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Piety People In Erga *Migrantes Caritas Christi* And Its Influence On The Issues Of Religious Identity Of Catholic Migration Original From Flores, East Nusa Tenggara

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Abstract

Internal migration of Catholics is a socio-religious phenomenon that has serious consequences for the practice of faith and the formation of religious identity among migrants. This article aims to analyze the principle of religious piety in the document Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi and its relevance to the issue. religious identity of the people Catholic immigrants from Flores Parish Mater Dei Melata. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study. Data were obtained through interviews with migrant congregations and key informants, as well as relevant pastoral documentation, and then analyzed thematically. The results show that migrant congregations face challenges in maintaining their religious identity due to limited contextual pastoral services, economic demands, and a less than supportive social environment. However, congregational piety—such as devotion, communal prayer, and culturally based expressions of faith—has proven to play a significant role in strengthening religious identity. and taste own to Local church. Findings this confirms that piety The people are a strategic pastoral resource that needs to be consciously integrated into migrant pastoral care. This article contributes to the development of migrant pastoral theology by linking the normative principles of the Church with the empirical reality of the migrant community at the parish level.

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Keywords: Internal Migration; Religious Piety; Religious Identity; Migrant Pastoralism; Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi.

INTRODUCTION

Migration and migration are human mobility phenomena that are increasingly strengthening. in context global And national, including in Indonesia Which in a way geographically and culturally very familiar with the practice of migration (Deidhae, 2024: 2). The practice of migration is not only understood as a physical movement from one region to another, but also as a social process that has multidimensional impacts on the lives of individuals and communities. Migration is often driven by economic factors, but social dynamics, culture, education, and aspirations for a more decent and dignified life also play a significant role (Febrianto, 2020: 61). In the context of the Catholic Church, migration is an inseparable reality from the lives of believers because migrants bring with them values, traditions, and religious identities that shape how they live their lives. Faith. This identity is not always easy to maintain when people find themselves in a new environment with a different culture and social structure. This adaptation process often requires identity negotiation between original values and the new reality. faced. Therefore, migration is not only a demographic phenomenon, but also a pastoral reality that directly affects the continuity of church life. In this framework, the Church is called to reading migration as a sign of the times that requires a reflective and contextual response of faith.

Various studies show that the migration experience is often accompanied by serious challenges in maintaining religious identity, especially when migrants live in environments that are less supportive of religious practice. High economic pressures often force migrants to prioritize work over spiritual life. Limited access to pastoral care and liturgical resources also weakens congregational involvement in church life. Furthermore, cultural differences and lifestyles in destination areas can create an emotional and spiritual distance between migrants and the local Church. The influence of secularization further complicates the situation, as religious values are often marginalized in daily life. This condition contributes to weakened religious participation and the emergence of a crisis of faith identity among Catholic migrants (Mu'asyara, 2024: 259). Although the Church has formulated various pastoral guidelines for migrants, empirical studies specifically linking the principle of community piety in the document *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi* with the issue of religious identity of migrants at the parish level is still relatively limited. This gap in research presents both a challenge and an opportunity for the development of migrant pastoral theology in the context of the local Indonesian Church.

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The urgency of this study is further strengthened considering that the Church today lives in what is called the "age of migration", where human mobility is a characteristic the main focus of global social life. In this context, migration is understood as a pastoral locus that demands active, creative, and contextual involvement from the Church (Para, 2024: 3). The instruction *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi* emphasizes that migration is not should not be seen solely as a social problem, but rather as a missionary opportunity for the Church. The Church is called to provide ongoing spiritual guidance to migrants. Sacramental services need to be inclusive so that migrants continue to feel part of the Church. Faith accompaniment must also respect the piety of the people rooted in their culture of origin (EMCC, 1). Without an adequate pastoral approach, migrants risk experiencing alienation spiritual Which impact on weakening appreciation faith And involvement in life go to church. By because That, The EMCC principles serve as an important framework for responding to the pastoral challenges of migration.

