



## **Missionary Prayer Intention - June 2006: "For bishops, clergy and laity: may they consider inter-religious dialogue and inculturation of the Gospel part of daily efforts to evangelize all people"** **Comment by Father Ignatius Ismartono, SJ, Secretary of the Crisis and Reconciliation Service of the Bishops' Conference of Indonesia**

Vatican City (Fides Service) - The main mission of Jesus is to love. Inter-religious dialogue and inculturation is a matter of love. We live with people from different religious and traditional background and we are called to love them, who ever they are. Our dealing with people around us is to love, as summarized in the triple exhortation for loving: to love God (Mt. 22:37), to love our neighbor as our ourselves (Mt 19:19, 22:39) as well as to love our enemies (Mt 5:44).

Dialoging is one of many forms of loving. In dialogue (dia - logos = through word) we have to meet the partners, we have to see them with our own eyes; we talk with them with our mouth, in such a way that together we know how to express our love. In dialogue, we meet others with respect; we respect them, because God also loves them; we meet God in His human face.

Human being lives in a particular culture, so loving human being means to respect their culture, because culture means every efforts of the community to try to find the best way how to be more and more human.

We need not to be afraid to dialogue, since all peoples are yearning or thirsty for God. Because of globalization, most of us do not live in a homogenous society any longer, our neighbors are not those with the same religion or culture as ours. But we believe that even though our religion and culture are different, basically and naturally they are not against God, since He says: "...anyone who is not against us is for us...(Mk 9: 40). We believe that Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Confucians are not against Him.

The original meaning of gospel is good news. We have to evangelize our neighbors means that we have to bring good news to them. It is not an instant work; it needs a process, even - many times - a long process. We have to shape our lives that it becomes good news. In our experience we come to know people who express themselves that they want to follow Jesus, not primarily because they listen to an ardent sermon, but because they meet one of us, followers of Christ who does not only preach with words but also with deeds, with good works in our daily life.

Now the work of evangelization becomes more difficult. Religions are more depicted as source of violence. It is a challenge of the followers of Christ to present Christ as the Peace Maker. Bringing peace is not doing something from without, but from within. In every human heart there is a seed of peace. It must be nurtured by being communicated to others. Let us give our ears to the Muslim wish for peace that is expressed in the word of salam, to the Hindu's shanty and invitation of Buddhists to pray because prayer is the force of peace.

The Catholic communities live in and face different situations. In each and every situation the call to become good news is indispensable. We have to bring witness that bringing good news is our main concern. Where are we? Are we in the situations full of violent conflict? Do not surrender. We have to start to make the initial step to come to the victims to help.

Are we in the situation of tolerance? If so, we have to develop more communications with people from other religious and cultural background that we may have common space to exchange the noble values found in our respective religion. Based on this common and universal noble values, we may have a common platform to collaborate that with the blessing of our Lord, we may join His work to create a new world, a world of peace which is more habitable for all creatures. P. Ignatius Ismartono, SJ. (Agenzia Fides 23/5/2006; righe 44, parole 637)