



Current Issues in Prayer

November 2017

Welcome! The Pope invites people of different faiths to come together and pray:



That Christians in Asia, bearing witness to the Gospel in word and deed, may promote dialogue, peace, and mutual understanding, especially with those of other religions.



Getting started:

I find a map of Indonesia, then I make myself comfortable in a quiet place. I think of the people who live there, mostly Muslims, a good number of Christians, as well as others belonging to other religions too. I imagine God looking lovingly at Indonesians of all religions and with sadness at the discord that occurs in the name of religion.



Short story:

Anto looked at Martana, his daughter, sitting next to her husband. How beautiful and happy she looked on her wedding day! It was hard to imagine that this wedding almost had not taken place! Anto still couldn't believe that it was Hanif, a Muslim, who had come to his rescue when he lost a lot of money over a business deal that went horribly wrong. He was meant to pay for his daughter's wedding with that money and he did not know who to turn to when he lost it. His family would have been mortified by the community and it would have broken Martana's heart. Hanif had realised what had happened and he had offered Anto a loan without interest.

As a Christian, Anto grew to mistrust all Muslims. Traditionally Indonesia had a reputation for religious tolerance but the recent past had been marred by several outbreaks of violence between Muslims and Christians.

Hanif was indeed a generous man. He was a founding member of a Christian-Muslim NGO that raised funds and provided educational opportunities for disadvantaged children. Now Anto plans to visit the premises of the NGO and help with its mission. The generosity of Hanif helped him shatter the mistrust he had for Muslims and become an instrument of dialogue, peace and mutual understanding between religions in his community.



Time to reflect:

What effect did the experience of being helped by a Muslim have on Anto?
Why do people who belong to different religions mistrust each other?



Let us pray:

Lord we pray for all Christians in Indonesia, and in the rest of Asia, that they may find the generosity and courage to overcome prejudice and build bridges of love and understanding within their own communities and with people of other faiths.



Inspiration:

"If the idea of loving those whom you have been taught to recognize as your enemies is too overwhelming, consider more deeply the observation that we are all much more alike than we are unlike."
Aberjhani, Splendid Literarium: A Treasury of Stories, Aphorisms, Poems, and Essays



Hands on:

I go online and find out how people of different religions in different countries in Asia are working together for a better world. This month I will pray for all these people. If I know or meet someone who belongs to a different religion than mine, I will make an effort to get to know them better and to talk to them with respect, seeking friendship, common ground and understanding.