

RELIGI

JURNAL STUDI AGAMA-AGAMA

ECOLOGICAL CRISIS RESPONSE BY INDONESIAN INTERFAITH YOUTH ACTIVISM OF ECO BHINNEKA MUHAMMADIYAH

Yazid Imam Bustomi, Cindy Nova Riyanti, Nurninashahawana Hj Osmara

ENVIRONMENTAL PRAYER MEANING FOR THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY IN NGESTI RAHAYU VILLAGE, PUNGGUR, CENTRAL LAMPUNG, LAMPUNG

Darma Nur Yadi, Ahmad Muttaqin, Luthfi Salim

ECO-THEOLOGY AND MINING MANAGEMENT POLICY BY RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS IN INDONESIA: AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

Muh. Mukhlis Abidin, Umi Faribah Arif

RELIGIOUS MODERATION ON NU ULAMA'S PERSPECTIVE

Moh. Rivaldi Abdul, Nella Wahyuni

RELIGIOUS MODERATION ON PTKIN'S GEN Z PERSPECTIVE

Amalia Irfani, Azkiya Ramadani

RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN FUNERAL CEREMONIES: A STUDY OF THE COMMUNITY OF NAGARI AIA DINGIN, SOLOK

Saskia Handayani, Rido Jamallius, Syafwan Rozi

RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE IN THE DIGITAL SPACE: A STUDY OF HABIB JAFAR'S MESSAGES OF TOLERANCE

Khatami Rahman, Andi Eka Putra, Nofrizal

CONSIDERING WILLIAM JAMES' CONCEPT OF RELIGION FOR RELIGIOUS GOVERNANCE MODEL IN INDONESIA

Roni Ismail

LOVE AS THE FOUNDATION FOR THE FORMATION OF RELIGIOUS CHARACTER IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION

Rosby Nur Khoiroh, Ahmad Barizi, Nabilatun Mubasyiroh

RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION AND MATURITY OF THE VOCATION MEANING AMONG CATHOLIC PRIESTLY CANDIDATES: A STUDY AT ST. PAUL'S MAJOR SEMINARY, KENTUNGAN, YOGYAKARTA

Wika Fitriana Purwaningtyas, Gilas Anti Ampera

RELIGIOUS-CULTURAL ACCULTURATION IN DECORATED BATHING OF MUSLIM TRADITION IN THE MALAY COMMUNITY, TALAWI DISTRICT, BATUBARA REGENCY

Nisa Syahrani, Zulkarnaen

THE SPIRITUALITY OF NGARUPUK TRADITION IN JAVANESE AND BALINESE HINDU CULTURE IN WAY PANJI DISTRICT, SOUTH LAMPUNG

Faiz Susena, Muslimin, Nofrizal

DIAKONIA TO INCREASE THE INVOLVEMENT OF CATHOLIC YOUTH AT SAINT ANDREW KEMPAWA STATION

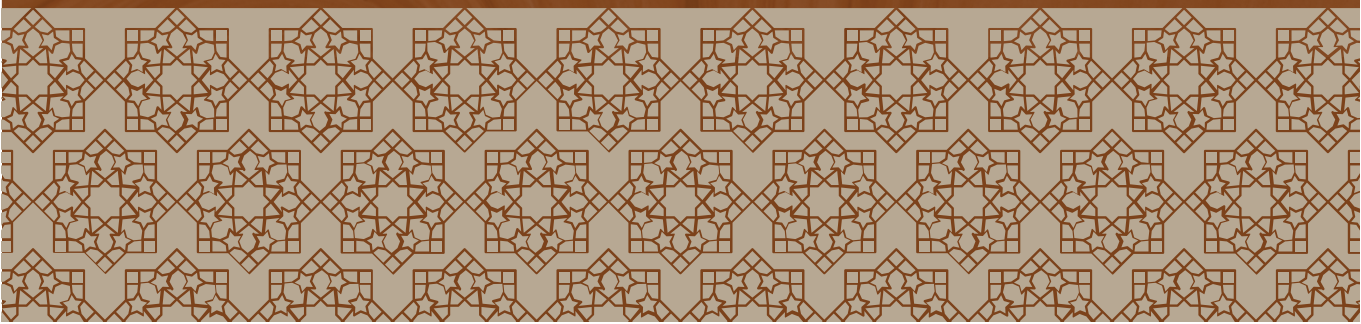
Silvyana Br Sembiring, Paulinus Tibo

ECOTHEOLOGY OF WOMEN'S ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM IN THE WADAS AGRARIAN CONFLICT

Iqtamar Muhammad, Siti Khuzaimah

ECO-THEOLOGY OF SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR'S THOUGHT AND IT'S RELEVANCE ON THE AWARENESS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT IN UIN WALISONGO CAMPUS

Wahib Irsadul Bahtiar, Makmur Aji, Luthfi Rahman



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DAFTAR ISI

DAFTAR ISI	v
ECOLOGICAL CRISIS RESPONSE BY INDONESIAN INTERFAITH YOUTH ACTIVISM OF ECO BHINNEKA MUHAMMADIYAH.....	1
<i>Yazid Imam Bustomi, Cindy Nova Riyanti, Nurninashahawana Hj Osmara</i>	
ENVIRONMENTAL PRAYER MEANING FOR THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY IN NGESTI RAHAYU VILLAGE, PUNGGUR, CENTRAL LAMPUNG, LAMPUNG.....	21
<i>Darma Nur Yadi, Ahmad Muttaqin, Luthfi Salim</i>	
ECO-THEOLOGY AND MINING MANAGEMENT POLICY BY RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS IN INDONESIA: AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE.....	43
<i>Muh. Mukhlis Abidin, Umi Faridah Arif</i>	
RELIGIOUS MODERATION ON NU ULAMA’S PERSPECTIVE	67
<i>Moh. Rivaldi Abdul, Nella Wahyuni</i>	
RELIGIOUS MODERATION ON PTKIN’S GEN Z PERSPECTIVE	85
<i>Amalia Irfani, Azkiya Ramadani</i>	
RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN FUNERAL CEREMONIES: A STUDY OF THE COMMUNITY OF NAGARI AIA DINGIN, SOLOK.....	105
<i>Saskia Handayani, Rido Jamallius, Syafwan Rozi</i>	

**RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE IN THE DIGITAL SPACE: A STUDY OF
HABIB JAFAR'S MESSAGES OF TOLERANCE125**