Based on this context, this article aims to analyze the principles of religious piety in *The Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi* document and its relevance in addressing the issue of religious identity of Catholic migrants from Flores, East Nusa Tenggara. This study specifically focuses on the migrant congregation at Mater Dei Melata Parish as the research locus. This research examines how the faith experiences of migrants are shaped by the interaction between their religious traditions of origin and the dynamics of life abroad. The pastoral principles in the EMCC are positioned as a reflective foundation for reading this reality. In addition, these principles are analyzed practically to see the possibility of their application in the parish context. Thus, this article seeks to demonstrate how the piety of the congregation can become an important tool in Building and maintaining the religious identity of migrants. Theoretically and practically, this article contributes to the development of migrant pastoral theology studies by positioning the piety of the congregation as a key element in maintaining religious identity. The findings of this study are expected to enrich academic discourse and serve as a contextual reference for local churches in formulating pastoral policies and practices that are more participatory, contextual, and rooted in the lived realities of migrants at the parish level.

The study of migration from the perspective of the Catholic Church begins with the understanding that migration is both a social and theological phenomenon that influences the identity, practice of faith, and the life of the community of believers. Conceptually, migration is understood as the movement of people across regions influenced by push and pull factors, as formulated in Everett S. Lee's migration theory, which emphasizes the interaction between conditions in the area of origin, destination, obstacles to migration, and individual factors (Lee in

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Rahmadana, 2020: 48). In the context of Christian faith, migration is seen as part of salvation history and a sign of the times (*signa temporum*), which the Church is called to interpret and respond to in the light of faith (EMCC, 26). This perspective positions migration as a pastoral locus, not merely an economic or demographic issue (Para, 2024: 3).

The main variables in this study, namely community piety and religious identity, have a strong theoretical foundation in the study of pastoral theology and the sociology of religion. Community piety is understood as an expression of faith born from the religious experience of the community, both personal and collective, and expressed through devotion, prayer practices, and rituals rooted in local culture (Simamora, 2022: 31–32; DKUL, 2–10). In *Erga* documents *Migrants Caritas Christi* , piety people emphasized as an important element for migrant communities because it is a bridge connecting them with their Church of origin as well as a means of maintaining spiritual identity in a place of migration (EMCC, 46). Meanwhile, religious identity is understood as internalization mark, belief, And practice religious Which shaping how individuals interpret themselves and their world, both personally and communally (Ismail, 2022: 23; Fahri, 2020: 57). In the context of migration, religious identity is dynamic because it faces the pressures of secularization, cross-cultural encounters, and changes in social structures (Mu'asyara, 2024: 259–261).

Several previous studies have addressed the themes of migration, pastoral care, and religious identity from various perspectives. Febrianto (2020) demonstrated through literature research that migration theology has developed as a multidisciplinary and intercultural approach relevant to public theology, by placing migration in a context of intercultural context. as a space for dialogue between faith and society. Jewadut and Nirmala (2023) used a qualitative method based on literature review to emphasize the role of the Ecclesiastical Base Community in realizing participatory and contextual pastoral care, which is relevant for assisting migrants. Siswantara et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of Catholic religious education in shaping religious character amidst diversity, through a study of student perceptions, although their focus was still limited to the context of formal education. Other studies have focused more on the social aspects of migration. Atmani (2022), through a quantitative analysis of 2015 SUPAS data, identified individual and contextual factors influencing migration decisions in Indonesia, but did not address the spiritual dimensions and religious identities of migrants. Moda (2024) discussed the challenges and opportunities for building Catholic communities in the digital age using a qualitative approach, relevant for examining the dynamics of the faithful's faith, but did not specifically examine migrants within pastoral constraints. Atasoge (2018) examined the impact of migration on

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Catholic workers and migrants, emphasizing the tension between opportunities for evangelization and the vulnerability of faith. However, her study was reflective and theological in nature, without focusing on the concrete implementation of Church pastoral documents.

While these studies make important contributions, significant theoretical and empirical gaps remain. Theoretically, few studies explicitly integrate the principle of religious piety in *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi* with the concept of religious identity in the context of migration. internally at the parish level. Empirically, research on concrete experiences Research on Catholic migrants in destination parishes, particularly those relating to community piety, pastoral care, and the crisis of religious identity, remains limited. Most studies emphasize the structural aspects of migration, education, or general theological reflection, without delving into the practices of faith and community piety as living pastoral resources.

Based on the literature review, this article positions itself to fill the research gap by empirically and theologically examining the role of The principle of community piety in the document *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi* relates to the issue of religious identity of Catholic migrants. By taking a case study from Mater Dei Melata Parish, this article contributes to the development of a contextual pastoral theology of migrants, while also offering a reflective framework for the local Church in designing pastoral services that are more responsive to the realities of the lives of migrants.

