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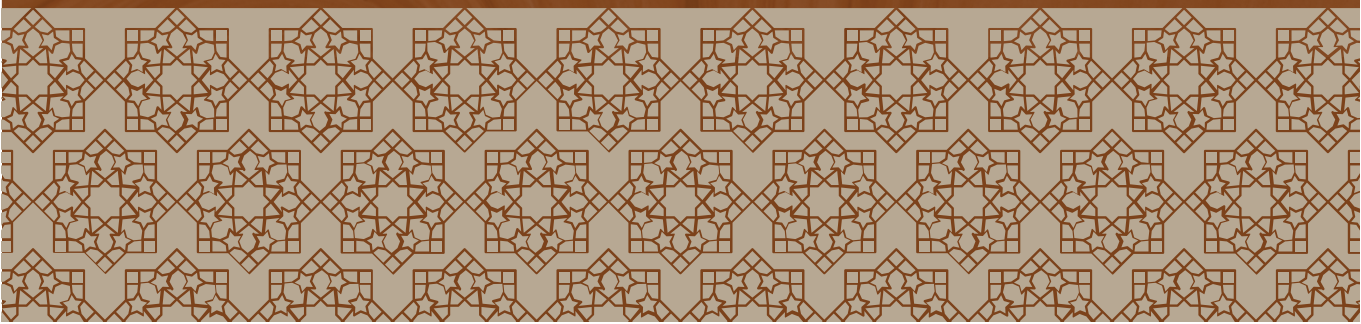
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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the religious maturity of Catholic seminarians at St. Paul's Seminary, Kentungan, Yogyakarta. The analysis of religious maturity is intrinsically linked to the relationship and mutual influence between such maturity and the religious vocation of these candidates. Consequently, in addition to evaluating religious maturity, this research explores the underlying meaning of religious vocation. Employing a qualitative methodology, data were gathered through field surveys, utilizing both psychological and phenomenological approaches to religion. Data collection involved direct observation and in-depth interviews, which were subsequently analyzed through the lens of Abraham Maslow's theory of motivation, William James's theory of religious maturity, and Antonius Denny Firmanto's theological framework of vocation. The findings demonstrate that the seminarians exhibit a high degree of religious maturity, characterized by profound spiritual depth and an intimate personal relationship with the Divine. Furthermore, the results indicate that religious maturity significantly reinforces their religious vocation, manifesting as a steadfast and robust commitment to their religious calling.

Keywords: *religious maturity; religious vocation; Catholic seminarians*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana kematangan beragama calon imam Katolik di Seminari Santo Paulus Kentungan Yogyakarta. Dalam pembahasan kematangan beragama tidak lepas bagaimana hubungan dan pengaruh antara kematangan beragama dan panggilan agama (*vocation*) calon imam Katolik. Jadi, selain membahas kematangan bergamaa penelitian ini juga akan membahas bagaimana makna panggilan agama calon imam Katolik. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif yang dilakukan dengan mengumpulkan data dari hasil survei lapangan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan psikologi agama dan fenomenologi agama. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan melakukan observasi, wawancara kepada pihak

yang bersangkutan yang kemudian dianalisis menggunakan teori motivasi Abraham Maslow, teori kematangan beragama William James, serta yang terakhir teori teologi panggilan Antonius Denny Firmanto. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa para imam Katolik di seminari tersebut memiliki kematangan beragama dengan memperlihatkan kedalaman spiritual dan hubungan pribadi yang dekat dengan Tuhan. Selain itu, dalam hubungannya dengan panggilan agama, kematangan beragama memberikan pengaruh berupa komitmen keagamaan yang kuat kepada mereka.

Kata kunci: kematangan beragama; panggilan agama; calon imam katolik

INTRODUCTION

Humans are rational beings who possess the opportunity to make choices.¹ Every individual is permitted to make decisions regarding their life and to elaborate on each decision they have taken. Society will always be faced with various decisions, one of which is the decision of how to live one's life. Some people decide to marry or remain single, while others decide to surrender their lives to God by becoming a minister or priest. In certain religions, such as Catholicism and Buddhism, the term for clergy frequently appears. In the Catholic Church itself, the term for a candidate for the priesthood is known as a *frater* (from the Latin word meaning 'brother'). Men who have decided to become seminarians will continue their lives in service and follow the guidelines established within a religious community or a theological college.² According to the Code of Canon Law, a *frater* is required to learn and live out the three evangelical counsels during their formation in the seminary. First is chastity, which prohibits a *frater* from marrying or having a wife (living a celibate life) throughout his life. The purpose is for the "brother" to have a pure and undivided heart. Second is obedience, meaning each individual who chooses to become a "brother" must submit to the authority or guidelines provided by the Congregation and the religious community or theological school, while continuing to follow Christ until the end. The third is poverty, which means the "brother" is expected to live a simple yet active life while avoiding excessive collective wealth. Based on the regulations cited from the Code of Canon Law, it is clear that these matters limit seminarians in defining their lives compared to individuals in general, particularly regarding marriage, personal opportunities, and the accumulation of wealth.³

These individuals respond to the call of Jesus Christ, supported by the Holy Spirit. They demonstrate extraordinary dedication in following the footsteps of Christ and fully

¹ Kevin J. Conner, *The Foundations of Christian Doctrine (Pedoman Praktis Tentang Iman Kristen)* (Malang: Gandum Mas, 2004). h. 278.

² Kara Agustri Paulina Maria Ekasari Wahyuningrum, Silvester Adinuhgra, "Motivasi Beriman Katolik Bagi Katekumen Di Paroki Katedral Santa Maria Palangka Raya," *Sepakat: Jurnal Pastoral Kateketik* 9, no. 2 (2023): 01–13.