Khatami Rahman, Andi Eka Putra, Nofrizal

**CONSIDERING WILLIAM JAMES' CONCEPT OF RELIGION FOR
RELIGIOUS GOVERNANCE MODEL IN INDONESIA145**

Roni Ismail

**LOVE AS THE FOUNDATION FOR THE FORMATION OF RELIGIOUS
CHARACTER IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION159**

Roshy Nur Khoiroh, Ahmad Barizi, Nabilatun Mubasyiroh

**RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION AND MATURITY OF THE VOCATION
MEANING AMONG CATHOLIC PRIESTLY CANDIDATES: A STUDY
AT ST. PAUL'S MAJOR SEMINARY, KENTUNGAN, YOGYAKARTA187**

Wika Fitriana Purwaningtyas, Gilas Anti Ampera

**RELIGIOUS-CULTURAL ACCULTURATION IN DECORATED
BATHING OF MUSLIM TRADITION IN THE MALAY COMMUNITY,
TALAWI DISTRICT, BATUBARA REGENCY.....209**

Nisa Syahrani , Zulkarnaen

**THE SPIRITUALITY OF *NGARUPUK* TRADITION IN JAVANESE
AND BALINESE HINDU CULTURE IN WAY PANJI DISTRICT,
SOUTH LAMPUNG229**

Faiz Susena, Muslimin, Nofrizal

**DIAKONIA TO INCREASE THE INVOLVEMENT OF CATHOLIC
YOUTH AT SAINT ANDREW KEMPAWA STATION.....249**

Silvyana Br Sembiring, Paulinus Tibo

**ECOTHEOLOGY OF WOMEN'S ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM
IN THE WADAS AGRARIAN CONFLICT263**

Iqtamar Muhammad, Siti Khuzaimah

**ECO-THEOLOGY OF SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR'S THOUGHT AND
IT'S RELEVANCE ON THE AWARENESS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL
MANAGEMENT IN UIN WALISONGO CAMPUS.....291**

Wahib Irsadul Bahtiar, Makmur Aji, Luthfi Rahman

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Abstract

The lack of academic studies specifically examining the meaning of environmental prayer for rural Catholic communities living as minorities indicates a research gap, particularly in understanding the spiritual, social, and existential dimensions of prayer at the grassroots community level. This study aims to reveal the meaning of environmental prayer for the Catholic community in Ngesti Rahayu Village, Central Lampung, based on the life experiences and religious awareness of the people. This study employs a qualitative method using Edmund Husserl's phenomenological approach to explore the religious experiences of the faithful as lived within their lifeworld, supplemented by a theological approach to interpret the field findings in light of Catholic Church teachings. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentary analysis, then analyzed through the stages of reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study show that environmental prayer is interpreted by the faithful in three main aspects: religious meaning as a space for encountering God and strengthening faith identity; social meaning as a means of building brotherhood, solidarity, and social capital within the community; and existential meaning as a source of inner peace, hope, and resilience in facing life's challenges. These findings confirm that environmental prayer not only functions as a ritual practice but also plays an important role in shaping the communal spirituality and social cohesion of rural Catholics in a pluralistic society.

Keywords: *Environmental Prayer; Catholic Community; Communal Spirituality*

Abstrak

Minimnya kajian akademik yang secara khusus mengkaji pemaknaan doa lingkungan bagi komunitas umat Katolik di pedesaan yang hidup sebagai minoritas menunjukkan adanya celah penelitian, terutama dalam memahami dimensi spiritual, sosial, dan eksistensial doa pada tingkat komunitas basis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap makna doa lingkungan bagi komunitas umat Katolik di Desa Ngesti Rahayu, Lampung Tengah, berdasarkan pengalaman

hidup dan kesadaran religius umat. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi Edmund Husserl untuk menggali pengalaman religius umat sebagaimana dialami dalam dunia kehidupan mereka, serta diperkaya dengan pendekatan teologis guna menafsirkan temuan lapangan dalam terang ajaran Gereja Katolik. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan studi dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis melalui tahapan reduksi, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa doa lingkungan dimaknai umat dalam tiga aspek utama: makna religius sebagai ruang perjumpaan dengan Allah dan penguatan identitas iman; makna sosial sebagai sarana membangun persaudaraan, solidaritas, dan modal sosial komunitas; serta makna eksistensial sebagai sumber ketenangan batin, harapan, dan ketahanan dalam menghadapi persoalan hidup. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa doa lingkungan tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai praktik ritual, tetapi juga berperan penting dalam pembentukan spiritualitas komunal dan kohesi sosial umat Katolik pedesaan di tengah masyarakat majemuk.

Kata kunci: Doa Lingkungan; Pengalaman Umat; Spiritualitas Komunal

INTRODUCTION

The practice of neighborhood prayer is a form of communal prayer that is deeply rooted in the tradition of the Catholic Church, particularly at the grassroots community level or within a specific neighborhood. Neighborhood prayer arose from the faithful's need to preserve the tradition of communal prayer, strengthen faith, and deepen fellowship, as well as to bring the Church into a smaller, more intimate setting. In contemporary theological developments, the practice of neighborhood prayer aligns with the understanding of the Church as the people of God, which emphasizes the participation of the entire congregation in church life and the spirit of walking together (synodality). Through neighborhood prayer, the faithful not only perform religious rites but also build spiritual and social relationships that support daily life of faith.

However, reality shows that the practice of environmental prayer is not always deeply internalized by the faithful. In various communities, environmental prayer is often understood merely as a social routine or a religious obligation, rather than as a faith experience that shapes spirituality. Declining participation among the faithful, economic pressures, and limited understanding of the meaning of environmental prayer pose real challenges in the life of grassroots communities. On the other hand, academic studies on the meaning of communal prayer which position communal prayer as a religious practice experienced within their own lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*), particularly in the context of rural Catholics living as a minority group—as well as research that places the faithful's subjective experiences at the center of analysis remain relatively limited. This situation raises an academic problem, namely the lack of mapping of the meaning of environmental prayer as a *lived religious* practice, as well as how the practice of environmental prayer influences the lives of rural Catholics.

