writing is qualitative with a participatory action research approach. The purpose of this participatory action research is to study the cultural values of the local community and align them with the values of the Catholic religion to be applied within the community for the sake of changing the local community's perceptions of religion. In this research process, the author is present alongside ordinary community members, actively participating in every cultural ritual organized by the local community, and engaging in dialogue to develop an Inculturated Sacrament of Confession (Religion and Culture). The results of this religious development with a cultural approach have succeeded in raising awareness among the Riangkemie community to participate in religious activities and feel a sense of responsibility in religious development.

2. Action Research

2.1 The cultural values of the Riangkemie community

Every celebration certainly has its own functions, just like the beola ritual. This ritual has several functions that give special meaning to the ritual. Here are some of the functions of the beola ritual for the Riangkemie community.

The Beola Rite as an Expression of Seeking God's Mercy

The main theme of the Beola ritual is repentance and reconciliation. Expressing regret for sins and repentance are two obligations that must be embraced by sinners or the community in the Beola ritual. Although the direct expression of sin repentance is not explicitly stated in the Beola ritual, the theme of repentance is always evident through symbols. The Riangkemie people seek forgiveness for the mistakes they have made in their lives and simultaneously pray for the grace and mercy of God to reconcile them for the future.

The expression of seeking the mercy of God can be seen in the prayers (mantras) performed in the Beola ritual. The prayers offered by the leader of the Beola ritual include a plea for mercy to the Creator, the Ruler of the universe, for the sins committed by the Riangkemie community. During the recitation of the prayer, the Riangkemie community is required to listen and contemplate together. The goal is to obtain the mercy of God in order to receive forgiveness for their mistakes and seek blessings.

As a repentance ritual, the Beola ritual invites the Riangkemie people to repent by not repeating the same mistakes in their future lives. The sins or mistakes that have been committed serve as lessons or guidelines for them to reconstruct their lives towards a better direction. The Riangkemie community realizes that achieving a harmonious life must be accompanied by the participation of God in their lives. Therefore, besides seeking the Divine mercy to forgive their sins, they also pray that Lera Wulan Tana Ekan (a deity or spiritual figure) will always bless all their efforts and endeavors, so that they may obtain abundant results.

In Honor of Nature

One of the places in the ritual of beola is called duan geraran. Literally, duan means a dense collection of large trees (forest), and geraran means sacred or forbidden. In the beola ritual, duan geraran is a specific term used to prohibit the cutting down of the forest. The Riangkemie people believe that all types of spirits, whether good or evil, reside in the duan

geraran. Therefore, the duan geraran is considered a protected forest, and it is forbidden to turn it into a new plantation. People can enter the duan geraran but are not allowed to utter words that are disrespectful or judgmental towards others. Harming the forest is also considered a violation because the Riangkemie people believe that hurting the forest is inviting disaster into their lives.

This prohibition is an alternative way to maintain harmony in the lives of the Riangkemie people compared to the high costs incurred when disaster strikes. The Riangkemie people believe that disaster will not occur if this prohibition is followed. Therefore, they always remind each other not to harm the forest or open new plantations.

On a deeper level, this prohibition also carries the meaning that forests, which provide a source of life, deserve to be respected. Forests cannot be exploited continuously without pause. Duan geraran is also an action to allow nature to rejuvenate itself and provide comfort to other wildlife. It helps maintain a relationship of mutual respect between humans and nature. Unity with nature can preserve the harmony of coexistence, and through it, humans can protect themselves from the dangers caused by excessive exploitative desires towards nature.

As a Moment of Self-Reflection

Ritus beola is also used for self-reflection. For this purpose, the Riangkemie community establishes two specific parts: the first part is to acknowledge the mistakes (sins) made by the Riangkemie people. In this part, the wise individuals, known as molan, also participate in assisting the Riangkemie people. According to the beliefs of the Riangkemie people, molan are those who have obtained a special charisma to connect with the Divine. The role of molan is evident in their assistance or guidance in helping the Riangkemie people become aware of their mistakes. Before approaching the Riangkemie people, the molan have already received some form of enlightenment through their dreams, such as reprimands or warnings from the Divine, indicating that there has been a disharmony or violation committed by the Riangkemie people. The Riangkemie people also need time to reflect or remember their mistakes. This is done so that the ritual of beola, based on a collective agreement, truly brings new meaning and color to the lives of the Riangkemie people.

