

Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Mary Virgin

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1. Preface

Thank you to God Almighty, who always gave us faith and health, so we were given a tremendous opportunity to complete the task of writing a paper on "Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Mary Virgin."

The purpose of this paper is to fulfill the criteria for the East Java Social LPB competition in 2019. In this paper, we will discuss the history of the entry of the Catholicism into Java, the history of the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Mary Virgin, the attitude of the society around the church, and a solution for preserving Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Mary Virgin.

Not forgetting all humility, we ask for reader's willingness to provide constructive criticism and suggestions regarding the writing of our paper, so that at other times we can make better papers. Hopefully the papers we make can be useful and inspire everyone who reads them. We apologize if there are incorrect words in writing our paper.

2. Introduction

One of the oldest Catholic church in Indonesia is Church of the Birth of Our Lady, also known as Kepanjen Church. It was located at Jalan Kepanjen number 4-6, Surabaya, beside the Frateran Catholic Senior High School. It still become the home center of Congregatio Missionis (CM) priests that form the Roman Catholic Diocese of Surabaya.

3. Church's History

The existence of religion cannot be separated from civilization itself. Since the days of our ancestors, humans actually knew religion. Human life is inseparable from religion. Religion is not only a belief, but a demand for life for humans. In Indonesia alone, there are six religions recognized by the state, namely Islam, Catholicism, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism.

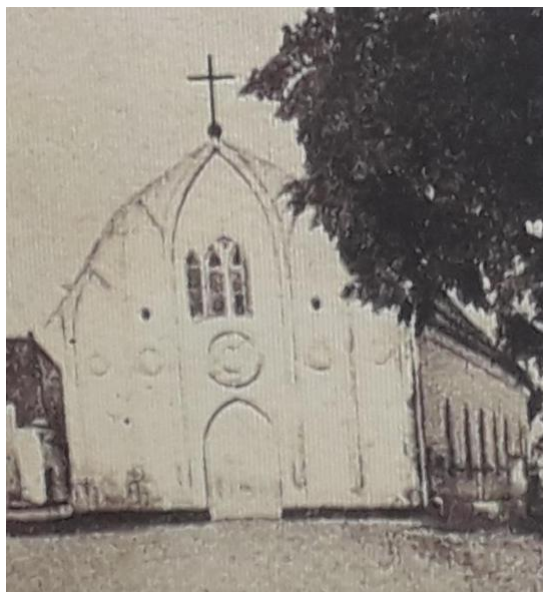
The spread of Catholicism was first carried out in Indonesia in the 16th and 17th century carried out in eastern Indonesia namely Maluku, Flores and NTT. In the early 19th century, Catholics entered Java during the reign of Herman Willem Daendels, this was marked by the establishment of the Apostolic prefecture of Dutch India. The apostolic prefecture was the direct area of the Catholic Church under the leadership of the Catholic Church in Rome was led not by a bishop, but by an ordinary priest appointed by the pope, called the apostolic prefect.

The first apostolic prefect was R.D. Jacobus Nellisen who was appointed on 4 April 1808. On 10 April 1808 the first mass was held openly in Batavia, right at home Doctor F.C.H. Assmuss. On April 2, 1810 Father J. Nellisen built a simple chapel located on the edge of Jalan Kenanga, in the Senen area. This ship was built from the donation of a Governor General Meester Herman Daendels. This ship became the first Catholic church in Indonesia precisely in Batavia. The protector of this church is Saint Ludovikus. Even though the church this is not good but the church is quite strong and can accommodate 200 people.

The first Catholic priests landed at Surabaya on July 12, 1810. They were Father Hendrikus Waanders Pr and Father Philipus Wedding Pr. Later, Father Wedding was tasked at Jakarta while Father Waanders settled at Surabaya and build a house that also serve as a church at Jalan Gatotan. On March 10, 1811 Jan George and Johanna Elizabeth, residents of Surabaya were baptized, becoming the first person that were baptized in Surabaya.

Until 1811, there were 7 priests that was working at Indonesia, 2 of them worked at Surabaya. In 1815 Father Waanders established the first chapelry in Surabaya (It was the fifth in Indonesia).

In the same year, Surabaya chapelry was changed into a parish. Therefore, after 7 years Surabaya chapelry still stood without a permanent church. Finally, Father Waanders built a church. It was blessed on March 22, 1822. Its name was "Maria Geboorte". It was located at Roomsche Kerkstraat and Komedienvleugel junction (around Jalan Cendrawasih and Jalan Merak). It was the first church at Surabaya and East Java.



Picture 1, Maria Geboorte Church

"Historia Stationis Soerabaiae ab anno 1810 ad annum 1890", a manuscript about the history of Catholic church in Surabaya in the early of 19th century, recorded the names of 30 priests worked at the Maria Geboorte church in 1810 until 1890.