In a rural context, there are distinctive social characteristics, such as close-knit social relationships, economic constraints, and religious diversity, which require the faithful

to build social and spiritual resilience. In such a situation, community prayer has the potential to hold a broader meaning than merely a religious ritual; it serves as a means of fostering communal spirituality, strengthening faith-based identity, and serving as a source of social and inner strength for the faithful. Without an adequate understanding of how the faithful themselves interpret environmental prayer within their lived world (*Lebenswelt*), this practice risks being understood superficially and losing its transformative power in communal life.

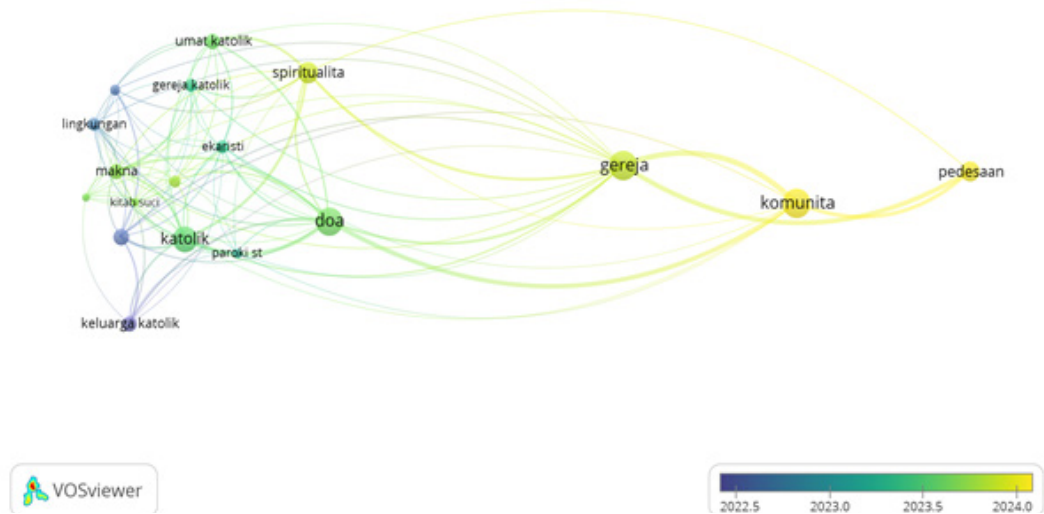
The village of Ngesti Rahayu in Punggur Subdistrict, Central Lampung Regency, is an example of a rural Catholic community living amidst a Muslim-majority society with harmonious social relations. The Catholics in this village maintain a tradition of neighborhood prayer meetings held regularly every Wednesday night into Thursday, rotating among the homes of the parishioners. Most of the community members work as farmers, merchants, farm laborers, and day laborers, yet they retain a strong religious spirit. Historically, this community originated from Catholic migrants from Muntilan, Central Java, who brought the tradition of communal prayer and community-based life with them starting in the 1950s. This tradition has fostered the formation of small groups as forums for prayer, sharing of faith, and strengthening the bonds of fellowship among the faithful.

It was from this spirit that the St. Heironimus Neighborhood Prayer Community was born, officially established in February 2010 at the initiative of one of the hamlet heads in Ngesti Rahayu Village, together with local Catholic leaders. In this context, the St. Heironimus Neighborhood Prayer Community serves as a space for the faithful to pray together, reflect on daily life, and strengthen the spirit of solidarity.

Given this context, this study employs a qualitative method using Edmund Husserl's phenomenological approach to gain a deep understanding of the religious experiences of Catholics in interpreting environmental prayer. The phenomenological approach allows the researcher to explore the consciousness, intentionality, and lifeworld of the faithful without being dominated by normative judgments. Thus, the meaning of environmental prayer can be authentically understood as experienced by the faithful themselves. To enrich the analysis, this phenomenological approach is combined with theological reflection so that the religious experiences of the faithful can be interpreted in dialogue with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

This study addresses *a gap in the literature* by highlighting the “ “ of rural Catholic communities in interpreting environmental prayers—an aspect not previously explored in prior studies—thereby necessitating a bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer to systematically position this research.

Environmental Prayer Meaning For the Catholic Community
in Ngesti Rahayu Village, Punggur, Central Lampung, Lampung



data overlay visualization processed by the researcher 2025

A bibliometric analysis using VOS viewer indicates that studies on “church,” “community,” and “spirituality” have been extensively discussed in the literature, while the “rural” context emerges as a relatively new theme that has not yet been strongly linked to the prayer practices and religious experiences of the faithful. Several relevant previous studies have discussed prayer practices in the lives of Catholics, particularly within the context of family and church communities, such as the research conducted by Sumantri and Rukiyanto (2024),¹ Montjai (2025),² Karunia (2022),³ Melo and Firmanto (2023),⁴ and Rotua (2023),⁵ emphasize the importance of communal prayer, grassroots communities, and pastoral accompaniment in the formation of the faithful’s faith and spirituality. Although relevant, these studies have not specifically examined community prayer as a religious experience of rural Catholics using a phenomenological

¹ Damiana Reanita Sumantri and Bernardus Agus Rukiyanto, “The Role of Family Prayer in Catholic Families in Developing Children’s Faith in the St. Joseph Parish of Bintaran, Yogyakarta,” *CREDENDUM: Journal of Religious Education*, Vol. 6, no. 1 (2024): 14–32, <https://doi.org/10.34150/credendum.v6i1.596>.

² Dwi Novika Montjai et al., “THE PASTORAL ROLE IN IMPROVING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS: B . Research Methods,” *Journal of Education and Health*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2025): 8–17, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.70420/tentiro.v2i1.136>.

³ Yosafat Elly Dhita Karunia, “The Transformative Environmental Mass for the Fellowship of the Faithful According to Kevin W. Irwin and Pope John Paul II,” *Media (Journal of Philosophy and Theology)* 3, no. 2 (2021): 201–20, <https://doi.org/10.53396/media.v3i2.26>.

⁴ Paulus Melo and Antonius Denny Firmanto , “The Role of the Church in the Spiritual Growth of Young Catholics,” *Journal of Contextual Philosophy and Theology*, Vol. 4, no. 1 (2023): 34–45, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.69678/aggiornamento40134-35>.

⁵ Rotua Dominika Sinaga, “The Role of Church-Based Communities in the Involvement of Catholic Youth in Church Life in the Jayapura Deanery,” *JURNAL JUMPA*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (2021): 1–13, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.60011/jumpa.v9i1.118>.

approach, nor have they deeply integrated the subjective experiences of the faithful with theological reflection.