The second part is the process of self-cleansing, known as nilu. Nilu is the final part and the pinnacle of the beola ritual for self-purification, as

well as a sign of blessings. The sins committed are generally related to conflicts that occur within families, harming the forest (duan gerara), using harsh words in sacred places (geraran), and other general matters. This moment becomes an opportunity for inner cleansing, to prevent further violations in the future, and to purify oneself from all diseases.

Thus, the beola ritual becomes a moment for self-reflection, self-improvement, and seeking forgiveness from one another, nature, and the Divine. Disputes among individuals are resolved through fines as a way of apologizing and a sign of re-establishing their relationship. On the other hand, relationships that are damaged with nature and the Transcendent are resolved within the beola ritual, and repentance is necessary to avoid repeating the same mistakes. The foundation of this attitude of self-reflection is revealed in the Lamaholot language, with the phrase “morit dore adat ne pehe koda keniri maê-maê,” which means living in accordance with customs and always adhering to the values and teachings of the ancestors.

As a Moment of Gathering Together

Ritus Beola is also a ritual of gathering because it involves several or even many people. Everyone can come together in this ritual because there may have been a lack of communication due to their individual busyness. This opportunity is also considered crucial as it can reunite community members who are experiencing conflicts and help them reconcile. Thus, the Beola ritual is the most precious moment to strengthen the familial bonds of the Riangkemie community.

The foundation that binds them as one originates from the same ancestors, which is called Koda Keniri. Here, the elders will recount the origin of their ancestors to explain the brotherhood relationships within the Riangkemie community, ensuring that the brotherhood remains intact. According to tradition, the ancestors of the Riangkemie community are descendants of Lia Nurat, who was one of the early inhabitants of Ile Mandiri. Lia Nurat had several children, and one of them resided in the Riangkemie region, while the others inhabited various areas in Baipito. Through this moment, the people of Riangkemie are expected to maintain a high level of solidarity among themselves and preserve the meaning of their culture

As a Preservation of Ancestral Heritage Wisdom

Ritus Beola is also used as a moment to remind community members of the wisdom brought to life and inherited by the ancestors. This moment is revealed when mantras, teachings, and advice are recited, recounting a series of stories and ancestral wisdom. Within it, the memories of the ancestors' lives are brought back through the ritual. Everyone present in the Beola ritual hears the customs (koda keniri) of the ancestral heritage, which are useful for the collective development of life.

On another note, the heritage of ancestral wisdom emerges in the form of symbolic beola, represented by arak and wua malu, which remind the Riangkemie people to unite. Arak is processed from nerê or lontar palm tree, which is a typical beverage of the Lamaholot community. Until now, arak and nerê are still preserved and maintained because arak serves as a means to unite. Meanwhile, wua malu symbolizes respect and a wholehearted acceptance of anyone willing to unite and participate in traditional ceremonies or other rituals.

During and after the Beola ritual, children or anyone else is allowed to delve into it by participating in the ritual or asking the molan (spiritual leaders) about the ritual. The leader or molan will try to answer these questions or explain to the best of their abilities and recollection. The answers provided by the leader and molan serve as the main pillars in preserving the meaning and values of the ritual when it is influenced by the currents of globalization.

2.2 The Value of Inculturation in the Beola Rite Ceremony

As a ritual of repentance, the ritual of beola (excrement) holds several high religious values as a form of devotion and expression of faith. The religious values are as follows:

Values of Repentance and Reconciliation

The beola ritual, organized by the Riangkemie community, turns out to have religious-spiritual value. The beola ritual serves as a means to transfer the religious-spiritual values inherited from ancestors, which are revealed in the practice of the ritual, teachings, and some prayers, to the generations involved in the ritual. These values are expected to shape a person's character and make them morally upright according to customs and traditions.

The beola ritual is a moment of repentance and reconciliation. In it, the Riangkemie community reflects upon, evaluates, and transforms their

behavior based on the teachings and advice that have been passed down through generations. The teachings and advice serve as guiding principles that strengthen, support, and guide individuals towards a better life both internally and externally. The appropriate expression to describe this is “*morit dorê koda keniri ne morit ne kaka ari maê*,” which means live according to customs and traditions (obeying rules and abstaining from reprehensible acts) so that the life of brotherhood can be improved. Therefore, the ritual becomes a moment of acquiring spiritual and physical well-being.

