



Strengthening the Understanding of Church Law and the Spirituality of Consecrated Life as a Means of Fostering the Faith of the People in Realizing Salvation (Salus Animarum)

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Corresponding Author Asrot Purba	The low understanding of the Church Law, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and the spirituality of consecrated life can limit the ability of the people to live the faith in its entirety. This Community Service activity aims to increase the understanding of the people about the pastoral functions of the Church Law, strengthen Christian spirituality, and encourage participation in church life with an orientation to the salvation of the soul (salus animarum). The program is implemented through an educational-participatory approach that includes interactive lectures, group discussions, pastoral case studies, faith reflection, simulation, and mentoring. Evaluation was carried out using pre-test and post-test, activeness observation, reflection sheets, satisfaction questionnaires, and assessments of participants' follow-up plans. The draft results showed an increase in the average score of participants from 57.5 to 86.8 in four aspects, namely understanding of Church Law, understanding the Catechism, spirituality of consecrated life, and pastoral participation. Participants also produce faith reflections, pastoral action plans, and commitments to apply the values of the Church in family and community life. The discussion shows that the Law of the Church is easier to understand when it is placed as a pastoral instrument and linked to the concrete experience of the people. The sustainability of the program is directed through the formation of faith building groups, the use of modules, and periodic mentoring by congregational cadres and pastoral partners. Keywords: Church Law; spirituality of devotion; building faith; salus animarum; community service.

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INTRODUCTION

Gereja Katolik has a pastoral responsibility to help the faithful grow in the knowledge of Christ, understand the teachings of the Church, and integrate the faith into personal, family, and community life. One of the important means of such a process is the Law of the Church. Canon Law not only serves to regulate the internal life of the Church, but also maintains communal order, protects the rights and obligations of the people, and directs the Church's ministry to its ultimate goal, which is the salvation of the soul.

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The principle of *salus animarum suprema lex*, which means that the salvation of the soul is the supreme law, shows the pastoral character of the Church Law. The Book of Canon Law places the salvation of the soul as the highest consideration in the application of the Church's norms (Catholic Church, 1983). In pastoral renewal, the norms, structure, and governance of the Church need to be applied in the spirit of fellowship, closeness, compassion, and missionary responsibility in order to truly serve the lives of the people (Congregation for the Clergy, 2020). Therefore, the law should not be seen as a rigid rule that restricts freedom, but as a guideline that helps the people use their freedom responsibly and live in fellowship of faith.

In pastoral reality, there are still people who understand the Law of the Church only as an administrative matter, such as marriage rules, sacraments, or organizational structures. This limited understanding causes the educational and pastoral functions of law to not be fully felt. This challenge is strengthened by secularism, moral relativism, individualism, consumerism, and digital information flows that often present religious views without adequate context.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church is an important resource to help the faithful understand the faith systematically. The Catechism outlines the confession of faith, the celebration of the Christian mystery, the moral life, and prayer (Catholic Church, 1997; Indonesian Bishops' Conference, 2020). The Directory for Catechesis emphasizes that faith formation needs to be kerygmatic, misogogological, contextual, and pay attention to digital culture so that the Church's teachings can be linked to the concrete experiences of the people (Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization, 2020). Thus, a formation that integrates the Law of the Church and the Catechism can help the faithful see the connection between doctrine, norms, moral actions, and spiritual life.

The spirituality of devotional life also has formative value for all people. Although the evangelical exhortation of purity, poverty, and obedience is lived especially by the religious, the values of surrender, simplicity, prayer, service, and faithfulness to the vocation can be an inspiration for the Christian life. The New Wine in New Wineskins document emphasizes the importance of creative fidelity, the renewal of relationships, and the structuring of community life in order for consecrated life to remain a prophetic witness that is relevant to the Church and society (Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, 2017).

The Second Vatican Council affirmed that all the faithful are called to holiness and to take part in the Church's mission (Second Vatican Council, 1964). The call needs to be realized in simple actions, service, and daily responsibilities (Francis, 2018). Faith formation therefore cannot be limited to a specific group, but needs to be held in a dialogical and participatory manner so that the people, including young people and prospective cadres, gain space to grow, be discreet, and take a role in church life (Francis, 2019, 2021).