³ Konferensi Waligereja Indonesia (KWI), *Kitab Hukum Kanonik* (Konferensi Waligereja Indonesia, 2016).

surrendering themselves to the Lord with a “unified” heart. They willingly renounce worldly matters to unite themselves with Christ, aligning with His devotion in serving God the Father and every human being personally.⁴ In the modern world, wealth, status, and family life are the primary goals for most people. Many compete to achieve these things through both good and bad means, leading many to become dependent on worldly pursuits. However, even today, there are still a few individuals who choose not to pursue these worldly pleasures; they are the candidates for the priesthood who will eventually become religious leaders.

Gordon W. Allport, an American psychologist, noted that religiously mature individuals possess the ability to understand the weaknesses of others, provide guidance, and continuously develop their religious potential to foster harmonious relationships with others. From this, it can be concluded that individuals who are mature in their religious aspects are able to increase their commitment to their organization by integrating the meaning and values of their religious teachings, especially in efforts to establish communicative relationships within an organizational environment.⁵

In this context, religious maturity, or mature religion, is assessed by the extent to which a Catholic priestly candidate can apply the message of faith in daily life. This message of faith includes: 1) The understanding and profession of faith, 2) The celebration of faith through liturgy and sacraments, and 3) The internalisation and implementation of faith in daily activities. A person’s ability to recognize and adopt the values of piety is reflected in respected attitudes and behaviors.⁶ Furthermore, Dister adds that the concept of the message of faith relates to the three vows as a religious calling, namely poverty, chastity, and obedience..

In the context of one’s religious development, it can be observed through the ability to understand, internalize, and apply it in daily life.⁷ In absorbing the process of an individual’s faith development, it is necessary to consider that the understanding of the essence of piety is not obtained instantaneously; rather, it requires a long and exhausting preparation, as well as tolerance to realize it. The state of a person’s mind and behavior, including their ways of thinking and acting, cannot be separated from the beliefs that form an integral part of their identity development.⁸

⁴ Theo Riyanto, *Panggilan Religius Awam “Bruder” Dan “Suster” Dan Pemaknaan Terus Menerus* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2015).

⁵ Duane Schultz, *Psikologi Pertumbuhan: Model-Model Kepribadian Sehat* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1998).

⁶ Nico Syukur Dister, *Pengantar Teologi* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2023).

⁷ Nisha Dogra Brian Lunn, Stephen Cooper, *Psychiatry by Ten Teachers*, 2nd ed. (Buca Raton: CRC Press, 2017).

⁸ Ramadhan Lubis Cahaya Maharani Sitompul, Setia Ningsih, Singgih Kusworo, “Perkembangan Jiwa Keagamaan Pada Fase Remaja Akhir,” *Innovative: Journal of Social Science Research* 3, no. 3 (2023).

In addition, religious maturity is the development of identity and insight that is free and normal. Religious development is achieved by individuals through the enhancement of life gathered through various encounters. These encounters occur physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. This accumulation is then reflected in one's perspective on life, as well as daily attitudes and behaviors.⁹

Several studies have been conducted to examine religious maturity. Mopheta and Livia, for instance, authored a scientific article titled “Pengaruh Kematangan Iman Terhadap Kesiediaan Menghidupi Panggilan Dengan Nilai Materialistik Sebagai Moderator”.¹⁰ Their research findings indicate that materialistic values do not serve as an effective moderating variable and play no role in the influence of faith maturity on the willingness to pursue a career as a Christian minister. In addition, faith maturity was found to have a significant influence on the willingness to live out a vocational calling. The positive relationship between religious maturity and life practices has also been demonstrated by various other researchers. For example, a study by Fikri and Rama, despite focusing on Muslim subjects, similarly shows a positive correlation between religious maturity and the practical values of life.¹¹

Another study, a 2023 thesis written by Eva Anjar Sari titled “Kematangan Beragama dan Hubungan Sosial Keagamaan Biarawati Kontemplatif Santa Klara di Desa Caturtunggal Depok Sleman Yogyakarta”.¹² found that these contemplative nuns demonstrate several characteristics of religious maturity as identified by Allport, although not all criteria were met. For instance, some of the St. Clare contemplative nuns exhibit strong differentiation by thinking critically about the teachings they follow. They are driven to draw closer to God through their devotion as contemplative nuns. Eva's research shares several similarities with the current study, such as the focus on how religious maturity influences an individual's decision to become a servant of God. However, while Eva's study focuses on nuns, the subject of this current research is candidates for the priesthood (frater).

⁹ Gordon Willard Allport, *The Individual and His Religion: A Psychological Interpretation* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1950).

¹⁰ Mopheta Audiola Dorkas Livia Yuliatwati, “Pengaruh Kematangan Iman Terhadap Kesiediaan Menghidupi Panggilan Dengan Nilai Materialistik Sebagai Moderator,” *Psychopreneur Journal* 4, no. 2 (2020): 58–66.

¹¹ Rama Furqona, “Hubungan Antara Kesadaran Beragama Dan Kematangan Sosial Dengan Agresivitas Remaja (Santri) Pondok Pesantren Modern Islam Assalaam Surakarta,” *Psychopathic* 1, no. 1 (2009): 51–62; Ahmad Fikri Sabiq, “Analisis Kematangan Beragama Dan Kepribadian Serta Korelasi Dan Kontribusinya Terhadap Sikap Toleransi,” *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Psychology* 2, no. 1 (2020).

¹² Eva Anjar Sari, “Kematangan Beragama Dan Hubungan Sosial Keagamaan Biarawati Kontemplatif Santa Klara Di Desa Caturtunggal Depok Sleman Yogyakarta” (UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2023).

