

## ***Sawur Or Sawyer Rite: the Perspective of Death Javanese-Sundanese Tradition In Catholic Church***

**Nikasius Jatmiko<sup>1,2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Sekolah Tinggi Filsafat Widya Sasana, <sup>2</sup>Universitas Katolik Parahyangan

email: [jnikasius@yahoo.com](mailto:jnikasius@yahoo.com), [nikasius\\_20150155@unpar.ac.id](mailto:nikasius_20150155@unpar.ac.id)

**Abstract:** Death is a certainty that humans cannot avoid. Everyone will face this event without exception. The difference lies in respecting the corpse before it is buried or cremated. Each region has its peculiarities in building a death ceremony. Culture plays a significant role in shaping the death ceremony based on local wisdom. These rites lead to the same goal: placing death as a noble act. This study aims to preserve and explore cultural wealth that is becoming extinct according to the times. These methods show that humans have a high value and dignity compared to other creations, even though they have died. This value is maintained through various very noble awards. Javanese and Sundanese have similarities in respecting the bodies to be buried. The ritual of *sawer* or *sawur* is a value that distinguishes it from other cultures. Local wisdom is still maintained, even though modernity has begun to erode it.

**Keywords:** Death, Rites, *Sawur*, *Sawer*, Javanese, Sundanese

**Abstrak:** Kematian adalah sebuah kepastian yang tidak bisa dielakkan manusia. Setiap orang akan menghadapi peristiwa ini tanpa terkecuali. Perbedaannya terletak pada penghormatan terhadap jenazah sebelum disemayamkan atau dikremasi. Setiap daerah mempunyai kekhasan dalam membangun ritus kematian. Budaya ikut andil besar membentuk ritus kematian dengan dilandaskan pada kearifan lokal. Semua ritus itu mengarah pada tujuan yang sama, yakni menempatkan kematian sebagai sebuah tindakan luhur. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjaga dan menggali kekayaan budaya yang mulai punah seturut perkembangan zaman. Cara-cara ini memberikan sebuah pembeda bahwa manusia mempunyai martabat luhur dibanding ciptaan lain, sekalipun sudah meninggal. Nilai ini terus terjaga melalui aneka penghormatan yang sangat mulia. Suku Jawa dan Sunda mempunyai kemiripan penghormatan terkait orang meninggal yang akan dimakamkan. Ritus *sawer* atau *sawur* menjadi sebuah nilai yang membedakan dengan budaya-budaya lain. Kearifan lokal itu terjaga, sekalipun modernitas telah mulai menggerusnya.

**Keywords:** Kematian, Ritus, *Sawur/Sawer*, Jawa, Sunda

### **Introduction**

*Sawur* and *sawer* are traditions of honoring death that have been handed down from generation to generation in Java and Sunda (Suwito et al., 1970). This tradition began to disappear with the presence of religion that played a role in replacing it. In this perspective, Humans try to explain the mystery of death from various points of view so that the meaning of death becomes a vehicle that can give peace to everyone when facing the event. *Memento Mori* is a term that strikes humans to understand the reality that death will always happen to everyone who is born into this world without exception (Legrand et al., 2019; Munro, 2004; Riley, 2020). Every culture has a different perspective on living its meaning about the rites of honor for the dead.

The development of thoughts and the meaning of death has changed, and culture still places the value of death as extraordinary, even though death is essentially the same from the past until now. This special event is marked by the emergence of various forms of respect for the corpse. It is shown that

every culture has its own way of respecting the corpse. When humans place death as an ordinary event, they can fall into the understanding of nihilism, pantheism, or naturalism (Francis, 2019). This will have an impact on the mindset that the death of all living things means the same as the quality of human death. This issue is explained in detail by various cultures so that human death does not get trapped in the value of nihilism (Rosda, 1995). The understanding of nihilism leads to the level of degradation of the meaning of human death because the event is equated with the death of an animal that has no spiritual significance. Therefore, humans interpret death with all its rites in an extraordinary way.

The other side of culture plays a role in providing a nuance that more or less emphasizes that human death has more meaning than the death of other creatures, especially animals. The meaning is seen in how culture gives truly extraordinary respect. Deaths and burials are often seen as big celebration, as seen in Toraja funerals (Ismail, 2019a, 2019b). Likewise, the culture of the Javanese (Karim, 2017; Kurnianto, 2020; Satimin et al., 2021) and Sundanese (Isnendes, 2019; Sunda, 1976), contributes to the meaning of funerals that has become a legacy which is still passed down from generation to generation. Local wisdom with traditions that are passed on from generation to generation has revealed how the funeral event became a ceremony that contained transcendent values. The difference in the way is as an effort to honor the person who died is upheld. This is very different from the death of other creatures, such as the death of animals; no rites of honor are found.