Given these circumstances, this study aims to fill a gap in the literature by examining how the practice of environmental prayer influences the formation of communal spirituality and the social life of rural Catholics, as well as how Catholics in Ngesti Rahayu Village interpret environmental prayer in their daily lives.

EXPLANATION OF THE RESEARCH OBJECT

This study employs a phenomenological approach based on Edmund Husserl's theory of to understand the religious experiences of Catholics regarding environmental prayer. Key concepts include *epoché* (suspension of judgment), *intentionality* (consciousness always directed toward something), and the *Lebenswelt* (the world of everyday life).⁶ Husserl asserts that phenomenology seeks to return to "the things themselves" (*zu den Sachen selbst*), that is, to understand reality as experienced by the subject.⁷ In the context of this study, the researcher seeks to uncover the meaning of environmental prayer as experienced by Catholics in Ngesti Rahayu Village, not based solely on theological interpretations. Through the process of *epoche*, the researcher sets aside personal biases to authentically explore the faithful's religious consciousness. The faithful's religious consciousness in environmental prayer is *intentional*, directed toward God and toward others within the atmosphere of a community of faith. Thus, *the Lebenswelt* from Husserl's phenomenological concept helps to understand the spiritual and social meaning of environmental prayer as a living experience of faith within the lived world of rural Catholics.

Based on the research subject, this study employs a qualitative method because it aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the meaning of environmental prayer within the lived world of the Catholic community in Ngesti Rahayu Village. This approach allows the researcher to engage directly in the field and collect data from the experiences, perspectives, and awareness of individuals rooted in the daily lives of the community, thereby enabling them to experience and understand the social phenomenon firsthand.⁸

⁶ Yosua Septerio, Glorian Taran, and Yaya Sunarya, "AL-AFKAR: Journal for Islamic Studies Education from a Phenomenological Perspective," *AL-AFKAR: Journal for Islamic Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (2025): 782–91, <https://doi.org/10.31943/afkarjournal.v8i2.1366.Education>.

⁷ Shofi Nugraheni et al., "Edmund Husserl's Concept of Phenomenology and Its Relevance to Islamic Education," *Journal of Islamic Education* 2, no. 2 (2023): 143–154, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.58353/jak.v2i2.140>.

⁸ Abdul Fattah Nasution, *Qualitative Research Methods, Sustainability (Switzerland)*, vol. 11 (Bandung: CV. Harfa Creative, 2023). we test the small molecule flexible ligand docking program Glide on a set of 19 non- α -helical peptides and systematically improve pose prediction accuracy by enhancing Glide sampling for flexible polypeptides. In addition,

Thus, the object of this study is the phenomenon and interpretation of environmental prayer, while the subjects of this study are the Catholic faithful involved in environmental prayer activities. This study is descriptive in nature, meaning it seeks to describe the phenomenon directly without altering the variables.⁹

Through this method, the researcher combines religious phenomenology and theological approaches, so that the practice of environmental prayer is not only described as experienced by the faithful but also interpreted in the light of the Catholic Church's faith. The phenomenological approach helps uncover the meaning of symbols, rituals, and the religious experiences of the faithful,¹⁰ while the theological approach provides a reflective foundation rooted in Sacred Scripture and official Church documents.¹¹

This approach was implemented through field research conducted in Ngesti Rahayu Village, Punggur Subdistrict, Central Lampung Regency, Lampung Province, via interviews and direct observation of community members actively involved in neighborhood prayer activities.¹² Informants were selected using purposive sampling, which included neighborhood leaders, deacons serving as prayer leaders, community leaders, and the families of event organizers as additional informants.¹³ From the in-depth study at the location, primary data was obtained as a direct result of the researcher's interaction with the informants,¹⁴ while secondary data was collected through literature reviews and relevant documentation.¹⁵ All data was then analyzed following the Miles and Huberman model through the stages of reduction, data presentation, and drawing

scoring of the poses was improved by post-processing with physics-based implicit solvent MM-GBSA calculations. Using the best RMSD among the top 10 scoring poses as a metric, the success rate ($\text{RMSD} \leq 2.0 \text{ \AA}$ for the interface backbone atoms

⁹ Hasan Syahrizal and M. Syahrani Jailani, "Types of Research in Quantitative and Qualitative Research," *QOSIM Journal of Social & Humanities Education* 1, no. 1 (2023): 13–23, <https://doi.org/10.61104/jq.v1i1.49>.

¹⁰ Edwin Gandaputra Yen, "An Introduction to Phenomenological Studies in Theological Research," *Te-Deum* 8, no. 1 (2018): 1–16, <https://doi.org/https://ojs.sttsappi.ac.id/index.php/te-deum/article/view/42>.

¹¹ Aulia Diana Devi and Seka Andrian, "Implementation of the Normative Theological Approach in Religious Pluralism in Indonesia," *TALIM: Journal of Islamic Education Studies* 4, no. 1 (2021): 60–73, <https://doi.org/10.52166/talim.v4i1.2193>.

¹² Zainuddin Iba, *Research Methods*, p. 241.

¹³ Asrulla et al., "Population and Sampling (Quantitative), and Selection of Key Informants (Qualitative) in a Practical Approach," *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* 7, no. 3 (2023): 26320–32, <https://doi.org/10.31004/jptam>.

¹⁴ Nurul Melani Haifa et al., "Identification of Research Variables and Types of Data Sources in Educational Research," *Learning Dynamics: Journal of Education and Language* 2, no. 2 (2025): 591 <https://doi.org/10.62383/dilan.v2i2.1563>.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 592.

conclusions,¹⁶ resulting in a comprehensive picture of the meaning of environmental prayer for the Catholic community.