A study in Ireland also demonstrates that faith-based education has a significant impact on the growth of missionary vocations.¹³ This research examined fourteen female missionaries and four volunteers who, after receiving faith-based education, became interested in humanitarian callings driven by a “message” or a noble purpose as missionaries. In contrast, a study in Mindanao, the Philippines, indicates that religious callings among Catholic priestly candidates are driven by diverse motivations. The study further suggests that the seminary structure can sustain motivation and even reinforce the desire of Catholic seminarians to nurture their future calling as priests..¹⁴

This study examines the religious vocation and religious maturity of Catholic priestly candidates at St. Paul’s High Seminary in Kentungan, Yogyakarta. The presence of St. Paul’s High Seminary serves as a testament to the Church’s commitment to providing a foundation for devotional teaching, a mission that has now spanned 50 years. Seminarians are expected to possess a mindset and heart capable of adapting to the modern era and discerning the “signs of the times,” enabling them to become priests who truly assist the ministry in its service. Accordingly, the vision of St. Paul’s High Seminary is to form shepherds modeled after Christ, who are prepared to be sent as bearers of the Good News among individuals and society, consistent with the seminary’s own mission.¹⁵ In 2023, there were four Catholic priestly candidates at St. Paul’s High Seminary who became the focus of this research. This study examines not only the variable of religious maturity but also its relationship with the religious vocation within the Catholic faith, specifically regarding the priesthood. This research seeks to address three primary questions: First, what is the state of religious maturity among Catholic priestly candidates at St. Paul’s High Seminary? Second, what is the relationship and influence between religious maturity and the religious vocation of these candidates? Third, what is the underlying meaning of the religious vocation for the seminarians at St. Paul’s High Seminary?

To conduct this research and address the aforementioned questions, a qualitative approach was selected, specifically using field research, as the subjects of the study are Catholic priestly candidates. Primary data were collected through interviews with these candidates. This research type and method were chosen, as explained by J.R. Raco, to achieve a deeper understanding (*verstehen*) of the meanings inherent in specific events,

¹³ Ellen Regan and Deirdre Raftery, “It Was in the Very Air We Breathed’: The Impact of Faith-Based Education in Ireland on the Growth in Missionary Vocations and Volunteer Aspirations, from 1950,” *International Journal of Educational Development* 101 (2023): 102817, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2023.102817>.

¹⁴ Mike Canoy et al., “Towards the Altar: An In-Depth Exploration of Seminarians’ Aspiration Towards Priestly Vocation,” *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies* 22, no. 2 SE-Articles (August 31, 2023): 641–72, <https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol22.iss2.art13>.

¹⁵ Yusupriyas, “50 Tahun Seminari Tinggi Santo Paulus Kentungan Yogyakarta,” 2023, <https://www.gerejakalasan.org/50-tahun-seminari-kentungan/>.

phenomena, facts, or other issues.¹⁶ Furthermore, since this is a field study employing interview methods, direct observation of the research site and subjects was conducted. Data analysis was performed through deep analysis to ensure the findings could be effectively interpreted using the established theoretical frameworks.

It is necessary in this section to elaborate on the theories appropriate for interpreting the collected data. In the context of religious maturity (mature religion), researchers commonly refer to Gordon Allport, who provides a comprehensive explanation. He defines religious maturity as a form of religiosity that remains open to various facts and values. This type of religiosity provides direction for a framework of life, both theoretically and practically, while remaining steadfast in the adhered religious teachings. Allport identifies the criteria for religious maturity through six personality traits: the capacity for differentiation and self-criticism (well-differentiated and self-critical), a dynamic character, moral consistency, comprehensiveness, an integral outlook on life, and a heuristic quality.¹⁷

In explaining religious vocation, the researcher utilizes the theory of vocation proposed by Antonius Denny Firmanto. The word vocation is derived from the Latin *vocationem*, which means “one who is called”.¹⁸ The essence of *vocatio* is a calling to perform a specific work in service to God. Within this framework, the context of a calling to the priesthood is a profound longing to become like Jesus Christ. The nature of this calling is one of devotion rather than a mere profession.¹⁹ Its primary motive is love, while its quality is measured by sacrifice through self-surrender, mirroring the life of Jesus. Only through this commitment can a priest embody the vision and mission of Christ.²⁰ The theory of religious vocation, which relates to the meaning of the calling for Catholic priestly candidates at St. Paul's High Seminary in Yogyakarta, refers to the concept of a spiritual or divine calling. This means that a religious vocation manifests in their dedication to religious teachings, obedience to ecclesiastical authority, as well as pastoral and sacramental service to the faithful.²¹

¹⁶ J.R. Raco, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif: Jenis, Karakter, Dan Keunggulan* (Jakarta: Gresindo, 2010).

¹⁷ Gordon Willard Allport, *The Individual and His Religion: A Psychological Interpretation*.

¹⁸ “The Spiritual Side of Vocation - JSTOR Daily,” accessed February 18, 2026, <https://daily.jstor.org/the-spiritual-side-of-vocation/>.

¹⁹ Marco Rotman, “Vocation in Theology and Psychology: Conflicting Approaches?,” *Christian Higher Education* 16, no. 1–2 (March 15, 2017): 23–32, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15363759.2017.1249763>.

²⁰ Antonius Denny Firmanto, *Teologi Panggilan* (Malang: Widya Sasana, 2020).

²¹ Nicu Grigore, “Relevant Aspects of the Purpose of Christian Missions,” in *RAIS Conference Proceedings, 2024*, 91–99; Walter McConnel, “The Missionary Call: A Biblical and Practical Appraisal,” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, 2007.

