

UGM Christmas Celebration: An Act of Expressing Gratitude and Sharing the Blessings

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Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, the Christian Family of Universitas Gadjah Mada (Kakrisgama) continues to hold a Christmas celebration together. The Christmas 2020 and New Year 2021 celebration was held online amid the exceedingly limited situation.

Held on Friday night (22/1), the celebration carried the theme of Expressing Gratitude and Sharing the Blessings. Pdt. Handi Hadiwitanto, M.Th., Ph.D. and Father Alfonsus Rodrigues Yudono Suwondo, Pr, led the worship, followed by lecturers, students, and academic staff.

Pdt. Handi Hadiwitanto, M.Th., Ph.D., in the Christmas sermon, stated the theme of expressing gratitude and sharing the blessings amid the current pandemic situation was a relevant response to the Covid-19 problem. During a disaster situation, people are expected to be grateful and can share their blessings with others.

“I think this is not just a theme, but a wonderful value of life. It goes beyond the meaning itself. If we talk about this particular theme only, everyone will agree and give their support. But the question is whether this will be operational for our lives, something we are living in, something we are fighting



for,” he said.

He conveyed the Holy One is present in the midst of weakness, and in that weakness, how we fight for holiness, how we continue to seek the truth, and how we fight for love and fight for life do matter.

Christianity exists because God is faced with weakness. Yet, in such weakness, Jesus Christ shows the instances of how He struggles, is determined, seeks and fights for integrity, and how He becomes a person who is grateful for everything and shares His blessings. Be grateful and share kindness, be grateful and share life.


“Expressing gratitude and sharing the blessings should not be a mere theme. We seem to be grateful and sharing, yet in fact, we never are. When disasters occur, we cannot find holiness or fail to find value and love. Being grateful and sharing can happen only when we are truly honest, weak, and amid the blessings we have and in humility, we seek the true values of life,” he said.

UGM Rector, Prof. Ir. Panut Mulyono, M.Eng., D.Eng., IPU, ASEAN Eng., in his remarks, hoped religious holidays, including Christmas celebration by the Christian Family of Universitas Gadjah Mada (Kakrisgama), could foster a sense of family and togetherness that was actualized in daily life. The Covid-19 pandemic has a broad impact on the lives of nations throughout the world, including Indonesia.

Economic growth has declined, the industrial sector and various business activities have been sluggish, and the number of unemployed has increased. As if the pandemic is not enough, recently, Indonesia has been hit by many disasters such as volcanic activities, floods, landslides, earthquakes, and aircraft crashes.

“This condition certainly encourages all of the UGM family to contribute in overcoming various problems that arise due to the pandemic and disasters. On the other hand, we should be grateful that the Covid-19 pandemic and the various disasters that have occurred have united, strengthened solidarity and mutual concern, revived the spirit of cooperation, and spurred our creativity and innovation,” he said.

He conveyed, various research collaborations between universities and partners in the discovery of vaccines and drugs, medical devices, and economic recovery produced many pride-worthy outcomes. The cohesiveness of various elements of society can be seen very prominently in their working hand in hand to help disaster victims.



Thus, according to him, the theme of the current Christmas celebration is precisely relevant. Hopefully, the UGM Christian Family can always be grateful and joyful during this pandemic and contribute to providing solutions to various problems of the nation with tolerance, empathy, and solidarity.

“We continue to cultivate unity and harmony in diversity, and creativity, innovation, and cooperation to solve various problems of the nation. Ladies and gentlemen, ending my remarks, let us continue to work together and synergize across faiths, fields, and generations so that our works and efforts can provide the best solutions for various problems of the nation. Merry Christmas 2020 and Happy New Year 2021. We are sure that with every difficulty, there is an ease,” he added.

Prof. Drs. Koentjoro, MBS., Ph.D., Chair of the UGM Board of Professors and Chair of the Korpagama, said that amid such difficulties, hopefully, everyone can learn with anyone, anywhere. Everyone is a teacher, and everywhere is a school.

“God has given us the means to learn through the Covid-19 pandemic. We can learn what we can do. The Covid-19 pandemic should result in us being more self-aware, able to introspect, getting closer to God while enjoying gratitude for His blessings. That’s why I invite everyone to learn from what God has given and His messages through this pandemic. Hopefully, we can always work together to advance UGM and our nation,” he said.

Himawan Tri Bayu Murti Petrus, ST., ME., D.Eng, head of the committee, stated that Christmas 2020 was indeed a different Christmas. Aside from the Covid-19 pandemic, Indonesia also faces various natural disasters such as floods, volcanoes, earthquakes, and many others. That is what underlies the Christmas committee to carry the theme of expressing gratitude and sharing the blessings during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The current Christmas celebration of the UGM Christian Family is manifested in gratitude by sharing the collected blessings for others in need, both those affected by Covid-19 and natural disasters.

“Are we going to be desperate as a result of this? I am sure the answer is no. In conditions like this, we always believe that God is with us. He is with all human beings. Thus, as a committee representative, I thank everyone in the Christian Family of Universitas Gadjah Mada who has contributed and shared their blessings. We will shortly distribute the aid to those in need,” he said.

Author: Agung Nugroho

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