From the perspective of Javanese and Sundanese culture, this paper provides an overview of the *sawur* (Kurnianto, 2020; Zoetmulder, 2004) or *sawer* tradition (Isnendes, 2019; Sunda, 1976). This tradition is a form of respect for someone who will be buried. Death events always bring many stories, and they want to be shown in the way of respect known as *sawur* or *sawer*. This tradition is a cultural contribution in Java in general, especially in the context of the Sundanese and Javanese in general, especially Central Java.

The Church gives a footing on the meaning of death that must always be based on the Scriptures as the main source of faith, namely death because of sin (Indonesia, 2013a). Is death also just a separate event of soul and body, or does death have a wider dimension when drawn in the realm of faith? Death is unavoidable, and the Holy Scriptures give a picture of death that occurs not only by human limitations in physical terms but rather by emphasizing the spiritual dimension (Indonesia, 2013c). Biblically it is explained that death is not just a dimension of loss of the realm of separation of soul and body, but a causal relationship between spiritual and body. Likewise, Peter's letter emphasizes that death is a sacrifice for sin, I Peter 2:24 "He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we, who died to sin, might live to righteousness. By His stripes, you have been healed." Augustine also took part in affirming that death is the result of sin (Augustine, 2005).

So death is not only interpreted as the final stop of humans in natural bodily limitations but rather emphasizes the new dimension of life after death (Maletta, 2016). That dimension is a space of God which every human being must live as a consequence of his sin and be judged (Indonesia, 2013d). Emphasizing this meaning, Rahner (1965) and Cioli (2004) contributed to the understanding that human life is a pilgrimage to God. This means that the pilgrimage to God can only be completed by death (Rahner, 1965). Initially, Rahner (1965) and Cioli (2004) emphasized physical death, but on the spiritual dimension, Rahner (1965) is more concerned with the side of God's revelation, which is the medium for how the value of spirituality is separated from the body. This means that death becomes the value of God's revelation so that humans can meet God spiritually (Piergiacomi, 2017; Rahner, 1965).

Justin Martyr was a philosopher who, in his time, confronted the emperor Antonius Pius in order to stop the persecution of Christians (Quasten, 1949). The persistence of this martyr Justin put emphasis on the side of how Justin fought for his faith even though he risked his life. Justin's death is a crown of martyrdom because he was willing to die in a sadistic way to defend his faith (Kotkowska, 2010). This description of Justin's death is not solely due to sin. Moreover, that death was due to an act of faith that was not in line with the authorities. Therefore, this dignity was very high in his day because Justin was able to endure the victory of faith without stains until he had to shed blood as a follower of Christ (Ortiz-Hidalgo, 2021).

Polycarp of Smyrna (Quasten, 1949) was a bishop who died at the age of 87 around 155–167 AD. His steadfast faith in Christ was the key to how Polycarp became a martyr. This martyrdom became a very extraordinary moment in the history of the Catholic Church so that Polycarp could become a patron in his life of faith in Christ until his death. His death was so glorified that Tertullian often referred to martyrdom as his second baptism (Quasten, 1952). This model of death was a sublime way of his day because the circumstances allowed for it. The motto of *Sanguis Martirum, Semen Christianorum* Embuiru (1967) and Tomasz Kaczmarek (2012) is increasingly echoing in the development of the Catholic Church. This is a strong foundation of faith in the Catholic Church.

The death of Justin and Polycarp provided a new paradigm at that time, and namely, death was not solely due to sin, like Rome 8:10. Human life cannot be separated from sin, but the two church fathers provide an inspiration that the death of the two figures is a process of glory. Their death was not natural but a forced death because of a choice of faith. Other people who cut off their life in this world, not because of God's will, should die naturally. Their death became a glory to God, namely death as a form of participation in the suffering of Christ (Otteneheim, 2015).

The Church openly teaches how someone who has died must still have a place. Human death still leaves more elements than the rest of creation. By itself, when humans die, they need to get a place in the form of respect and take care of the body. The Church also has a lofty view that everyone who dies must always be given a place. The *Requiem* Mass is one of the ways the Church honors death as the culmination of the human pilgrimage in the world (Bianchini & Testa, 2018).

The other side of the Church also provides teaching on how the body should be considered. The *Ad Resurendum Cum Christo* document proposes that one of the noble traditions is to bury the body in a holy place (Francis, 2019). This sacred place is a place worthy of the final resting place for the deceased. This document provides attention and suggestions that the main action for the deceased should be buried. More precisely, it says, "In memory of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord, the mystery that illumines the Christian meaning of death, burial is above all the most fitting way to express faith and hope in the resurrection of the body (Francis, 2019; Paul VI, 1963). This means that the Church sees the burial as a symbol of Jesus' own death, burial, and resurrection.

On the other hand, the Church also teaches written in the Code of Canon Law (CIC) 1178 until 1180 that burial is a form that is expected for both *clericus* and *laicus* (Jawa, 2019). According to CIC 1240 § 1, it is explained in detail that both bishops, priests, religious, and the faithful are buried in a proper and proper place (Jawa, 2019). This method is a form of respect for those who have died properly. More firmly, even human death still has meaning, so by itself, death must also have a place in the Church. Indeed, the Church does not prohibit cremation either. According to Francis (2019) The *Ad Resurendum Cum Christo* and CIC 1176 § 3 documents also emphasize this aspect (Jawa, 2019).