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF ST. PAUL'S HIGH SEMINARY, KENTUNGAN, YOGYAKARTA

St. Paul's High Seminary is one of the seminaries located in the city of Yogyakarta. Its exact address is Jl. Kaliurang Km. 7, Kayen, Condongcatur, Depok District, Sleman Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta 55283. St. Paul's High Seminary serves as a formation and educational institution for future diocesan priestly candidates for the Archdiocese of Semarang, the Diocese of Purwokerto, and the Diocese of Ketapang..

The establishment of St. Paul's High Seminary stands as a testament to the commitment of Msgr. Petrus Willekens, SJ, the Apostolic Vicar of Batavia (1933–1952), to root the Gospel message of Jesus Christ within the Indonesian Church. In 1936, he pioneered the founding of a major seminary for diocesan priestly candidates within the Muntilan Mission Complex. Twenty-five years earlier, in 1911, Msgr. Antonius van Velsen (the second Apostolic Vicar of Batavia) had established a minor seminary in Muntilan to increase the number of indigenous priests. His vision was to build a self-reliant and strong local church. August 15, 1936, was designated as the founding date of St. Paul's High Seminary. Due to the uncertain political climate, characterized by war and oppression, the seminary underwent several relocations. On September 3, 1938, higher education was conducted in Mertoyudan. In January 1941, the seminary moved to Jl. Kode, Yogyakarta. Subsequently, on January 24, 1942, it relocated to Girisonta. Three days later, on January 27, 1942, the educational process was transferred to the Sisters of Charity of St. Charles Borromeo or Carolus Borromeus (CB) novitiate complex on Colombo's street 19, Yogyakarta.

On July 29, 1944, the High Seminary was relocated to the Boedi Oetomo dormitory complex in Sindunegaran, Yogyakarta. Subsequently, on December 10, 1945, the seminary was moved to St. Ignatius College, Yogyakarta, before moving again to Jl. Kode on August 20, 1952. Finally, on January 6, 1968, St. Paul's Seminary occupied a spacious area in Kayen, Kentungan, Yogyakarta. During the Japanese occupation, the seminary was closed by the Japanese government. At that time, priestly candidates were assigned to parishes to study theology and pastoral ministry alongside the priests.²²

The primary purpose of St. Paul's High Seminary is to prepare candidates for the priesthood for their eventual ordination. In this regard, the various missions within the field of formation are outlined as follows:

1. To nurture and develop a robust and profound spiritual life characterized by an openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, enabling priestly candidates to grow as dedicated spiritual leaders. This section contains analysis and discussion

²² Seminari Tinggi Kentungan, *Pedoman Pendidikan Calon Imam Diosesan Seminari Tinggi Santo Paulus Yogyakarta* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2011).

2. To form mature personalities who are balanced in their affectivity, filled with compassion, and committed to the advancement of others. This formation focuses on the qualities of humility, simplicity, the ability to collaborate, a readiness for self-sacrifice, and the capacity for wise decision-making, enabling priestly candidates to develop as refined men of culture (*budayawan*) of high quality.
3. To foster discipline and spirituality through lifelong learning, alongside a depth of reflection as men of culture. This aim ensures that the priestly candidates' realization of the priesthood and their pastoral ministry continue to evolve.
4. To create a community of disciples of Jesus characterized by a spirit of sharing in love, joy, responsibility, cooperation, and diligent, faithful mutual service, as well as a profound concern for the environment. This reflects the essential qualities of a good shepherd to the faithful.
5. To cultivate *caritas pastoralis*, a generous, joyful, and reliable ministry within the Church. This involves encouraging a readiness to serve as witnesses of the Gospel who are engaged in societal transformation, prioritizing service to the marginalized, the weak, the poor, and the excluded. Collectively, these efforts aim to enhance engagement within the dynamics of Church life.

MOTIVATIONS FOR PURSUING THE PRIESTHOOD AMONG CATHOLIC PRIESTLY CANDIDATES AT ST. PAUL'S HIGH SEMINARY, KENTUNGAN, YOGYAKARTA

Becoming a Catholic priestly candidate represents a profound spiritual calling and a commitment to serving God and His people within the Catholic Church.²³ This endeavor entails a full dedication to the teachings and traditions of the Church, complemented by intensive preparation through theological education, spiritual formation, and pastoral practice. A priestly candidate is expected to cultivate an intimate relationship with God through prayer, asceticism, and the sacraments, while simultaneously deepening their understanding of Catholic doctrine and their capacity to provide pastoral care to the faithful. It is a calling characterized by significant challenges and sacrifices, yet it offers profound opportunities for growth in faith and service to others.

Pursuing the vocation to the Catholic priesthood is a journey characterized by sacrifice, spiritual growth, and sincere service to others. To be motivated to become a Catholic priestly candidate signifies possessing a profound drive and a robust spiritual calling to serve God and His people through the Catholic Church. This motivation

²³ Petervir A Paz, "Exploring Life Narratives on Challenged Religious Vocation: A Phenomenological Study of One's Discernment," *Fieldwork in Religion* 17, no. 2 (2022): 124–44.

represents an intimate and personal calling, involving a steadfast commitment to divine and ecclesial service. In this regard, it is evident that motivations among fraters or Catholic priestly candidates may vary, depending on their individual backgrounds, experiences, and spiritual journeys. While each individual possesses a unique set of motivations, certain differences may emerge among them. Despite these variations, their unity in consecrating their lives to the service of God and the faithful remains the underlying value of their priestly vocation. Furthermore, religious motivation significantly influences religious maturity (mature religion).

A Catholic priestly candidate, familiarly known as Frater Tian, stated that:

“When I was in elementary school, I observed a visit from an individual who was highly esteemed and respected; as it turned out, he was a priest. I was deeply impressed by his profound humility, and that encounter left me in awe. It was that specific moment that initially sparked my desire to become a priestly candidate”.