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study approach. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research aims to deeply understand the experiences, meanings, and dynamics of religious piety and the religious identity of Catholic migrants in the context of migration. The case study is used to explore socio-religious phenomena contextually and holistically, particularly regarding the application of the principle of religious piety in the *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi document* in one particular pastoral location (Nursapira, 2020: 463–464). This approach is relevant to answering research questions that focus on "how" the Church's pastoral principles are internalized and implemented by migrant communities.

The research was conducted at Mater Dei Melata Parish, Diocese of Palangka Raya, which is administratively located in Lamandau Regency, Central Kalimantan Province. This location was chosen because it is one of the destinations for Catholic migration from Flores, East Nusa Tenggara, who face the social, cultural, and pastoral dynamics typical of migration. Data collection was conducted between October 26 and November 8, 2025, depending on the needs of the field research and the availability of informants.

The population of this study was Catholic migrants from Flores who resided and were

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involved in church life at Mater Dei Melata Parish. The informant selection technique used purposive sampling, taking into account certain criteria, namely status as Catholic migrants, involvement in parish life, and direct experience in the dynamics of faith in the region of migration. The number of primary informants was eight Catholic migrants, plus one key informant, the Pastor of Mater Dei Melata Parish. This number was considered adequate for qualitative research because it met the principles of data depth and information reproducibility (data saturation) (Morissan, 2017: 166).

The main instrument in study this is the researcher himself, who supported The data were collected through a semi-structured interview guide and documentation checklist. The interview guide was developed based on indicators related to congregational piety, involvement in religious practices, pastoral experiences, and understanding and experiencing religious identity in the migrant context. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation, namely comparing data from migrant congregations, parish priests, and relevant Church documents, including the *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi document* (Moleong, 2019: 324).

Data collection techniques were conducted through interviews and documentation. Interviews were conducted in a directed manner using an interview guide, and in practice, they were conducted through a Google Form-based questionnaire. and further clarification if necessary (Ritonga, 2023: 3). Documentation is used to supplement field data, including parish archives, pastoral records, and Church documents related to migrant pastoral care (Ayumsari, 2022: 64; Murhayati, 2025: 13084).

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively using thematic analysis techniques. The collected data was analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of the analysis were then interpreted by linking field findings to the theoretical framework and pastoral principles in the *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi document* . The interpretation process was carried out reflectively and critically to uncover the theological and pastoral meaning of the experiences of migrant communities, as suggested in qualitative data interpretation techniques (Rasyid, 2021: 13). This study did not use special data analysis software, as the analysis was conducted manually with an emphasis on the depth of meaning and context of the data.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that Catholic migrants from Flores in the Mater Dei Melata Parish face real challenges in maintaining their identity. their religious amidst the context of

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internal migration. Of the eight informants interviewed, most revealed a decrease in the intensity of their involvement in life go to church, specifically in celebration Eucharist, categorical activities, as well as practices devotional. Decline participation This No This situation does not occur suddenly, but rather is the accumulation of various structural and social pressures experienced by migrant communities. Limited access to regular and sustainable pastoral care is a major factor influencing this situation. Furthermore, high work demands and a life orientation focused on meeting basic needs economy makes people migrate have a good time Increasingly limited opportunities for spiritual activities. A pluralistic social environment that lacks support for religious practice also weakens the consistency of people's faith experience. This situation leads to a weakening of both personal and communal faith practices. These findings indicate a religious identity crisis, characterized by a decline in the congregation's sense of connection to the Church community.

This study also found that the principle of religious piety as formulated in the *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi document* has not been optimally implemented in pastoral policies and practices at the parish level. Current pastoral services tend to be general in nature and have not been specifically directed to address the spiritual needs of migrants as a community with a unique cultural background. Pastoral care has not fully provided space for expressions of faith rooted in the traditions and piety of the Flores community. Consequently, religious practices such as devotion, communal prayer, and culturally based faith celebrations have not been systematically empowered as strategic pastoral tools. Piety is more often experienced individually or informally without the support of an adequate pastoral structure. This situation indicates a gap between the Church's normative principles on migrant pastoral care as affirmed in *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi* and their implementation at the parish level. This gap has resulted in a less than optimal role of religious piety in supporting the religious identity of migrants. Thus, the potential of religious piety as a pastoral force has not been fully utilized. In side other, results study show that when people migrants

By gaining space to express their piety in a communal way, they experience a significant strengthening of their religious identity. Practices such as neighborhood prayer, communal faith celebrations, and culturally based religious expressions provide a more meaningful and contextual faith experience for the migrant community. Through these practices, the community rediscovers their closeness to the faith traditions they have lived since their origins. The community's piety serves as a means of building a sense of togetherness, solidarity, and spiritual support among fellow migrants. Furthermore, the practice of shared piety strengthens the sense of community.