THE PRACTICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PRAYER AND ITS IMPACT ON THE LIVES OF CATHOLICS IN NGESTI RAHAYU VILLAGE

Community prayer is a religious ritual and a spiritual space for the Catholic community in Ngesti Rahayu Village. This prayer activity serves as a gathering place where people come together to apply Gospel values in their daily lives; it also brings the Church closer to its grassroots community, which is their home. Theologically, communal prayer gatherings strengthen the faithful’s identity as part of the Body of Christ, reinforce relationships among community members, and serve as a pastoral means for the faithful to mutually encourage one another in facing the dynamics of life.¹⁷ Therefore, before examining the extent to which neighborhood prayer influences the lives of the faithful, it is important to first understand how the practice of neighborhood prayer is carried out within the community, as the structure of the prayer provides form and direction for the spiritual experience of the faithful. The following is the sequence of the neighborhood prayer:

Table of the sequence of neighborhood prayer activities

No	Name of Practice	Description
1	Praise / Opening Song	An environmental prayer service typically begins with a hymn or opening song that invites the congregation to be spiritually present before God. This song serves as a sign of worship and community unity in welcoming the presence of the Lord. ¹ This structure is consistent with the liturgy of the Catholic Church, where liturgical worship begins with a greeting and praise to God and is aligned with the liturgical calendar.
2.	The Sign of the Cross	After the opening prayer, the congregation makes the Sign of the Cross (in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit), as a liturgical introduction that affirms the identity of the Trinity and worship of the Triune God. ² This practice is a fundamental prayer in the Catholic Church, as also noted in the tradition of communal prayer, and is likewise practiced in community prayer in the village of Ngesti Rahayu: the sign of the Cross is included among the “fundamental prayers” that the faithful must master.

¹⁶ Zainuddin Iba, *Research Methods*, CV.EUREKA MEDIA AKSARA (Central Java, 2021). p. 242.

¹⁷ Adelia Elma Lawa Dasi, Frederikus Binsasi, and Modesta Amsikan, “Raising Catholic Women’s Awareness of the St. Anne’s Prayer Group and Its Implications for the Living Out of Faith in Church Life at St. Michael’s Parish in Asueman,” *Journal of Education and Pastoral Catechesis* 14, no. 1 (2025): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.61717/p.v14i1.129>.

Environmental Prayer Meaning For the Catholic Community
in Ngesti Rahayu Village, Punggur, Central Lampung, Lampung

No	Name of Practice	Description
3.	Introduction	The prayer leader, usually the neighborhood chairperson or an elected representative, delivers an introductory remark or a brief address after the Sign of the Cross. This introduction highlights the theme of the prayer gathering, invites the congregation to focus on the purpose of the neighborhood worship service, and explains the shared intention of the congregation. As stated by Mr. Riyatno, one of the individuals selected to lead the neighborhood prayer, <i>“this introductory statement is delivered in accordance with the liturgical calendar followed by the Catholic community.”</i> ³ It is thus emphasized that this introduction is essential in the liturgical worship model to guide the congregation within the social and spiritual context of the community.
4.	Call to Repentance	There is always a call to repentance before the main part of the prayer. This may include a communal confession of sins, addressing the shortcomings of the local prayer community, and asking for forgiveness for the sins of the faithful. This practice reflects the Church’s liturgy, which emphasizes awareness of sin and the need for God’s grace. ⁴
5.	Opening Prayer	The leader leads the opening prayer, often called the collect, to gather the congregation’s praise, repentance, and intentions into a single brief, Trinitarian prayer. This structure is similar to that of the collect found in classical Catholic liturgy, where the introductory section concludes and the Word of God section begins. ⁵ This is also practiced in community prayer as an essential component, as community prayer is a form of worship that must be carried out to strengthen faith at the grassroots level.
6.	Reading of the Holy Scriptures / the Bible	Next, a reading from the Word of God is presented; this may be a reading from the Old Testament or the Gospels, depending on the theme of the prayer. In the “Word Liturgy of the Community,” for example, a passage from Acts 2:42 is cited to emphasize the importance of gathering and praying, with the phrase “they continued to meet together and pray.” ⁶ This is because this Bible reading reflects the kerygma and the community’s reflection on the Word of God.
7.	The Congregation’s Prayer	The leader leads the congregation in prayer as part of the community prayer service following the readings. Most congregational prayers consist of an opening, the presentation of intentions, petitions, and a closing. People pray together for the Church, the parish, the community, the family, and personal needs; this illustrates the priesthood of all believers in the Catholic community, meaning that the faithful also function as priests in intercessory prayer. ⁷
8.	The Lord’s Prayer	The Lord’s Prayer, recited by all the faithful after the prayers of the faithful, is a very important prayer in the Catholic tradition (from Jesus himself). ⁸ It demonstrates the community’s unity in acknowledging God as Father and expresses eschatological hope. In the practice of praying together as a family or in a parish community, the Lord’s Prayer is included among the “basic prayers” that are traditionally memorized and recited by the faithful.

No	Name of Practice	Description
9.	Closing Prayer	The leader then leads a closing prayer that brings together all the intentions that have been expressed, asking God to hear the prayers of the faithful, protect the community, and bring the prayer service to a close. This structure is also outlined in the Catholic Church's liturgical prayer guidelines, which state that prayers should be simple yet meaningful, addressed to God the Father, and offered through the mediation of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. ⁹
10.	Brief Reflection	After the closing prayer, there is often a time for brief reflection. The prayer leader or a member of the congregation shares reflections on the Scripture reading that has just been read, relating it to the realities of community life, personal challenges, and the call of faith. This practice is very important in base communities because it deepens spiritual meaning and koinonia (fellowship) in daily life. ¹⁰ Thus, "Neighborhood Prayer" refers to the neighborhood as a church base community (CBC) that functions as a space for fellowship (koinonia), worship (liturgy), and proclamation (kerygma).
11.	Closing Blessing and Sending Forth	As the final part, the leader offers a closing blessing to the congregation, praying that they may be guided in their daily lives and strengthened in their faith. Then the sending forth takes place; the congregation is sent out to be witnesses of love and prayer in their communities, carrying the spirit of prayer to their homes, workplaces, and social activities. This structure of blessing and sending forth aligns with the teachings on community prayer within religious orders, where "community prayer culminates in and draws its source from the Eucharist," and every community is called to pray together regularly. ¹¹

The data in the table above indicates that the conduct of neighborhood prayer in Ngesti Rahayu Village has a relatively systematic structure and is in harmony with the liturgical order within the Catholic Church tradition. The sequence of prayers, beginning with the opening praise, the sign of the cross, the introduction, and ending with the blessing and sending forth, demonstrates that neighborhood prayer is not understood as merely a spontaneous activity, but rather as a communal religious practice with integrated liturgical, spiritual, and social dimensions.