The teachings of the beola ritual reveal that repentance and reconciliation cannot be separated from the inner being of a person. This means that what is seen externally must originate from the depths of one's inner self. It becomes a sign of expression from within. Therefore, even though the signs or expressions may appear more related to external matters, they imply the willingness of the Riangkemie community's inner self to undergo repentance and reconciliation. Without the involvement of the inner being, a person would feel alienated in living their life. Customs, teachings, or advice can be internalized if the community has inner awareness. The beola ritual must be experienced by the Riangkemie community in their lives. The teachings of the beola ritual must be ingrained in the inner self and become the driving force and guiding light for each person towards true repentance.

Thus, it can be concluded that the beola ritual is a special and exceptional ritual. It is considered special because this ritual can only be carried out if the Riangkemie people have an awareness of the mistakes they have made. Awareness forms the basis of the beola ritual. Awareness leads the Riangkemie people towards repentance and reconciliation. On an exceptional note, the Riangkemie community uses this ritual as a means to deepen their faith, which is evident in both the external and internal elements. Externally, through the beola ritual, the Riangkemie people can strengthen their faith by preparing all the equipment used in the ritual. Various equipment serves as evidence of their faith in the divine arrangement of God. The internal element is an important part that must be considered in the beola ritual because everyone involved in it must prepare themselves internally. God is compassionate and does not discriminate against anyone (Surjoseputro 2006). Without the beola ritual, the teachings and advice of the Riangkemie people can lose their power and spirit that

bring life, provide self-identity, and guide behavior and patterns of living together. Therefore, the beola ritual is an exceptional opportunity.

Acknowledgment of the Divine Existence

Ritus Beola invites everyone to reflect on their lives. In the context of this reflection, each person is urged to remember their mistakes, which are their offenses or sins towards others, ancestors, and the Divine as the organizer of life. Beola provides an opportunity for individuals to reflect and reconnect with their inner depths in order to evaluate their personal lives based on what is taught in the Riangkemie customs.

The Beola ritual is conducted in a calm atmosphere. This atmosphere aims to enable everyone to listen to the recitation of prayers (mantras). Tranquility can guide humans to immerse themselves and reach the depths of faith with complete dedication. Serenity provides space and time for the Riangkemie community to listen to prayers (mantras) and advice, with full self-awareness and self-evaluation.

In this reflective ambiance, humans always find themselves as weak creatures or below the Divine as the organizer of life. From here arises the recognition of the existence of the Divine. The power of the Divine surpasses human capabilities and is always present with them. The leader expresses mantras to represent the community's plea for forgiveness for their mistakes and to seek the grace of health and a good life. The phrase used by the reciter of mantras for this purpose is, "*O Lera Wulan menange noon kamê! Nêing kamê sarê belarang berihang kamê.*"² In the Catholic Church, God is known as the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Kirchberger 2007).

This plea to the Divine signifies that humans do not have control over their own lives, but it is God who has authority over the organization of life. When someone passes away, people say, "Rera Wulan guti apan" or "Rera Wulan mayaro" (God takes them back or God calls them back). The awareness of human powerlessness leads the Riangkemie people to

² *O Lera Wulan* means *oh Lera Wulan* (God); *menange* means have mercy; *noon* means with; *kamê* means we; *nêing* means grant; *sarê* means health; *belarang* means illness; *berihang* means health and hardship; *kamê* means belonging to us (a possessive pronoun indicating first-person plural). Literally, this expression means, "O God, have mercy on us! Grant us healing from illness and hardship."

specifically request that the grace of health and life always accompany them. This awareness of humans as powerless beings is deeply felt.

Therefore, the Beola ritual becomes a form of living and expressing faith together for the Riangkemie people in their belief in the Divine, whom they recognize as their God. In truth, their entire lives are a blessing they receive from God. God is always present and involved in every experience of their lives. This awareness is the origin of a more meaningful and good life.