The condition of partners shows the need for systematic, easy-to-understand, and sustainable faith building. The problems faced include low understanding of Church Law, limited access to teaching resources, weak spiritual appreciation, lack of supervisory cadres, and low participation in pastoral activities. Based on these needs, this service activity is designed using an educational-participatory approach through interactive lectures, discussions, case studies, reflection, simulation, and mentoring.

The activities aim to increase the understanding of the Church Law and the Catechism, foster awareness of the pastoral orientation of the law, introduce the spirituality of

consecrated life as inspiration, help the faithful integrate the Church's teachings in daily life, and form cadres who can support the development of faith in a sustainable manner. The program is expected to result not only in increased knowledge, but also a real change in attitude and involvement in church life.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

Location and Activity Partners

The activity was carried out with the Catholic community as a partner in pastoral development. Based on the draft proposal, the participants were composed of 30 people from elements of the people, environmental administrators, and prospective cadres of faith builders. The location, number of participants, characteristics of participants, and the date of implementation need to be updated according to the actual data of the activity before the article is published.

Approach and Method

The program uses an educational-participatory, reflective, and contextual approach. Participants are placed as active subjects who connect the teachings of the Church with life experiences. The principles of adult learning emphasize that experience, reflection, dialogue, and direct application are essential elements in the formation of meaningful understanding (Merriam & Baumgartner, 2020). The material is delivered communicatively and continues with activities that encourage analysis, dialogue, reflection, and the formulation of real actions. The methods used in the activity are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Method of Implementation of Activities

No.	Method	Activity Description
1	Interactive lectures	Presentation of Church Law, Catechism, <i>salus animarum</i> , and spirituality of consecrated life accompanied by questions and answers.
2	Group discussions	Discussion of people's perceptions, coaching needs, and church life experiences.
3	Pastoral case studies	Analysis of sacramental cases, family, ministry, community conflicts, and the use of digital media.
4	Reflection of faith	Participants relate the material to personal experiences and draft attitude updates.
5	Simulation and mentoring	The exercise delivered brief material and prepared a coaching action plan in the environment.

In order for the implementation of the program to take place systematically, activities are divided into five interrelated stages ranging from identification of needs to follow-up. A description of each stage, method, and expected output is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Stages of Implementation of Activities

Stages	Main Activities	Method	Exterior
Preparation	Coordination and identification of needs	Observations and interviews	Map of partner needs
Preparation of materials	Arrangement of modules and instruments	Study of Church documents	Evaluation modules and tools

Stages	Main Activities	Method	Exterior
Implementation	Counseling and mentoring	Lectures, discussions, case studies	Improved understanding
Evaluation	Program achievement measurement	Tests, observations, reflections	Data on the results of activities
Follow-up	Preparation of recommendations and regeneration	Mentoring and monitoring	Continuous coaching plan

Evaluation Instruments

Formative evaluation was carried out during the activity through observation of participation, facilitator notes, and the quality of participants' contributions to the discussion. Summative evaluation uses pre-tests and post-tests, reflection sheets, satisfaction questionnaires, and action plan assessments. The use of several instruments allows for a more complete assessment of aspects of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and follow-ups and supports the triangulation of evaluation data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Success indicators include increasing knowledge, awareness of spiritual life, participant activity, satisfaction with the program, and the arrangement of coaching follow-ups.

RESULTS OF ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSIONS

Implementation of Activities

Activities were carried out through opening, pre-test, material delivery, group discussions, pastoral case studies, faith reflection, cadre simulation, preparation of action plans, and post-tests. Church Law material is focused on the function of norms in the Church's communion, the rights and obligations of the people, the service of the sacraments, and the principle of *salus animarum*. The Catechism material emphasizes the interconnectedness between faith, liturgy, morals, and prayer, while the consecrated life material introduces the values of simplicity, obedience, purity of heart, and service.

In the case study session, participants analyzed problems that are often encountered in the lives of the people. Each group identifies facts, relevant Church norms, pastoral values, affected parties, alternative solutions, and life-saving follow-ups. This activity helped participants see that the application of the law requires the precision of norms as well as pastoral wisdom.