Furthermore, Frater PD expressed his motivation for becoming a Catholic priestly candidate as follows:

“I intend to respond to God’s love, which was first bestowed upon me, by offering myself to the Church. I am deeply moved by the lifestyle of priests—their simplicity, compassion, servant heart, and closeness to the faithful. A priest serves as a channel of God’s grace to humanity and leads people toward God.”

In a subsequent interview, Frater YB described his motivation for becoming a Catholic priestly candidate as follows:

“Regarding motivation, it is a long journey because it has continuously evolved from my childhood to the present. As a child, I simply wanted to wear the soutane and drink the [altar] wine—just a child’s imagination. However, after experiencing life as a frater, having worn the soutane and partaken of the wine, what sustains me in this vocation is a development where my motivations are increasingly purified and clarified”.

From the explanations provided above, it is evident that the motivations among these three Catholic priestly candidates are quite diverse. For instance, the motivation to become a priestly candidate stemming from a desire to be valued and respected by the faithful is one of the factors influencing Frater Tian. In this context, such a motive may be more closely related to the esteem needs or the need for recognition from others within Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. At this level of need, individuals feel a

drive to obtain recognition, appreciation, and respect from others as a form of validation for their identity, qualities, or contributions. For some Catholic priestly candidates, the desire to receive esteem and respect from the laity can serve as a significant motivating factor in choosing the path of the priesthood.

RELIGIOUS MATURITY AMONG CATHOLIC PRIESTLY CANDIDATES AT ST. PAUL'S HIGH SEMINARY, KENTUNGAN, YOGYAKARTA: A PERSPECTIVE BASED ON WILLIAM JAMES' THEORY

William James' theory of religious experience highlights various traits or characteristics of such experiences, including transcendent experiences, self-transformation, the acceptance of life-altering experiences, and deep emotional engagement.²⁴ The religious maturity of Catholic priestly candidates can be analyzed through this framework by considering how they respond to their spiritual calling, grow in their understanding of Catholic doctrine, undergo shifts in thought and behavior, and engage in profound relationships with both God and the ecclesial community. By applying James' theory, we can understand how the spiritual journey and religious experiences of these candidates reflect the process toward religious maturity. This analysis provides a deeper insight into the factors influencing spiritual growth and ministry within the context of the priestly vocation in the Catholic Church. James argues that religion plays a central role in determining human behavior.

Priestly candidates consecrate their entire lives to the service of God. As believers, they establish God as their ultimate goal and strive with all their might to achieve that end. The capacity to understand religion and utilize it as a guiding principle for one's attitudes and behaviors is a hallmark of an individual's religious maturity.²⁵ Furthermore, religious behavior significantly influences social behavior.²⁶

In accordance with James' earlier explanation, the primary criterion serving as a benchmark for an individual's religious maturity is their sensibility toward the existence of God. In this regard, Frater Tian stated the following:

“An individual who is sensitive to the existence of God will possess a heart and mind that are constantly connected to Him. This connection of heart and mind does not imply merely praying in isolation from other activities. Rather, being constantly connected means that every action performed is accompanied by

²⁴ Roni Ismail, “Beragama Bahagia Untuk Bina Damai: Kajian Atas Teori Kematangan Beragama William James,” *Living Islam* 7, no. 1 (2024): 145–62.

²⁵ Ida Windi Wahyuni, “Hubungan Kematangan Beragama Dengan Konsep Diri,” *Al-Hikmah: Jurnal Agama Dan Ilmu Pengetahuan* 8, no. 1 (2011).

²⁶ Agus Riyadi, “Pengaruh Kesadaran Diri Dan Kematangan Beragama Terhadap m Komitmen Organisasi Karyawan RSUD Tugurejo Semarang,” *Pympathic* 1, no. 2 (2015).

faith. In everything one does, God is kept in mind; for instance, as one carries out their work, it is done with a heart and mind mindful of God, where every step is accompanied by reflection and awe at the majesty of God's creation."

In addition, Frater PD provided the following explanation:

"One of the most existential and precious experiences for me was the peregrinatio—the experience of a long-distance pilgrimage without carrying any provisions or pocket money. At that time, I was tasked with walking from Semarang to Nanggulan, a distance of approximately 125 kilometers. Initially, I felt fearful and anxious about whether I could reach the destination safely. Throughout the journey, I reflected: Does God truly exist, and does He love me? It was proven that God is indeed present and loves me; I reached my destination safely and in good health. I truly felt God's presence through the kindness of many people who willingly provided me with food, drink, and even money without my asking. Since then, I have become increasingly convinced that God will always accompany me on my life's journey".

Frater YB offered a perspective closely aligned with that of Frater PD, stating that:

I feel that from the very beginning, God loved me first, as I have always felt His presence accompanying me through life's challenges. I know that God is always following or accompanying me."

Based on the testimonies provided by Frater Tian, Frater PD, and Frater YB, perceiving the existence of God within specific moments is a frequent occurrence for priestly candidates and individuals experiencing a spiritual vocation. In such moments, one may sense the presence of the Divine in a profound and convincing manner, providing a deeply significant spiritual experience that shapes their subsequent religious journey. It is essential to note that these experiences are inherently subjective and personal. Although an individual may not always perceive the existence of God with the same intensity at all times, such encounters serve as a vital source of strength, consolation, and inspiration throughout their spiritual formation. Furthermore, these experiences reinforce their commitment to serving God and the ecclesial community with unwavering dedication.