Mutual Respect and Appreciation in Relationship with the Transcendent and Others

The ritus Beola is ultimately an event aimed at improving the behavior of individuals to maintain social, environmental, and Transcendent integrity and harmony. Every member of the Riangkemie community believes that peace and harmony in communal life can be achieved. For this purpose, a guideline or principle of living together that regulates the behavior of each person is needed. These principles are already present in the customs and traditions inherited from the ancestors.

One main principle that serves as the foundation for the Lamaholot and Riangkemie communities, particularly in relation to social relations, is the custom and habit of respecting one another, nature, and the Transcendent. This is expressed in the local language through the phrase "hungen baat tonga blolo koon Rera Wulan Tana Ekan; pupu taan tou gahan taan." Literally translated, this expression means the existence of an attitude of respecting the Transcendent and fostering unity and integration among humans and nature. They believe that everything in the world, whether physical or spiritual, deserves respect. God is seen as the love that created everything good for humanity.

Furthermore, specifically, the Ritus Beola teaches a tangible action that is applied in communal life to cultivate a pattern of mutual respect, which is to instill a sense of justice within the Riangkemie community. This can be summarized by the phrase "*ata raèn di raèn, titè titèn dititèn or tekan tite ake tekan knèu raèn.*"³ It also teaches the values of honesty and

³ *Ata raèn di raèn* means that what belongs to someone else remains their property, and "*titè titèn dititèn*" means that what belongs to us remains our property. Literally, this expression signifies respecting the possessions of others. This is a translation of an interview with Simon Welan, the leader of Riangkemie, conducted on January 11, 2020, in Riangkemie.

truthfulness, taking care of the forest by not indiscriminately cutting down trees, and instilling respect for Lera Wulan Tana Ekan. These attitudes are expected to be maintained and preserved by every member of the Riangkemie community. Therefore, it is expected that all Riangkemie individuals always participate in every communal traditional ceremony, whether it is a clan ceremony or other general traditional ceremonies. The purpose is to ensure that the values contained in the teachings of the ancestors (customs and traditions) are preserved.

In conclusion, the ritus Beola is a moment for the Riangkemie community to deepen and sharpen their conscience while adhering to the customs and traditions that serve as the fundamental principles in their relations with the Transcendent, others, and nature. These fundamental principles are expected to be observed and maintained in communal life.

2.3 Action

Catechesis with the Faithful on the Values of Catholic Culture and Religion

Catechesis is an effective step in helping the faithful understand the aspects of religion and culture (Boli Ujan 2012). In catechesis about culture and religion, the community actively engages in dialogue regarding religious values and cultural relationships. People can comprehend religious concepts through an approach that is based on faith. It is important to pay attention to aspects that contain universal values according to the local community's perspective and further develop them. Anything related to customs and traditions that are not directly connected to superstition or falsehood will be wisely considered by the Church, and if possible, preserved with humility.

Prayer of Repentance and Inculturation

In inculturated penitential worship, priests or elders who are accustomed to leading the rite of penance are given the opportunity to become leaders. Inculturation is the way the Church addresses God within the cultural context (Boli Ujan 2019). The trust in these priests or elders is affirmed in a public ceremony of appointment that bestows the authority to lead the inculturated penitential worship. The process of accompaniment and appointment for these leaders follows the same steps as those for other ministers who conduct Sunday Word Services without a priest. In inculturated penitential worship, the venue can be held in the homes of the

community with a cultural approach, and every member is free to attend without coercion. The success of this cultural approach in the transformation is evidenced by the involvement of the faithful in participating in church activities and the increasing number of Catholic faithful in the Riangkemie region, with the number of faithful reaching 1.819 souls in the year 2020.

Collaboration with the Faithful to Develop Inculturated Repentance Worship

In the development of inculturated repentance worship, researchers collaborate with the community to discuss the integration of cultural and religious aspects in its practices. Additionally, together with the community, researchers formulate appropriate language to meet the needs of the local community while adhering to Catholic religious principles. Below is an example of inculturated repentance worship that involves collective participation with the faithful in uniting these two aspects:

First, Introduction and Sign of the Cross: On the agreed-upon day, the people of Riangkemie gather at the venue for the repentance ceremony. Once everyone is present, the leader initiates the ceremony by greeting all the attendees.