To find out the change in the level of understanding of participants after participating in the program, a comparison of pre-test and post-test scores was carried out on four aspects of assessment. A summary of the results of the quantitative evaluation is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Draft Results of Pre-test and Post-test Participants

Aspects Assessed	Pre-test	Post-test	Differences	Remarks
Understanding Church Law	55	86	+31	Increase
Understanding the Catechism	58	88	+30	Increase
Spirituality of devotion	60	89	+29	Increase
Pastoral participation	57	84	+27	Increase
Average	57,5	86,8	+29,3	Increase

The following visualization shows the difference in the average value before and after the activity in each indicator. Graphs are used to clarify patterns of improvement that occur after participants participate in counseling, discussion, reflection, and mentoring.

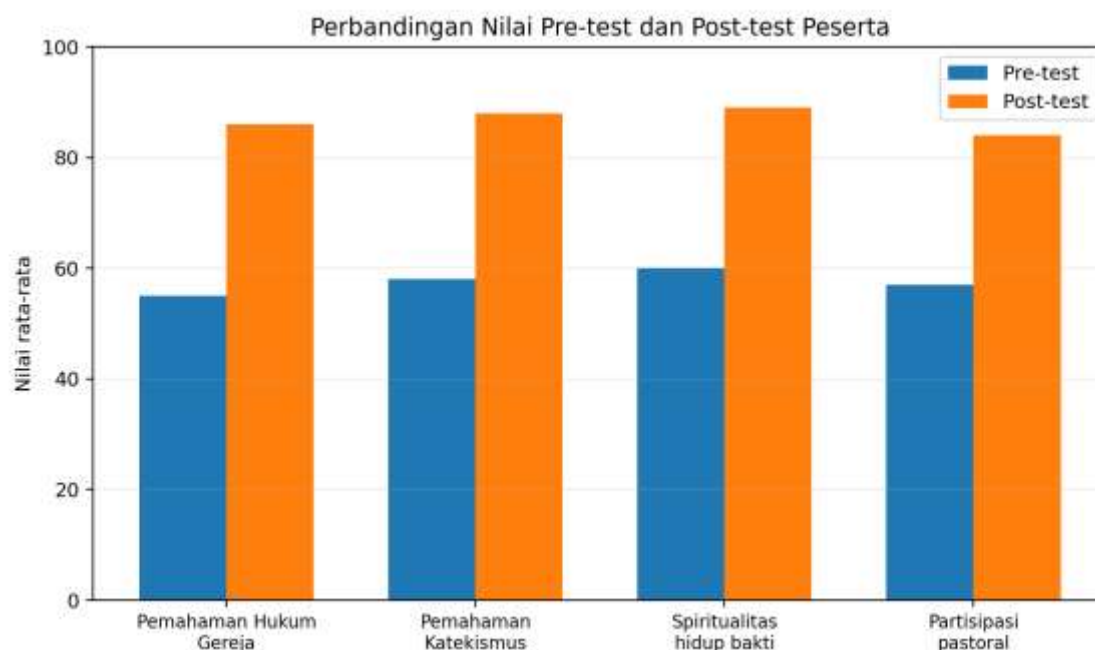


Figure 1. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Scores of Participants

Draft data shows an average increase of 29.3 points. The highest improvement is in the aspect of understanding Church Law by 31 points. These results indicate that explanations that place the law as a pastoral tool may reduce the perception that the Church Law is only administrative. The post-test score in all aspects was above 80, which indicates the achievement of the minimum understanding target in the design of the activity.

In addition to the increase in grades, the activity produced outputs that showed changes in the aspects of knowledge, spirituality, skills, and involvement of participants. The main outputs and their significance for the sustainability of faith building are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Output and Activity Outcomes

Exterior	Reach	Meaning
Understanding Church Law	Participants were able to explain the pastoral functions of the law and the principle of <i>salus animarum</i>	Reduced perception of the law as a rigid rule
Spiritual reflection	Participants associate the value of filial living with family and community life	Increased awareness of spiritual life
Pastoral case analysis	Participants are able to identify pastoral norms, values, and solutions	The development of contextual faith reasoning
Action plan	Participants arranged simple coaching activities in the environment	Program sustainability policy
Coaching cadres	Selected participants practice facilitating faith discussions	Strengthening partner capacity

The results of the observation showed that the participants were increasingly active in asking questions and providing examples from the people's experiences. At the beginning of the activity, the discussion of Church Law tends to be directed towards prohibitions and

obligations. After the case study session, participants began to use the terms protection of rights, order of fellowship, service, coaching, and life safety. These changes reflect an expansion of the perspective on the role of law in the Church.