Each stage of the litany carries religious significance that is collectively experienced by the congregation. The opening praise and the sign of the cross serve as a means of bringing the congregation's awareness of God's presence and affirming the Trinitarian identity of faith. The introduction to the prayer and the call to repentance help the congregation reflectively situate themselves within the context of their real lives, both as individuals and as part of the base community.¹⁸ This demonstrates that the community prayer serves as an initial space for the congregation to connect their daily life experiences with the dimension of faith.

¹⁸ Yohanes Anggi Witono Hadi, "Personal and Communal Faith: A Critical Reflection on Faith for the Present Age," *JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY*, Vol. 08, No. 01 (2019): 65–84, <https://doi.org/10.24071/jt.v8i1.1584>.

Scripture readings, congregational prayers, and the Lord's Prayer occupy a central position in community prayer because they serve as the medium for the encounter between the Word of God and the concrete experiences of the faithful. At this stage, the faithful do not merely act as listeners but also as active participants in expressing their intentions, hopes, and shared life struggles.¹⁹ This practice reflects the understanding of community prayer as a lived religious experience (*lived religion*), where faith is lived out in a reciprocal relationship between God and the community.

The inclusion of brief reflections, closing prayers, as well as blessings and a sending-forth demonstrates that community prayer does not stop at the ritual aspect, but extends into the practical dimensions of life. Reflection on the Scriptures guides the faithful to interpret social realities, life's challenges, and the call of faith together, while the sending forth affirms that the community prayer has implications for the social life of the faithful, such as strengthening solidarity, compassion, and the witness of faith within a pluralistic rural context.²⁰

Thus, the structure of the implementation of the Environmental Prayer has a comprehensive impact on the Catholic community in Ngesti Rahayu Village in the form of strengthened unity, deepened spirituality, increased participation, and the maintenance of social harmony and a vibrant grassroots church. The data in the table confirms that neighborhood prayer in Ngesti Rahayu Village is understood not merely as a liturgical routine, but as a religious experience that shapes communal spirituality and influences the social life of rural Catholics.

THE MEANING OF COMMUNITY PRAYER IN THE LIFE OF FAITH AND THE PARISH COMMUNITY

The meaning of community prayer for Catholics in Ngesti Rahayu Village is not singular but layered. Based on the results of interviews and observations of community prayer practices conducted using a phenomenological approach from Edmund Husserl's theory, the researcher identified three primary meanings experienced by the faithful: religious meaning, social meaning, and existential meaning.²¹

¹⁹ Maria Caritas Trisian Wae Moda and Intansakti Pius X, "Building a Strong Catholic Community in the Digital Age," *Journal of Religious Education, Catechesis, and Pastoral Care (Lumen)*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2024): 202–15, <https://doi.org/10.55606/lumen.v3i1.343>.

²⁰ Rotua Dominika JURNAL JUMPA, Vol. 9, No. 1 (2021): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.60011/jumpa.v9i1.118>.

²¹ Nugraheni et al., "Edmund Husserl's Concept of Phenomenology and Its Relevance to Islamic Education." *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 2, no. 2 (2023): 143–154, <https://doi.org/10.58353/jak.v2i2.140>.

Religious Meaning

The religious significance of community prayer for Catholics in Ngesti Rahayu Village cannot be understood merely as a normative expression of religiosity, but rather as a living religious experience within the context of the community's daily life. This study addresses the academic issue regarding the tendency to interpret environmental prayer as a social routine by demonstrating that, for the majority of the faithful, environmental prayer actually serves as a relevant space for encountering faith amidst the pressures of modernity, the demands of work, and an increasingly individualistic lifestyle.²² In such a context, environmental prayer revives religious awareness, enabling the faithful to shape their relationship with God both personally and communally.

From the phenomenological perspective of Edmund Husserl, the religious experience of the congregation during communal prayer can be understood as a form of intentionality of consciousness directed toward God as the center of faith. This experience does not emerge as an abstract concept, but rather as a meaning experienced within the congregation's *Lebenswelt*.²³ The testimony of Mr. Muryoko states that:

“the house used for prayer is like it has been blessed because the congregation gathers as one and prays together.”²⁴

This indicates that the faithful experience God's presence tangibly through this fellowship. This statement reveals that community prayer provides deep religious meaning for some of the faithful, although others still tend to participate in this activity without *true spiritual engagement*. From Edmund Husserl's phenomenological perspective, such religious experiences are understood as phenomena of consciousness *directed* () toward something—namely, God as the center of faith.²⁵ Phenomenology encourages researchers to understand the experience of prayer as an experience lived by the subject and not merely through external evaluation. Therefore, the meaning of environmental prayer emerges from the faith consciousness of the faithful who experience and internalize the presence of God in the midst of their *lifeworld*.²⁶

²² Theresiani Bheka and Emmeria Tarihoran, “Building a Community of Faith Through Social Media Using Engaging Platforms,” *Jurnal Magistra* 2, no. 2 (2024): 72–81, <https://doi.org/10.62200/magistra.v2i2.101>.

²³ Maria Gorethi Vivi Wulandari and Albert I Ketut Deni Wijaya, “Joint Prayer in Catholic Families in Zone III of the Mater Dei Parish in Madiun During the Covid-19 Pandemic,” *CREPENDUM: Journal of Religious Education* 4, no. 1 (2022): 77–89, <https://doi.org/10.34150/credendum.v4i1.926>.

²⁴ Interview with Mr. Muryoko, Head of the Ngesti Rahayu hamlet, regarding the research “The Significance of Community Prayer for the Catholic Community in Ngesti Rahayu Village,” on November 12, 2025.

²⁵ Bambang Arianto and Bakti Handayani, *Introduction to Phenomenological Studies*, ed. Gozali, First (Balikpapan: Borneo Novelty Publishing, 2024).