Meanwhile, according to James, the second criterion of religious maturity is continuity and self-surrender to God. This second point emerges as a consequence of the first, wherein religious adherents attain spiritual maturity consciously and free from external pressure. They adapt their lives in accordance with God's will as a form of acknowledgment that God is Supreme Goodness. An individual who has reached

spiritual maturity in religion is no longer ensnared by the ego, which tends to dominate the self through internal moral failings or wickedness of the heart.²⁷

Self-surrender to God is often a pivotal step in an individual's spiritual journey. As individuals progress in their spiritual life, they tend to become increasingly aware of the necessity to surrender themselves to God's will and relinquish control over their own lives. In a similar vein, Frater PD stated the following:

“All the dynamics, struggles, joys, and sorrows of life must be faced. I constantly believe that God will not allow any difficulty to occur that exceeds my capabilities. Moreover, trust and self-surrender to God are essential”.

When facing life's challenges and trials, continuity and self-surrender to God provide strength and inner peace. By placing his trust entirely in God, Frater PD can rest assured that he is not alone in his life's journey.

According to James, the third criterion of religious maturity is that Self-Surrender to God engenders Happiness and Freedom. William James characterizes the religious attitude as a belief in the existence of an invisible order and the desire to live in harmony with it. This relationship between humanity and the invisible reality religion generates life-altering effects for the individual, activating their spiritual energy and driving spiritual endeavors. A religiously mature person possesses a zest for life, bestowing a new sense of meaning and glory upon things that are ordinarily perceived as mundane. James, therefore, views religion as a primary source of happiness.

This criterion can be observed in the testimonies of the Catholic priestly candidates, such as Frater Tian and Frater PD. Both mentioned that self-surrender to God grants them an extraordinary sense of happiness. Frater PD stated: “*Surrendering myself to God allows me to experience the infinite grace of Divine love, which provides authentic happiness.*” Meanwhile, Frater Tian stated:

“I can feel happiness through self-surrender to God. Within happiness, there are two distinct concepts: freedom and joy. Freedom [in this sense] is a form of happiness that is conditional; for instance, I am happy because my second chapter has been accepted, so, the happiness stems from that acceptance. Joy, on the other hand, is unconditional happiness, arising because there are no longer any shackles or burdens.

²⁷ Roni Ismail, “Konsep Toleransi Dalam Psikologi Agama,” *Religi: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama* VIII, no. 1 (2012); Wika dan Roni Ismail, “Konversi Agama Santriwati Pondok Pesantren Ulul Albab Balirejo, Umbulharjo, Yogyakarta,” *Living Islam*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2023, hlm. 141-162; doi: <https://doi.org/10.14421/lijid.v6i1.4452>

In truth, surrendering oneself to God is not a burden; it is akin to someone who willingly strives for their beloved and relinquishes personal pleasures for their sake. This sense of being blessed engenders a happiness that transcends all else. Authentic happiness flourishes within a human being whose soul is tranquil and pure.²⁸

A similar condition is experienced by Frater Tian, who notes that self-surrender to God enables him to experience God's infinite love, thereby attaining authentic happiness.

Meanwhile, the final criterion according to William James is the transformation of emotions into love and harmony. Individuals who have attained spiritual maturity in religion undergo an emotional transformation toward feelings of love and concord. Those who have reached this stage of spiritual maturity achieve a state of tranquility and peace, where love serves as the foundation for all their interpersonal relationships. Consequently, religiously mature individuals are not bound by hatred, prejudice, or hostility; instead, love and harmony become the bedrock of their social and interpersonal lives. James argues that a monk represents the ideal archetype of life for an individual who has reached spiritual maturity in religion. Therefore, while not everyone may reach this pinnacle of religious maturity, individuals such as Sufis, Monks, Nuns, Priests, and Priestly Candidates are regarded as those who have attained spiritual maturity within James's framework.²⁹

In this context, the candidates (fraters) mention that love and harmony flourish because they consistently share their experiences, prayers, and ministry together. This aligns with the statement made by one of them, Frater Tian, who noted: "*In the seminary, there are moments when the candidates gather and share everything they have done; in those moments, we can offer solutions to what other candidates are experiencing, and conversely, receive solutions from them as well.*"

THE MEANING OF RELIGIOUS VOCATION AMONG CATHOLIC PRIESTLY CANDIDATES AT ST. PAULS MAJOR SEMINARY

Religious vocation describes a personal and profound divine event, a process involving dialogue and discernment with God.³⁰ Furthermore, a religious vocation is viewed as a specific invitation from God that requires a sincere response from the individual. It is described as a profound and long-term life commitment. This reflects that a religious vocation is not merely about specific tasks or occupations, but rather about wholehearted devotion and permanent sacrifice in serving God and His people.

²⁸ Amril, *Akhlak Tasawuf (Meretas Jalan Menuju Akhlak Mulia)* (Bandung: Refika Aditama, 2015).

²⁹ Roni Ismail, "Konsep Toleransi Dalam Psikologi Agama."

³⁰ Firmanto, *Teologi Panggilan*.

A life commitment in pursuing a religious vocation also reflects the personal sacrifice required to follow Christ. A priest is expected to prioritize service to God and His people above personal interests and must be prepared to face challenges and trials throughout his priestly journey. This commitment further encompasses a willingness to continually grow in faith and obedience, as well as to accept direction and guidance from ecclesiastical authorities and spiritual directors.³¹

This is in accordance with what was stated by Frater Tian, as follows:

“A priest who has responded to his religious vocation surrenders himself entirely to the Catholic Church and commits to living his life in service and sacrifice for God and His people. This involves living in poverty, chastity, and obedience, as well as serving the faithful with love and compassion in daily life.”

Consequently, vocation as a life commitment underscores that becoming a priest is not a career choice or an ordinary occupation, but a calling that requires wholehearted devotion, sacrifice, and unwavering loyalty to the Church and the teachings of Christ.

