

The Christmas Situation in a pandemic, Jakarta Province



“Gloria in Excelsis Deo”

We the Sisters of Notre Dame in Indonesia wish a Merry Christmas 2020 and a Happy New Year 2021 to all of you, our beloved Sisters and readers. Peace in heaven, peace on earth and peace in your heart. May the joy of Christmas and the New Year be a blessing to everyone with the same passion to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

On this occasion, we would like to share our experiences of celebrating Christmas. The COVID-19 pandemic has written many stories that will not be forgotten from the memory of the human race. This situation has also had a direct impact on the nuances of Christmas this year. We still continue to celebrate the Eucharist online and “stay at home”. Christmas is usually synonymous with festive celebrations, gifts and hospitality to families and even long holidays while welcoming the new year. This year, Pope Francis' Christmas Message is very clear for us to truly understand Christmas Day, “Christmas should not be consumerism. Christmas should not be reduced to a sentimental or consumerist festival, filled with gifts and good wishes but poor in the Christian faith. "The Pope's message reminds us that celebrating Christmas is not just a routine, but a time to contemplate the birth of Jesus 2000 years ago which was full of struggle.

The pandemic situation also does not limit our space to be creative. Sr. Maria Paula SND, a teacher, and six Perwitah Asih Kindergarten children sang the song, Beautiful Night and sent Christmas greetings to parents and friends. The six children consist of five Muslims and one Christian. They may not have faith in Jesus, but what they do know is that Jesus is a Friend. This activity is fully supported by the parents of the students.

Children are given the opportunity to practice the songs in their own homes accompanied by their parents. The uniqueness is extraordinary, because parents are willing to take the time to accompany their children during practice to master the songs and lyrics. Indirectly, parents are also involved in helping the school.

On December 22nd, the children together with the Sisters and other faculty, gathered at the Santa Maria Retreat House to record the sound as well as make a video. During the gathering, Sisters, teachers and children observed health protocols, namely by maintaining distance, wearing masks and washing their hands diligently. The recording of the music and the creation of the video was time consuming. Since it was not completed during the morning session from 10.00 to 12.45, recording was continued from 17.30 until 18.00. The parents accompanied the children until the shooting was complete. The children's videos were also used by the sisters in the Santo Rafael community to wish Sisters in the other communities as well as young people a Merry Christmas and New Year. The sisters wore traditional clothes from Kalimantan and Java.

The same activity was also carried out by the Sisters, teachers and children at the Notre Dame School - Grand Wisata. They wish all a Merry Christmas 2020 and New Year 2021 virtually. The teachers wished Merry Christmas by using several regional languages from several provinces where they come from and several foreign languages such as Javanese, NTT, North Sumatra, West Java, English, Spanish and Chinese languages. They then closed with Christmas greetings from the children and the teachers. The children were so excited and enthusiastic in being creative to wish them a Merry Christmas and New Year with their wonderful songs and greeting cards.

We are one in the same hope. In the New Year 2021 may our earth be free from the COVID-19 pandemic and may all activities again return to normal. May our children be able to go back to learning at school, meet with the teachers and once again play with their friends. Soli Deo