



Berkeley, April 3rd, 2021.

This year's Easter is very beautiful because I have done the fasting for the first time here in the United States, alone, not with my family. The fasting situation occurs during the Covid-19 pandemic so that the opening of the fast on Ash Wednesday, namely on February 17, 2021, was carried out in zoom's worship at First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley.

The beauty of spring certainly brings hope about God's care in this life. The pandemic has taught me about the ability to endure separation. Fasting as a discipline tradition of Christian spirituality has taught about the separation of the body and materials that are needed daily in order for life to continue. The separation of humans from food is very painful. Fasting helps

people to practice feeling a painful separation so they can experience other experiences that are hidden or covered up because of the accumulation of matter being absorbed into the body. Food can mask the pain of fractured relationships. Fasting uncovers fragile relationship that can be healed with the grace of God.

Fasting during tribulation period before the resurrection of Jesus, I have reminded of the vulnerability of the human's body, the vulnerability of emotions, the vulnerability of thinking, the vulnerability of the soul that Jesus Christ has to heal again. Christ has shown us a model of how He lives daily, He lives with fellow human beings, He experienced rejection, He blesses people, He heals, He enters into God's plan, surrenders himself, experiences separation from all who were with him, experiences separation from his own body.

Fasting in the Christian tradition helps me to be willing to walk with Christ. I can be separated from my loved ones, but my unity with God is God's redemption against my separation from various self-enveloping authorities.

This understanding is getting stronger during a pandemic. Separation teaches me about respect for the spiritual aspects of life in this world. Spiritual experiences that allow me to be grateful and know that I do not die if I eat a little, instead I share with those who are in need.

I was touched that the College Avenue Presbyterian Church which gave me \$ 300 to buy groceries for homeless dinner tonight. I cooked yellow rice, roast chickens and tofu curry. Initially I had prepared a budget for this cooking activity. But there is a blessing from the church that came from pastor Monte at the same time when I am thinking about an empowerment program for people in East Nusa Tenggara in Indonesia who are very vulnerable due to the effects of climate change.

The people are poor and many have become victims of human trafficking. A student of mine comes from the area. I pray that community empowerment programs there can be carried out through my students. My prayer was answered. \$ 300 will be used to become a start-up fund for my student to empower women to make clergy stoles that can be marketed by the Griya Jati Rasa (House of Authentic Sense) Consumer Co-op in the United State. Since this program is an empowerment program for self-sufficiency in production, the \$300 will grow into another blessing for other programs. I would like to name the program of College Avenue Presbyterian Church for No hunger. Church feed homeless. \$300 will feed many people in East Nusa Tenggara.

It's just my reflection about the fast that I am doing. This fast will last until the fast in the month of Ramadhan. Ramadhan is a holy month where Muslim fast for one month. They eat breakfast at 3 AM then break their fast in the afternoon after sunset. They are prohibited from swallowing their saliva when fasting. Fast in Ramadhan is a collective practice that involve the Muslim as well as other religious person. In Indonesia, when the Muslim performs their fasting, we honor and cook especial meals to be delivered to our neighbors for breaking their fasting.



It's just my reflection about the fast that I do. This fast will last until the fast in the month of Ramadhan. The type of fast that I do, I call it the birth fast. I have started since I was 54 years old. Every year I get older, so I decide to fast according to the sum of my age in that year. In 2021, I am 56 years old so I fast for 56 days. Starting from my birthday on 11 February, then on Ash Wednesday until now. It has been almost 40 days I have fasted from the night without eating at the next morning and stopped drinking after I did yoga at 10 am. Then I break my fasting at 5- 6 PM everyday.

Several times I fasted for half a day because I had a stomach ache. I also started running again, so after I come back from running, I eat one ripe avocado before I continued my yoga.

In the month of Ramadhan I will continue fasting. There is a difference between Islamic and Christian fasting. Islam teaches the purpose of fasting to get reward from Allah (pahala).

Meanwhile, in Christian teaching, fasting is a way to enter into the mystery of the separation of the body which is vulnerable so that it requires salvation from God Himself.

The number of my fast this year is 56 days. Until Easter I had fasted 41 days. I still have to fast for 15 days. So I will arrange for the remaining 15 days so that my fast can be finished on the day of Pentecost, which is May 23. From Easter to Pentecost there are 8 weeks. I will fast every week one day starting after Easter. There are still 7 days of fasting which I will do in the month of Ramadhan plus one day of e week to fast to Pentecost. Total of my fast during the Ramadhan will be 12 days. Then I will arrange three more days in each week approaching to the Pentecost. I will continue my fasting with the method I am doing now.

The day of Eid al-Fitr is May 13 which is also the day of the ascension of Jesus Christ. So nature gives me the opportunity to experience the end of my fasting in the ramadhan on the ascension day of Christ. Celebrating the encounter of the Muslim and Christian holidays is very important to understand God's intention to bring Christians and Muslims together to live peacefully and be a blessing to others. Because we are all united by God's love to us as we experience God within other fellow humans.

Indeed He is risen. The resurrection of Christ unites separation in Him.

Salam

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