²⁶ Supriadi, “The Development of Phenomenology in Social Reality from the Perspective of

The religious significance of neighborhood prayer groups serves as a vital foundation and source of steadfast faith for Catholics who are in a minority within a diverse society. The existence of these prayer groups provides a space for the faithful to strengthen their religious identity, experience the tangible presence of the Church, and build the spiritual courage to bear witness to their faith amidst social differences. Gea's 2023 study confirms that the faithful's active participation in parish-based communities significantly contributes to the strengthening of faith identity and spiritual cohesion within the Catholic community.²⁷ Similarly, the results of a study by Bato and Pius in 2024 state that the involvement of young people in prayer and deepening of faith within the church community strengthens religious commitment and a sense of belonging to the faith community.²⁸ This is reinforced by the statement of Mr. Muryoko, who affirmed that neighborhood prayer brings the faithful

“remain true to the Catholic faith even while living in a village where the majority follows a different religion.”²⁹

It also emphasizes that the religious significance of neighborhood prayer is not merely personal but also communal and serves as a source of identity, enabling them to maintain their fidelity to the Catholic faith within a diverse society. Neighborhood prayer serves as a vital means for the faithful to entrust all of life's struggles to God's providence. Simple economic activities, the uncertainty of harvests, and family dynamics place the faithful in situations that require spiritual strength. Through community prayer, the faithful learn to entrust their lives to God's providence (), an attitude that, according to Situmorang, is the core of the spirituality of community prayer as a form of total self-surrender to divine providence.³⁰ When the faithful bring their gratitude, hopes, and life's challenges into communal prayer, they are truly discovering religious meaning as a source of strength to face the difficult realities of life.

Edmund Husserl,” *SCRIPTURA Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (2015): 52–61, <https://doi.org/10.9744/scriptura.5.2.52-61>.

²⁷ Mawarni Gea and Renata Rufiana Gowasa, “The Importance of Parishioners’ Participation in the Development of Church-Based Communities at St. Mary, Mother of All Nations, Gunungsitoli,” *Jurnal Magistra* 1, no. 1 (2023): 39–52, <https://doi.org/10.62200/magistra.v1i1.46>.

²⁸ Patrisia Rera Bato and Intansakti Pius X, “Youth Participation in Faith Enrichment at St. James, MDKS Parish,” *Journal of Christian and Catholic Education* 2, no. 2 (2024): 306–15, <https://doi.org/10.61132/tritunggal.v2i2.353>.

²⁹ Interview with Mr. Muryoko, as the village head in Ngesti Rahayu regarding the research “The Significance of Community Prayer for the Catholic Community in Ngesti Rahayu Village,” on November 12, 2025.

³⁰ Agustinus Supriyadi and Stkip Widya Yuwana, “The Influence of the Practice of Family Prayer in Christian Households on Children’s Faith Development,” *Journal of Catholic Religious Education* 19, no. 1 (2019): 63–72, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.34150/jpak.v19i1.144>.

Thus, the religious significance of community prayer in Ngesti Rahayu Village is evident not only in the experience of God's presence but also in its role in addressing various spiritual and social concerns of the community: the influence of modernity that weakens faith, the uneven practice of prayer, the need to strengthen religious identity as a minority community, and the call to surrender one's life to God. Community prayer becomes a space that reunites faith, religious consciousness, and the real lives of the faithful in a single spiritual encounter that enriches and strengthens them.

Social Meaning

The strong sense of brotherhood and solidarity that has grown among Catholics in Ngesti Rahayu Village demonstrates the social significance of neighborhood prayer. In the homes of the faithful, prayer gatherings held on a rotating basis serve not only as religious gatherings but also as a means to strengthen social bonds, build trust, and foster values of community in the simple life of the village.³¹ The social relationships built through community prayer are vital for minority communities because they foster a sense of security, mutual support, and interdependence as they face life's various challenges.

Community prayer also broadens the dimension of Christian fellowship, as congregants do not merely gather to pray, but also share life experiences, listen to one another's struggles, and offer emotional support when facing difficult situations. These activities foster genuine solidarity, for example, through collective efforts to assist congregants experiencing economic hardship, illness, or grief. Gea's 2023 study indicates that parishioners' involvement in church-based communities also plays a significant role in building social cohesion and strengthening a sense of belonging among Catholics.³² These findings align with the reality in Ngesti Rahayu, where an on-site interview with Mr. Benedetus Adi—who serves as both the neighborhood prayer group leader and a host frequently involved in neighborhood prayer activities—reinforced this understanding. He stated that;

“Through neighborhood prayer, the community grows closer together. If someone is sick or facing difficulties, we find out quickly and help right away because we often gather and look out for one another.”³³

³¹ Angelo Luciani Moa Dosi Woda, “The Meaning of Christian Brotherhood,” *Journal of Research in Religion and Philosophy (JURRAFI)* 3, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.55606/jurrafi.v3i1.2766>.

³² Gea and Gowasa, “The Importance of Parishioners' Participation in the Development of Church-Based Communities at St. Mary, Mother of Nations Parish in Gunungsitoli.” *Jurnal Magistra*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2023): p. 41, <https://doi.org/10.62200/magistra.v1i1.46>.

³³ Interview with Mr. Benedetus Adi, as the leader of the St. Heironimus neighborhood prayer group regarding the research “The Significance of Neighborhood Prayer for the Catholic Community in Ngesti Rahayu Village,” on November 12, 2025.

Mr. Benedetus Adi's testimony reveals that through community prayer, the congregation becomes more attuned to one another's circumstances, thereby manifesting solidarity in concrete forms such as mutual aid and social assistance. This demonstrates that the social significance of community prayer arises from the collective consciousness of the congregation, shaped through shared experiences within their *Lebenswelt*. Thus, community prayer functions as a social mechanism that connects spirituality with concrete action. This is reinforced by Selatang's 2022 study, which confirms that communal prayer serves as a crucial foundation for the development of pastoral care and social concern, particularly for vulnerable members of the community.³⁴

Neighborhood prayer also helps strengthen internal bonds and maintain good relations with non-Catholics in the surrounding community. Strong internal solidarity serves as social capital for fostering peaceful relations with other groups in a diverse society. The presence of parishioners who support one another and are united within a small community makes them more confident and open to interacting positively with other residents, the majority of whom are Muslim. Therefore, the social significance of neighborhood prayer encompasses aspects such as interfaith fellowship, solidarity in daily life, and the ability to build good social relationships with the community as a whole.

Existential Meaning

The existential meaning of environmental prayer for Catholics in Ngesti Rahayu Village is evident in the awareness that prayer serves as a source of inner strength that sustains their daily lives. The faithful interpret environmental prayer not merely as a spiritual routine, but as a space for existential reflection that provides strength to face the challenging realities of life. In the context of rural life, which is characterized by economic and social uncertainty and limited facilities, environmental prayer functions as *a spiritual coping mechanism* that helps the faithful to endure both mentally and emotionally.