The program implementation flow describes the relationship between partner problems, intervention processes, evaluations, and expected outcomes. The series is shown in Figure 2 so that the stages of the activity can be understood in a concise manner.



Figure 2. Flow Diagram of the Implementation of Community Service Programs

Discussion

The results of the activity show that the Law of the Church can be understood more positively when norms are explained in relation to pastoral goals. The principle of *salus animarum* emphasizes that the application of the law must serve the salvation of the soul (Catholic Church, 1983). This orientation is in line with pastoral renewal that places parish structure, ministry, and governance in the spirit of evangelization, fellowship, closeness, and collaboration (Congregation for the Clergy, 2020). With this framework, participants can see that the Church's order, rights, obligations, and procedures are not goals in themselves, but rather a means to build communion and responsible ministry.

Increasing the understanding of the Catechism shows the importance of presenting the teachings in an integrative manner. The Catechism organizes the Church's teachings into confessions of faith, the celebration of the Christian mystery, the moral life, and prayer (Catholic Church, 1997; Indonesian Bishops' Conference, 2020). This structure helps the faithful understand that doctrinal knowledge is inseparable from the liturgy, moral choices, and the life of prayer. In addition, contextual, dialogical, and digital-culturally sensitive coaching helps catechesis to respond to the real experiences of the people (Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization, 2020).

The deepening of the spirituality of devotional life contributes to the affective and practical dimensions of coaching. The value of obedience is understood not as passivity, but

as the ability to listen to and respond to God's will; poverty is understood as simplicity and freedom from attachment; While purity is understood as the integrity of the heart in loving. This meaning is in line with the renewal of consecrated life that demands creative fidelity, the quality of community relations, and the courage to respond to the challenges of the times (Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, 2017). These values also support the universal call to holiness embodied in daily life (Francis, 2018).

A participatory approach has been shown to help participants connect teaching resources with experiences. Discussions and case studies reduce one-way learning patterns as participants are asked to interpret, assess, and formulate actions. This process is in accordance with the principles of adult learning that place participant experience, critical reflection, and practical application as the primary learning resources (Merriam & Baumgartner, 2020). Dialogical assistance is also important so that participants, especially young people and prospective cadres, are able to recognize their vocations and take responsibility in the community (Francis, 2019).

The formation of cadres is an important element for sustainability. One-time programs can increase knowledge, but changing faith habits requires mentoring, repetition of materials, and a learning community. The determination of catechism ministry emphasizes that the laity who are called to the task of formation need to obtain adequate formation, maturity of faith, communication skills, and commitment to service (Francis, 2021). Ummah cadres can help organize periodic meetings, facilitate discussions, and direct ummah to accountable sources of teaching. Pastoral partners still need to supervise so that the materials and practices of mentoring are in accordance with the Church's teachings.

Supporting factors for the activity include the openness of participants, partner support, relevance of the material, and the use of varied methods. Obstacles to consider are differences in participants' education, time constraints, difficult canonical terms, and a tendency to expect simple answers to complex pastoral problems. These constraints can be overcome through the use of popular language, concrete examples, glossaries of terms, concise modules, and follow-up consultation sessions.

The short-term impact of the program is increased spiritual knowledge and awareness. The medium-term impact is expected in the form of increased participation in environmental activities, deepening of faith, and service. In the long term, the program is directed at the formation of a community of people who are able to understand the norms of the Church maturely, have a strong spirituality, and are actively involved in the Church's mission.

CONCLUSION

Activities to strengthen the understanding of Church Law and the spirituality of consecrated life provide a framework for faith formation that integrates knowledge, reflection, and pastoral action. Through interactive lectures, discussions, case studies, faith reflection, simulations, and mentoring, participants gain a more complete understanding of the pastoral functions of Church Law, the structure of the teachings in the Catechism, and the value of consecrated life for the lives of the people. The evaluation draft showed an increase in average scores from 57.5 to 86.8. Activities include pastoral case analysis, spiritual reflection, action plans, and strengthening prospective supervisory cadres. The sustainability of the program needs to be maintained through faith building groups, the use of modules, monitoring, and periodic mentoring by pastoral partners. Before the article is published, the results data,

partner identity, implementation time, documentation, and number of participants must be verified based on the facts of the activity.

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