Similarly, a similar sentiment was expressed by Frater PD, as follows:

“The vocation to the priesthood is a history of dialogue between God and humanity between the love of God who calls and the freedom of the individual who offers a response of love to Him. For me, the call to become a priest is 100% Divine grace and 100% human effort. Thus, a vocation is not an ambition, but rather a cooperation between grace and human response. It requires a balance of prayer and effort”.

What Frater PD expresses reflects the belief that God has a unique plan for each individual, and that through prayer and reflection, one can discover the right path in pursuing their religious vocation. This process also helps individuals understand the consequences and challenges associated with living out a religious calling, while preparing them to fulfill the pastoral and sacramental duties encountered in the life of a Catholic priest. Understanding these consequences and challenges helps a candidate or seminarian prepare themselves mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, as well as develop the necessary resilience to face the obstacles and trials on their journey as servants of God.

In this regard, vocation as a life commitment underscores that becoming a priest is not a career choice or an ordinary occupation, but a calling that requires wholehearted

³¹ David Susilo Pranoto, “Makna Panggilan dan Pilihan Dalam Surat 2 Petrus 1:10-11,” *Manna Rafflesia* 2, no. 1 (2015).

devotion, sacrifice, and unwavering loyalty to the Church and the teachings of Christ.³² Furthermore, religious individuals often feel that their work, including acts of service, possesses a deeper sense of meaning and purpose.³³

It is also stated that vocation as a **spiritual discernment process** emphasizes the importance of spiritual discernment in understanding and responding to a religious calling. Discernment itself is a spiritual process that guides an individual to make specific decisions in accordance with God's will. This highlights that a religious vocation is not instantaneous but involves profound reflection, prayer, and spiritual direction to comprehend God's will in one's life. In this regard, Frater PD's discernment reflects the conviction that God has a unique plan for every individual, and that through prayer and reflection, one can discover the right path in pursuing their religious vocation.³⁴ This process also assists individuals in understanding the consequences and challenges associated with living out a religious vocation, as well as preparing them to fulfill the pastoral and sacramental duties encountered in the life of a Catholic priest. In this context, Father Edy explains that understanding the consequences and challenges related to a religious vocation helps a candidate or seminarian to prepare themselves mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, while developing the necessary resilience to face obstacles and trials in their journey as servants of God.

Finally, a religious vocation is also a **call to be part of the larger Church community**. This analysis underscores the importance of the individual's relationship with the faith community in living out their religious calling, as well as the support and cooperation provided by that community in serving God together..³⁵ Being part of the larger Church community is one of the meanings of vocation frequently experienced by the candidates (fraters). In this regard, Frater YB shared that he once met a woman of the same faith who prayed for him to become a priest. He stated:

“At that time, I was invited by my priest to attend a prayer service at the church, where I met an elderly woman. She said to me, ‘I hope you can become a priest here to lead the prayers, Frater.’ At that moment, my heart was deeply touched. Thus, being a priestly candidate involves experiencing support and guidance

³² Maximus Manu Yosep Uskomo, “Exploring Seminarians’ Motivation to Pursue Priesthood,” *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)* 8, no. 6 (2024).

³³ Farr A Curlin et al., “Do Religious Physicians Disproportionately Care for the Underserved?,” *The Annals of Family Medicine* 5, no. 4 (2007): 353–60; Brent D Rosso, Kathryn H Dekas, and Amy Wrzesniewski, “On the Meaning of Work: A Theoretical Integration and Review,” *Research in Organizational Behavior* 30 (2010): 91–127.

³⁴ Benjamin L. Webb Melissa Bopp, Meghan Baruth, Jane Anthony Peterson, “Health Effects of a Religious Vocation: Perspectives from Christian and Jewish Clergy,” *The Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling* 70, no. 4 (2016): 266–71.

³⁵ Firmanto, *Teologi Panggilan*.

from the faith community, including fellow priests, spiritual directors, and the Catholic laity, in pursuing one's religious vocation”.

Reflecting on Frater YB's statement, vocation as a communal calling emphasizes that priestly ministry is not isolated but is inherently connected to the lives and needs of the People of God. A priest is expected to be a role model of faith and service for his community, collaborating with the laity to build the local Church and expand the Kingdom of God in the world.³⁶ Consequently, vocation as a communal calling underscores the importance of strong relationships with the faith community in pursuing a religious calling, as well as the understanding that priestly ministry is not merely about the individual, but about serving and fostering the growth of the faith community as a whole.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGIOUS MATURITY AND RELIGIOUS VOCATION AMONG CATHOLIC PRIESTLY CANDIDATES AT ST PAUL MAJOR SEMINARY, KENTUNGAN

The religious maturity of Catholic priestly candidates, in accordance with William James's theory, is inherently linked to their religious vocation at Saint Paul Major Seminary, Kentungan, as the two are mutually influential and interconnected. Religious maturity serves as an essential foundation for an individual to respond to a religious calling with the necessary willingness, integrity, and spiritual depth.

High religious maturity, as proposed by William James and Allport, often serves as an essential foundation for a religious vocation. The more mature an individual is in the Catholic faith, the more likely they are to respond to a spiritual calling with seriousness and sincerity.³⁷ Conversely, the experience of a religious vocation can foster an individual's spiritual growth and maturity. Through this vocation, Catholic priestly candidates are encouraged to explore their faith more deeply, cultivate a stronger commitment to the Church, and prepare themselves for effective pastoral ministry, as they will eventually become religious figures who serve as role models or examples for others.