From a phenomenological perspective, the experience of community prayer reveals the intentionality of the congregation's consciousness, directed toward the search for meaning and hope in life.³⁵ The belief that prayer provides the courage to face life's challenges also emerges strongly in the testimonies of the congregation. Mrs. Bernadeta Bertin Setiyanti, an active member and organizer of community prayer, stated that

³⁴ Fabianus Selatang et al., "Interpreting Communal Prayer in the Community as the Foundation of Pastoral Care by Caregivers for People with Disabilities," *Journal of Catholic Religious Education Research* 02, no. 01 (2022): 1–16, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.52110/jppak>.

³⁵ Suardin Gaurifa, Yan J B Parrangan, and Stefanus, "The Role of Prayer in the Formation of Christian Spirituality: A Theological Study," *JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY PONDOK DAUD* 8, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/https://ejournal.sttpk-medan.ac.id/>.

“environmental prayer serves as a guide in facing life’s challenges; when there are problems or when one is unsure of what to do, praying together makes the heart stronger and more at peace.”³⁶

This testimony demonstrates that communal prayer holds a very real existential value for the faithful, serving as a place where they find inner peace and direction in difficult situations. From a phenomenological perspective, such an experience shows that prayer is not merely a ritual, but rather a conscious intentionality directed toward hope and the meaning of life itself.

This existential meaning is also connected to how the faithful interpret the suffering, failures, and uncertainties they experience. Through communal prayer, the faithful learn to view life’s challenges not merely as obstacles, but as part of a journey of faith that deepens their relationship with God. This practice aligns with several findings from research on Catholic base communities, which indicate that involvement in church-based communities helps the faithful develop *spiritual resilience*—the ability to view life through the lens of faith and find strength within it.³⁷ Community prayer serves as one of the means to strengthen this dynamic of resilience because the faithful not only pray but also share experiences, pray for one another, and offer mutual encouragement.

Furthermore, the existential meaning of environmental prayer is evident in the experience of hope. Hope is a vital element in the lives of rural communities facing economic, educational, and health challenges. Mrs. Bernadeta emphasized that every time the community gathers to pray,

“There is a sense of optimism and faith that God will surely make a way.”³⁸

The hope that arises from this prayer provides guidance for the faithful to continue living with enthusiasm, even in the face of adversity. This aligns with Aleksander’s 2021 findings, which indicate that communal prayer within the Church fosters spiritual resilience and optimism among the faithful, particularly among small groups facing socioeconomic challenges.³⁹

³⁶ Interview with Mrs. Bernadeta Bertin Setiyanti, as one of the active parishioners and organizers of the event. “The Significance of Community Prayer for the Catholic Parish Community in Ngesti Rahayu Village,” on November 13, 2025.

³⁷ Gea and Gowasa, “The Importance of Parishioner Participation in the Development of Church-Based Communities at St. Mary, Mother of Nations Parish in Gunungsitoli.” *Jurnal Magistra*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2023): p. 42, <https://doi.org/10.62200/magistra.v1i1.46>.

³⁸ Interview with Mrs. Bernadeta Bertin Setiyanti, an active parishioner and organizer of the “. activity on November 13, 2025

³⁹ Aleksander Arif, Damian Febrianto, and Darianto, “The Faithful’s Understanding of the Meaning of the Eucharist in Daily Life,” *Journal of Religious Education and Theology* 1, no. 9 (2021): 271–77, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.56393/intheos.v1i9.1191>.

Community prayer also has an existential dimension because it fosters a sense of togetherness that overcomes feelings of loneliness. In the context of modern life, which is becoming increasingly individualistic, encounters and togetherness serve as a source of meaning that strengthens both personal and communal identity. When believers gather, share stories, and pray for one another, they feel that their lives are not separate from those of others. This experience answers the deep human need to be understood and accepted. Wiwin's pastoral research in 2022 confirms that communal prayer can reduce psychological burdens because individuals feel supported by the presence of fellow believers.⁴⁰ Thus, community prayer is not merely a religious practice but also an existential therapeutic space that affirms one's place within the community.

For Catholics in the village of Ngesti Rahayu, the existential meaning of community prayer lies in its ability to provide a broad source of strength—such as inner strength, the courage to face challenges, peace of mind, social support, and hope for the future. The community's experience shows that community prayer is not merely a religious ritual, but an integral part of how they understand life, build hope, and remain steadfast in a social reality that is not always easy. Through prayer, people discover that their lives have meaning because they are close to God and their community.

CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of community prayer in Ngesti Rahayu Village demonstrates that the Catholic faithful in Ngesti Rahayu Village perceive community prayer not merely as a ritual obligation or a liturgical routine, but as a living religious experience integrated into their daily lives. Through environmental prayer, the faithful experience an encounter with God that is closely intertwined with their concrete life experiences, such as economic struggles, social relationships, and life as a minority within a pluralistic rural community. This interpretation arises from the faithful's own awareness and is rooted in their lived world (*Lebenswelt*), making the community prayer a space for reflection that helps the faithful interpret their faith within the context of daily life.

Furthermore, the meaning of community prayer has significant implications for the formation of communal spirituality and the social life of rural Catholics. Community prayer serves as a means of strengthening togetherness, solidarity, and a sense of belonging as a community of faith. This practice of communal prayer encourages active participation among the faithful, strengthens relationships among community members, and fosters social sensitivity and care for one another. Thus, community prayer not only shapes

⁴⁰ Wiwin, Klemensia Nini, and Maria Bintang Ahista Fua, "Paul Janssen's Concept of Pastoral Spirituality in the Experiences of Alumni of the Indonesian Pastoral Institute in Church Ministry," *JOURNAL OF SOCIAL MORALITY* 9, no. 2 (2024): 422–34, <https://doi.org/10.21067/jmk.v9i2.10876>.

individual spirituality but also serves as the foundation of social life and communal identity for rural Catholics at the grassroots level.

Based on these findings, opportunities for further research remain open and offer many possibilities for exploration. In-depth studies are needed regarding the role of the younger generation in the sustainability of community prayer, the dynamics of interfaith relations that influence the communal life of the faithful, and the development of community prayer studies by expanding the geographical context, comparing rural and urban communities, or using an interdisciplinary approach to enrich the analysis. For the Church and pastoral workers, the results of this study can serve as material for reflection in developing community prayer as a space for contextual and participatory faith formation. Meanwhile, for the government and policymakers at the local level, the practice of community prayer can be understood as social and spiritual capital that contributes to strengthening social cohesion, interfaith harmony, and the resilience of rural communities.

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