This first church serves for 78 years. It started to crumble and can't accommodate people anymore, and it was located at a less strategic location. For that reason it was

decided to build a church designed by architect W. Westmaas on the muddy soil that Father C.W.J. Wenneker SJ bought in 1889, located at Tempelstraat (now Jalan Kepanjen).

The first from 790 pillar was installed on April 18, 1899. Those pillar was brought in from Borneo. The first cornerstone laying was held on August 19, 1899 by Father van Santen SJ. The material to support those pillars was brought in from Europe. The whole wall was made from bricks that was brought in from Europe. The wooden part of the building was made from teak, while the cap and the top of the tower was made from ironwood.

The cost to build Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Mary Virgin (Onze Lieve Vrouw Geboorte) was:

Part of the Building	Cost in gulden (f)
Tower	f.10000,00
Foundation	f.60000,00
Building	f.95000,00
Total Cost	f.165000,00

Table 1, The cost to built Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Mary Virgin

The church was blessed by Monsignor Edmundus Sybrandus Luypen SJ on August 5, 1900 at 8 o'clock.



Picture 2, Church's blessing

Since 1923, Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Mary Virgin was served by the priests from Congregatio Missionis (CM) that continue and develop the previous missionary work, until it expands into the Roman Catholic Diocese of Surabaya.

Roman Catholic Diocese of Surabaya was initially established as Apostolic Prefecture of Surabaia on February 15, 1928 on territory split off from the Apostolic Vicariate of Batavia (now Metropolitan Archdiocese of Jakarta). Then it was promoted as Apostolic Vicariate of

Surabaia on Surabaia on October 16, 1941. Then it was promoted on January 3, 1961 as Diocese of Surabaia. Then, on August 22, 1973 it was renamed as Diocese of Surabaya.

Not only at Surabaya, CM also worked at places across Indonesia. At Malang, CM gained trust to foster Saint Vincentius a Paulo Parish (or Langsep Parish) since 1972. At Jakarta, CM also gained trust to foster Rawamangun Parish, then Tugu Semper Parish. At Sintang, West Borneo Provinces, CM worked at parishes at Bondau, Menukung, Nanga Ella, Nanga Pinoh, and Nanga Serawai.

CM also established John Gabriel Foundation that moves in field of education and runs a lot of school from Elementary School until Senior High School at Roman Catholic Diocese of Surabaya.

Not only that, an intermediate seminary was established at Surabaya in 1948, then it was moved to Blitar in 1958. A high seminary was established at Rembang in 1953, then it was moved to Garum, Kediri in 1963, finally it was moved to Malang in 1971. A high school of philosophy and theology (Widya Sasana) was established by CM that was working together with O.Carm at Malang.

Back to the church itself, during the Battle of Surabaya in 1945 the church was bombed and burned until few left. Renovation was started by Father P.A. Bastiansen CM with the help from architect Henri Estourgie. The architecture was remain the same, but without tower anymore. Some parts like the glass window become plain. The sacristy room was added on the left and right of the priest house. The confession room was added on the left and right wing. In October 1951 the church started to serve people again.



Picture 3, The church's condition during and after renovation

After that, when Father H.J.G. Veel CM serves, the church was renovated again to replace the glass window. The glass window was made by Jacques Verheyen with the picture design by Bruder Coenraad, Engineer Ang Koen Ie, and Muljono Wirjosastro. This project was led by Tjioe Tiang Djien and color expert Dr. Kho Hong Giem. After the parish hall construction in 1993-1994, the church floor was replaced with ceramics. The priest house floor also replaced with granite. In 1996 two towers on the left and right of the main entrance were installed. Each tower was 15 metres high, with a cross 3,75 metres high and a rooster statue 3,5 metres high.



Picture 4, The church's appearance from above

From the architecture side, Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Mary Virgin got an appreciation from Surabaya Architecture Preservation Community in 1996, and in 1998 it was designated as cultural heritage according the SK Walikota Surabaya no. 188/45/004/402.1.04/1998.

4. People's Attitude to the Church

Even though this church is old and has been bombed in the past, this church still stands firmly and that because of the effort from the government and society around this church.

Until today, Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Mary Virgin still preserved and used by many people to pray in this church. This church can afford around 2000 people and 1000 at the church's frontyard.

People also use this church to do various activities such as: Sunday school, giving basic needs, etc. Every morning we can meet a group of elderly people that do physical exercises together. This activity can establish kinship with one another. People also helped in the development of the church, such as cleaning the church, arranging flowers to beautify the church, etc.

5. Closing Remarks

Thus the papers that we make. As the new generation of Indonesia, we have to preserve this magnificent church, so it can be used for many generations to come. Not only the church, we also have help and appreciate the society around, because without them, this church might never exist after the bombing. Hopefully this paper can be useful and add insight to the reader. We apologize if there are errors in our paper and please give us a criticism and suggestion. Thank you for reading this paper.

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Picture 5, People helping each other to renovate the church



Picture 6, People praying inside the church