Pastoral formation within the Catholic seminary environment also plays a crucial role in enhancing religious maturity and strengthening the religious vocation of priestly candidates. As stated by Frater YB as follows:

³⁶ “Three Views on ‘Having a Vocation’ | Church Life Journal | University of Notre Dame,” accessed February 18, 2026, <https://churchlifejournal.nd.edu/articles/three-views-on-having-a-vocation/>.

³⁷ Bernardo Brown, “Less Virtuous than It Seems The Motivations behind Priestly Vocations in Catholic Sri Lank,” *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 13, no. 3 (2023): 543–56.

“Through spiritual direction, community support, and spiritual formation, priestly candidates are given the opportunity to grow in their faith, explore their calling more deeply, and respond to the challenges and trials in their journey toward the priesthood.”

The relationship between religious maturity and the religious vocation of Catholic priestly candidates at Saint Paul Major Seminary, analyzed through William James’s theory of religious maturity, indicates that such maturity involves a holistic development in one’s faith. This encompasses a deeper understanding of religion, a more intimate relationship with God, as well as self-acceptance and devotion to the faith community.

The relationship between the religious maturity of Catholic priestly candidates and Allport’s perspective on religious vocation is an integral aspect of their preparation for pastoral ministry within the Catholic Church. Through a balanced emphasis on these two aspects, Catholic seminaries strive to form priests who are not only pastorally competent but also steadfast in their faith and commitment to the Church. At Saint Paul Major Seminary, this is encapsulated in two core principles: *ngimami* and *ngimani*. These signify the dual role of being a role model and a priest for the faithful (*ngimami*), while consistently anchoring one’s life in faith in God (*ngimani*).

A deeper understanding of religion among Catholic priestly candidates at Saint Paul Major Seminary involves rigorous theological study, prayer, and profound spiritual reflection. The religious maturity of these candidates, as discussed in the previous chapter, is evident in their ability to understand and interpret Church teachings with wisdom and contextuality. Furthermore, these attitudes are demonstrated through their consistency in time management, particularly in the way they exercise self-awareness.

Utilizing William James’s theory of religious maturity, it is evident that the relationship between religious maturity and the religious vocation of Catholic priestly candidates at Saint Paul Major Seminary involves a holistic development in both faith and ministry. Religious maturity enables them to grow in understanding, foster a personal relationship with God, and achieve self-acceptance all of which are essential aspects of their preparation to become faithful and dedicated Catholic priests.

RELIGIOUS MATURITY AND THE CONTEXT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

The theory of religious maturity is considered a well-established framework within the Psychology of Religion. Gordon Allport’s work remains the primary reference, particularly for the subject of this research. Despite being an older theory, it remains highly relevant today. Within the context of Religious Studies and specifically in the

psychology of religion this theory is frequently utilized as a benchmark to measure an individual's religiosity and its relationship with their social life.

This discussion is crucial given that religious issues are highly sensitive in Indonesia. The religious maturity of individuals or groups becomes significant in fostering a harmonious religious life built upon a foundation of sound religious maturity. This aligns with the axiological perspective of Religious Studies, which is expected to contribute to interreligious harmony in Indonesia. This research demonstrates that religious maturity can be cultivated by establishing a robust educational system one that is capable of evoking or providing a sense of the Almighty's presence to every individual. An educational system such as that in a seminary creates a milieu or environment that progressively matures one's religiosity..

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and descriptions derived from the research on the meaning of religious vocation among Catholic priestly candidates at Saint Paul Major Seminary, Kentungan, the researcher draws the following conclusions: Regarding the first research question, the religious maturity of the candidates at Saint Paul Major Seminary fulfills the criteria of religious maturity established by William James and Gordon Allport. The candidates interviewed demonstrated a spiritual depth in their personal relationship with God, a wise understanding of Church teachings, and a steadfast commitment to their religious calling. They also exhibited tolerance toward the views of others, equanimity in facing life's complexities, joy in serving God, and integrity in their daily lives. Thus, they embody the aspects of religious maturity emphasized by both theories. William James posits that religious maturity involves the holistic development of an individual through faith and spiritual experience. The Catholic priestly candidates at Saint Paul Major Seminary manifest this maturity by: (1) Finding profound depth in their personal relationship with God through prayer, meditation, and the sacraments; (2) Studying and comprehending the teachings of the Catholic Church in a wise and contextual manner; and (3) Embracing the responsibilities and duties inherent in their religious vocation.

The meaning of religious vocation, based on Antonius Denny Firmanto's theory, for the Catholic priestly candidates at Saint Paul Major Seminary, is defined as a personal call received from God to serve within the Catholic Church. This theory emphasizes that a religious vocation is not merely a career choice or a personal desire, but a divine calling that demands a willingness to offer oneself entirely to God and His people. For the candidates at the seminary, the meaning of vocation is manifested through a holistic life commitment, devotion to the Church, and the readiness to live in accordance with the teachings of Christ. By understanding vocation as a profound and personal divine call, candidates can pursue their journey toward the priesthood with the necessary conviction, integrity, and

courage. The relationship between religious maturity and religious vocation among these candidates is that religious maturity provides a solid foundation for responding to their calling with willingness, commitment, and integrity. Through the process of spiritual development and a deep understanding of the Catholic faith, the candidates strengthen their personal relationship with God and prepare themselves to serve the Church and the faithful with full dedication. Consequently, religious maturity and religious vocation complement and reinforce one another throughout their journey toward the priesthood.

There are specific recommendations regarding future research: this study was limited by the number of informants. While this small sample size provided a distinct advantage by allowing for a more profound and nuanced exploration of individual feelings and experiences, it also opens up opportunities for quantitative research involving a broader and larger population. Therefore, it is hoped that future studies will complement these findings using quantitative methods with a larger sample size. Such an approach would provide a more comprehensive and generalizable overview of the themes explored in this research.

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