Ema bapa, kaka ari, waka kae,

tite tobo hama-hama

noon ike kwaan lewo tana tite, ne Lera Wulan Tana Ekan

ta to tola penyake ne leta heren ampun ne leta berkat.

Tite hama-hama leta berkat ne muri iker tite morit sare.

Soga Naran Bapa, Noon Ana, Noon Roh Kudus. Amin.

Translate:

Dear Father, Mother, brothers, and sisters, on this occasion,

we gather together with the saints as our protectors and our own God, the Sun, Moon, and Earth,

to ask for healing for the illnesses we experience,

and also to seek forgiveness for our mistakes or sins,
and to request blessings for our future lives.

Together, we ask for God's blessings to grant us health and a good life.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.⁴
Amen.

Second, Request for Forgiveness and Blessing: Following the introduction by the ceremony leader, it continues with a prayer asking for forgiveness from the Lord. This prayer is spoken by the leader, representing the heartfelt plea of the guilty parties. The prayer content is as follows:

*Allah Bapa teti kowa onen,
noon ike kwaan lewo tana kamen,
morit pi pure paimipati beda kamen ni
naa nala dosa, (sebutakan kesalahan atau dosa),
noon khirin naan milan daten.
Kame olin balik ta Moe, tapin teren
Leta heren ampun nalan nedin kamen.
Noon nalan nedin pulo lema waka kaen.
Puke morit kame bauk beta ara rua mae snaren
Noon puji plewan naran Moe sampe nuan tutu. Amen.*

Translate:

⁴ In the original ritual, there is no sign of the cross, but this distinctive Christian symbol is incorporated into the inculturated repentance worship, with the aim of imparting the significance of the Trinity in the worship.

O God our Father in heaven and the saints,

Recently, our brothers and perhaps some among us have committed mistakes, (mention the mistakes).

Therefore, today we come to You asking for Your forgiveness for these sins, as well as for the sins of the entire community, and we seek Your blessings for our future lives.

Through Your blessings, we also ask, heal us from all kinds of illnesses and keep us away from all kinds of disasters that may befall us. Amen.

*Third, Reading of Scripture Text and Reflection.*⁵ In selecting the Scripture reading, it is necessary to consult with the parish priest or other pastors to determine the appropriate Scripture text according to the needs of the community. The pastors also need to have a clear understanding of the culture of the Riangkemie people so that they can easily determine the Scripture text to be proclaimed. After reading the Scripture text, the ceremony leader can provide a brief reflection on the reading.

Fourth, Personal Confession. In this part, the priests can prepare themselves at the confession site and individuals from Riangkemie can confess their sins privately.

Fifth, Communal Feast. In this communal feast, everyone present is obligated to participate to foster bonds of brotherhood/sisterhood among them. Following this feast, the leaders can guide communal life in the Riangkemie region that has been passed down through generations.

Sixth, Conclusion: announcements, please blessings,⁶ and commissioning.

3. Conclusion

The active application of cultural approaches in religious development has significantly impacted the growth of Catholic community members. Additionally, society now has a better understanding of the cultural and Catholic values that serve

⁵ In the original ritual, there is no reading of Scripture, but it is considered beneficial to incorporate this Christian element into the inculturated repentance worship.

⁶ In the original ceremony, there is no blessing, but it is very good to incorporate this Christian element into the inculturated repentance worship.

as the foundation of communal life. In action research, collaboration with the community is crucial to support local religious culture. Local cultures that appreciate universal values accept Catholicism without prejudice. This enables Catholicism and local cultures, such as Riangkemie, to coexist harmoniously. While the faith of the community and local culture can be unified in some aspects, some differences cannot be equated. Nevertheless, there is no outright conflict. Local culture accepts Catholicism, while Catholicism also respects the truth of local culture. Thus, the community of Riangkemie, living within its local culture, continues to embrace Catholicism with unwavering conviction.

Inculturation has often been carried out, for example, through the use of songs in local languages, traditional dances, and offerings led by prayers from local elders or religious figures. This process of inculturation instills a sense of acceptance among the faithful within their local culture, which in turn enhances their faith in Christ. Moreover, in terms of morals and ethics, culture also teaches values of wisdom and compassion, aligning with the teachings of Catholic faith. Thus, the ethical and moral values inherent in the local culture contribute to shaping the character of the Riangkemie people.

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