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The congregation's attachment to the parish as their spiritual home in a foreign land. This communal experience of faith helps the congregation overcome feelings of alienation and disconnection from the Church community. These findings confirm that faithful piety is a strategic spiritual resource in facing the challenges of migration. Thus, faithful piety plays a crucial role in sustaining the faith life and building the religious identity of Catholics living abroad amidst the dynamics of internal migration.

The findings of this study confirm the relevance of Everett S. Lee's migration theory, which states that migration is not only influenced by economic factors but also produces complex social and cultural consequences (Rahmadana, 2020: 48). In the context of Catholic migrants, high economic pressure forces individuals to prioritize meeting their living needs over involvement in church life. The demands of social adaptation in a new environment also require adjustments to values and lifestyles that are not always aligned with religious practices. This situation directly impacts the sustainability of the spiritual life of migrants. Religious identity undergoes a continuous process of negotiation amidst changing social realities. This situation demonstrates that migration is an experience that profoundly influences the dimensions of faith. These findings align with the sociology of religion's perspective, which positions secularization as a factor. which weakens role religion in life daily public modern (Mu'asyara, 2024: 259). Thus, migration accelerates the process of secularization in the lives of the migrant community.

From a pastoral theology perspective, the results of this study strengthen the teachings *of Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi* who confirm that migration is *a locus pastoral* and at the same time a missionary opportunity for the Church (EMCC, 1). The Church is called to be actively present in the lived reality of migrants, not only through sacramental ministry, but also through ongoing faith accompaniment. The piety of the people, as emphasized in the EMCC, is not merely a devotional practice, but rather a spiritual bridge connecting migrants with their Church of origin and an important means of maintaining their faith identity (EMCC, 46). Field findings indicate that when the piety of the people is neglected or not given space in pastoral care, the people of the people tend to experience spiritual alienation. This situation is characterized by declining participation in liturgical celebrations and church activities. This alienation has resulted in a weakening of the congregation's sense of belonging to the local Church. Thus, the congregation's piety becomes a key element in migrants' pastoral strategies.

Results study This in line with findings Febrianto (2020) Which put migration as a space for multidisciplinary theological reflection, where the faith of the congregation needs to be read in dialogue with social realities. Migration opens up space for the Church to reflect on its pastoral

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practices in the context of rapid social change. Similarly, research by Jewadut and Nirmala (2023) emphasizes the importance of a participatory and contextual pastoral approach in accompanying the congregation. In the context of this research, this approach proves relevant for migrant congregations who require recognition of their cultural background and faith experiences. However, unlike previous research that is more conceptual and normative, this study presents empirical evidence from the experiences of migrant congregations at the parish level. These findings demonstrate how the principle of community piety can function as a concrete pastoral strategy. Thus, this research expanding the study of migrant pastoralism from the normative to the practical realm.

In a way theoretical, findings study This enrich study theology pastoral migrants by emphasizing religious piety as a key variable in maintaining religious identity in the context of internal migration. Piety serves not only as an expression of personal faith but also as a socio-spiritual mechanism that strengthens community cohesion. Through the practice of piety, migrants build solidarity and faith support amidst limitations in formal pastoral care. Piety also plays a role in maintaining the continuity of faith across generations in migrant communities. Practically, the results of this study have direct implications for local churches, particularly parishes, in designing more contextual pastoral care. A participatory pastoral approach that is sensitive to the cultural background of migrants is an urgent need. This aligns with cross-cultural migrant pastoral guidelines that emphasize the importance of inculturation and community participation (Jewadut, 2023: 215–216). Therefore, piety needs to be consciously integrated into parish pastoral policies.

