



WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK 2016

INTERFAITH PRAYER FOR PEACE

*-Sisters of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Area Indonesia and
-Islamic State University – Bandung - Indonesia*

With our world in such turmoil, what can we do? What can people of all faiths – or no faith – do together? Talking often leads to disharmony. Let's try something else. PRAY!. We all do it. We all want peace. During the UN's World Interfaith Harmony Week, we RSCJ(Religieus Sacre Coeur de Jesu) in Indonesia decided to invite people of any faith or none to pray for peace together? A simple idea that caught fire! If we want children to come, we should have it on a school day. The "extra day", February 29 seemed better than the 21st which was decided earlier. The Religious Studies Department of UIN (Universitas Islam Negeri) heard about the simple plan and asked to co-sponsor it. Young people from a 15 year old interfaith network, JAKATARUB pitched in as staff and widened our reach and perspective.

At least 750 people trooped in during the day at half hour intervals beginning at 9 am. Participants maintained a prayerful atmosphere, even the many middle schoolers who had trekked over to our house by foot. The 30 minute program was simple; each person picked the name of a country to pray for, picked a card on which they wrote their action for peace, watched a video of victims of war while listening to hymns for peace from seven religions. Then followed some moments of silent prayer. They, then our 'ambassadors' of peace filed out quietly returning the card of their future action for peace. Each one left with a box of traditional snacks.

The combinations of pray-ers reflected Indonesia's diversity. Old and young (mostly young) men and women, clerics and lay, seminarians and *santris* (persons who have studied or are studying in a *Pesantren* – Islamic boarding school), people with special needs and most with ordinary ones. University students from Muslim and Catholic Universities. Staff members from the Borromeus Hospital prayed simultaneously with special children from a Muslim school named Nur Abadi. The Catholic Bishop of Bandung arrived at the same time as high echelon

men and women from UIN, several Hindu gentlemen, and Ursuline sister novices . This distinguished group prayed with a middle school delegation.

Nearby schools came 50 or 100 strong in the following order:

- Primary grade of St. Ursula
- State Middle School – SMP 7
- SMK – Vocational School from Jakarta
- Christian primary school BPK SD Penabur
- Kindergarten School Pondok Bocah - Jakarta
- Muslim Special School Nur Abadi - Jakarta
- Catholic Primary School St. Aloysius
- Christian Middle School BPK Penabur
- Middle School St. Maria
- Primary School Muttahari
- Primary, Middle and High School - Talenta
- Primary School St. Joseph
- Primary, Middle and High School Slamet Riyadi, Pandu and Yos Sudarso
- High School St. Angela

Besides the schools we had young men from the Hare Krishna Mission, from the Tribal Religion and Belief (*Agama Asli*) the Buddhists and Bahai students praying together. Heads of Interreligious commissions, students studying world religions along with their professors were present too. Muslims, Christians, Catholics and Orthodox, Hindu, Bahai, Buddhist all seemed of one mind seeking peace. The last to arrive were three Buddhists students. To end the day at 6pm, the RSCJ and JAKATARUB joined the prayer with the Buddhists.

Photographers from the daily national newspaper Kompas and The Tribune caught the spirit of the day. Interviews indicate the participants want this to become an annual event. Let us pray for peace so that future events will have a theme of Thanksgiving for a tranquil, tolerant world.

Let there be peace on earth and let it begin in our own hearts!



State Middle School No. 7



Islamic Nur Abadi Special School



Catholic Bishop, Muslim Kiyai, Hindu, Buddhist



Participants writing their action for peace, praying and sending peace vibrations to the world.