

## **Contemplating Renewed Mission and Martyrdom**

### **in the Context of Modern Plural Society**

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Last February 2019, I attended a Chinese New Year celebration in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. I visited a temple called Fuk Ling Miao. There, the New Year was celebrated by Buddhists, Confucianists, and Indonesian-Chinese Christians. I myself did not celebrate it.

At first, I came because of my curiosity; I wanted to know the way they pray and celebrate their New Year. It was, however, a surprise for me when I met a Javanese Moslem there. This old man has been working there for twelve years and helping people when they are praying. Working at the temple, he can support his wife and three children. In addition, he is still observing Islamic laws faithfully.

Three questions emerged related to the experience. Is it possible to provide a decent livelihood for people from different religions, including inviting them to take roles in liturgical activities which do not belong to them? Then, is it possible for people from different religions to master a role which is related to other religion's worship activities? These questions lead us to the main question which becomes the main topic of this writing: what is the contribution of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises in order to promote a more possible and worth-living multicultural environment nowadays?

We are living in a multicultural world, but our way of thinking and living has not been "multicultural" enough. We may have seen people from other religions working at the same office; we may have collaborated when we are working on the same project with them. We may have accepted people from other religions in our offices, schools, or houses.

We, however, do not usually see people from other religions working at shrines which incompatible with their own religious beliefs. Not only to work, but also to

help us pray in the way they do not practice and believe. In some cases, they even do not ask for money or anykind of financial aid. When it is still rare in other countries, it starts to become a phenomenon in Indonesia, especially in some cities, such as Yogyakarta. In this more globalized world, there is a possibility that soon it becomes a world-wide phenomenon, either in the United States, Europe, or China.

We know that this phenomenon would not happen in many places before 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the mission of the Catholic Church focused on converting people. It was in line with the spirit of discovery and conquest, which was popular among European nations at the time. Let us take the Jesuit mission in China as an example. Started by St. Francis Xavier in 1549, the mission of great Jesuits, such as Michele Ruggieri and Matteo Ricci, was to convert Chinese people by firstly winning the hearts of the literati and noblemen (Brockey 2007: 28-56). Thus, intellectual and cultural dialogues were not the main purpose of their coming to China; those were means to transmitting Christianity.

Since the age has changed, our ways of seeing our relationship with the non-Catholics have also renewed. The spirit of discovery and conquest, in fact, has been stronger in the terms of socio-economics than in the terms of religion nowadays. Even, it has influenced some religious communities so that they tend to be more defensive in the terms of relationship with people who bring different thoughts or beliefs. Ignatian contemplation, then, has a great role in helping us see the possibilities of going beyond narrow influenced brought by modern socio-economic movements, which then draws us to maintain a interreligious livelihood as a mission. For this purpose, the notion from William J. Byron, SJ (1973) is still worth-noted. Martyrdom, then, is not merely about personal holiness, which may draw others to conversion; moreover, it is about others who can live through our practices of faith without the obligation to embrace the faith we practice.