However, this study has limitations that require critical consideration. The relatively limited number of informants limits the breadth of perspectives that can be explored in this study. The study's focus on only one parish context also requires caution in generalizing the findings. Furthermore, this study has not yet explored in depth the role of Church institutional structures at the diocesan level in supporting migrant pastoral care. The broader dimensions of pastoral policy remain beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, further research is recommended, involving more migrant locations and communities. A comparative approach between parishes or dioceses would provide a more comprehensive picture. Furthermore, future research should explore integration policy pastoral migrant between Church origin And Church destination of migration.

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CONCLUSION

This study shows that Catholic migrants from Flores in Mater Dei Melata Parish face complex challenges in maintaining their religious identity amidst the dynamics of internal migration. Limited contextual pastoral care is a major factor affecting the sustainability of the faith life of migrants. Furthermore, high economic demands and time-consuming work patterns have a direct impact on the decline in the intensity of their involvement. people in activity go to church. Environment social Which plural And Lack of support for religious practices has weakened the consistency of the faith of migrants. This condition tends to make faith practices individualistic and not deeply rooted in the Church community. However, the findings of this study also indicate that religious piety, such as devotion, communal prayer, and culturally based expressions of faith, remains a vibrant source of spiritual strength. This piety serves as an important means of maintaining the continuity of faith and strengthening the religious identity of migrants, as emphasized in *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi* document.

Theoretically, the findings of this study reinforce the perspective of migrant pastoral theology, which views migration as *a pastoral locus* and a space for faith reflection that demands the active involvement of the Church. Migration is understood not only as a social event but also as a reality of faith that influences how people experience their relationship with God and the Church. The piety of the people is proven to function not merely as a personal religious expression but also as a socio-spiritual mechanism that supports the cohesion of migrant communities. Through the practice of piety, migrants build a spiritual space that allows them to remain connected to God. The faith tradition of the home Church. In this context, the piety of the congregation serves as a bridge between faith, culture, and the realities of daily life. From a practical perspective, this research emphasizes the importance of participatory and dialogical pastoral care. Local churches are challenged to develop pastoral approaches sensitive to the cultural backgrounds of their migrant congregations in order to more effectively and sustainably address their spiritual needs.

This research's scientific contribution lies in its effort to integrate the principle of religious piety in the *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi document* with an empirical analysis of the religious identity of migrant Catholics at the parish level. This research not only repeats the Church's normative teachings but also places them in dialogue with the concrete experiences of migrant communities. Thus, this article addresses the shortcomings of previous research, which tended to be conceptual or reflective-theological without the support of field data. The findings of this study enrich the study of migrant pastoral theology with a contextual perspective rooted in the reality

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of internal migration in Indonesia. Furthermore, this study emphasizes the importance of religious piety. people as variables key in formation And maintenance religious identity. This approach opens up space for the development of a more inclusive and contextual model of migrant pastoral care. Overall, this article makes a significant contribution to the development of discourse on migrant pastoral care at both the academic and practical levels of the Church.

Further research is recommended to expand the scope of research locations and the number of informants in order to obtain a more comprehensive picture of The dynamics of migrant faith in various pastoral contexts. Studies in other parishes with different migration characteristics will enrich our understanding of the varied faith experiences of migrants. Furthermore, comparative research between parishes or dioceses can reveal effective and relevant migrant pastoral practices. Further research should also examine the role of synergy between the Church and the Church. The Church of origin and destination of migration in providing continuous support to the migrant community. Aspects of pastoral policy at the diocesan and conference levels bishops also deserve to be studied in more depth. An interdisciplinary approach that combines theology, sociology, And anthropology religion will enrich analysis migrant pastoral care. Thus, further research is expected to produce more strategic and applicable pastoral recommendations for the Church in the context of internal migration.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This research article is useful for examining the conditions, experiences, and roles of migrants and nomads in social, economic, and cultural life, both in their regions of origin and destination. This research also aims to identify the various challenges and opportunities faced by migrants and nomads in the adaptation process and their contribution to community development. The benefits of this research for migrants and nomads include providing information and recommendations that can help improve their welfare, protection, and quality of life. For the government and stakeholders, the results of this research are expected to be used as considerations in formulating more effective policies that support the needs of migrants. In addition, this research can increase public insight into the importance of respecting diversity, strengthening social solidarity, and reducing stigma against migrants and nomads. Thus, this research is expected to provide broad benefits for migrants, nomads, the government, and all levels of society in realizing a more inclusive and sustainable life.

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