## Method

The Church lives in a tradition; by itself, the Church builds a relationship with the local culture. The Church explains, "death is understood as the end of physical life. It is with death that our life history before God attains a complete and irreversible form. The Scriptures view death as natural (Ps 49:11-12, Isa 40:6-7) and as a result of sin (Gen 3:19; Rom 5:12). Death is the final enemy to be defeated (1 Cor 15:26) by our participation in Christ's resurrection (O'Collins & Farrugia, 1995). The Church based the idea of death on two dimensions, namely soul and body. At the first glance, Plato's insight contributes on this understanding of death. Apart from that, the emphasis of death is more on the physical dimension. When explored more deeply, the Church makes room for what will happen after death. Moody (1977) seems to be leaning on the side of the Church's understanding that there is a reality that exists after in this world. More precisely, the word death seems to have been abolished by being replaced with life (Moody, 1977; Thacker, 2010). The Church continues to emphasize that death is a sacred event. Therefore, liturgical ordinances are given to honour the bodies and, in particular, to pray for the souls of the faithful.

This description of the *sawur* or *sawer* tradition is based on a literature study and interviews with several sources who understand Javanese persons and Sundanese culture. This article compares how the cultures were lived in their time. This combination of literature study and interviews provides an overview of the meaning of the *sawur* or *sawer* rite in a death. The selection of informants was based on purposive sampling. The interview will just deepen and complement the cultural values of *sawur* and *sawer* that are starting to disappear. The quantitative data shows the use of elements in the *sawer* rite, namely rice with turmeric, money, flowers and *sawur* rite, namely land, yellow rice, charcoal, chalk, teak wood and flowers.

This tradition is still used by several regions, especially those who still uphold these cultural values. Meanwhile, there are also areas that have started to eliminate the ritual because of the intervention of religious teachings (Abdillah, 2016; Euben, 2002). Religion gives an often contradictory assessment of the culture. The different interpretations of religious leaders make this rite shift its meaning, and some even eliminate it.

The studies of the ritual texts of *sawur* or *sawer* in the death rites reopen fragments of ancestral heritage that remind the younger generation of the richness of culture. The texts provide views and are strengthened by the results of interviews with several observers as well as cultural actors who still care for them. The combination of the text and the interview gives an illustration that the changing times also have an impact on the interpretation of the *sawur* or *sawer* rite. Religion plays a role in maintaining the culture, but there are also religions that replace the rite. The analysis of the text and the experience gives a picture that death is so highly respected that every culture displays extraordinary respect.

## The Theological Death According to the Church

Life and death are human boundary points in the physical context of the life of the soul. Two things that cannot be separated from one another, death is the process of separating the two sides. Departing from Plato's two-dimensional thought of body and soul, Bellarmine emphasized the separation of body and soul (Giovanni, 2007). This understanding is common and can be accepted from all circles, even though there are also people who have a different interpretation of the definition. Death is an event that at least gives a physical limit while living in this world. Plato's thought seems to have stopped on the worldly dimension, while the Church also teaches on the spiritual dimension (*Catechesimo Della Chiesa*

*Cattolica*, n.d.). Therefore, people of faith must hold spiritual ceremonies to honour the deceased. The Church's invitation is further emphasized through the thought of Thomas Aquinas, who gives an understanding of death as a separation between body and soul (Aquinas, 1948). Spiritual values are taught that human death becomes the basis for rising with Christ. Saint Paul also emphasized the resurrection of the body (Indonesia, 2013b).

The separation of body and soul is an understanding that is commonly used without the intervention of other thoughts on the understanding of death. This principle is emphasized by various theological thoughts that give the view that death is an extraordinary event. According to Damascius, the body, indeed, is not purified when separated from the soul, but rather it becomes unclean and therefore causes uncleanness (Mouzala, 2015). As a result, many people try to talk about it from various scientific perspectives combined with a cultural field. The separation of the two matters between body and soul is a realm of thought that perpetuates Plato's thought. However, the human consciousness of faith explains that death is not only marked by the separation of body and soul but rather provides a wider space for the event of death itself.

Therefore, when death becomes an encounter with God himself, of course, there are spiritual demands as well. Holiness is the basis of how people can meet God. Whereas in the initial thought that death was caused by sin, humans automatically died in an impure state. Sin prevents humans from meeting God on this side because God can only be found with holiness. The Church gives hope for faith even though humans are in sin before God, namely the process of purification. The book of Zechariah 13:9 gives an illustration "I will put the third one in the fire and will refine them as one refines silver. I will test them as one tests gold. They will call on my name, and I will answer them. I will say: They are my people, and they will answer: The LORD is my God! "(Indonesia, 2013c; Jawa, 2019).

The meeting of God and man becomes the deepest longing for eternity. Eternity is only on the side of the soul (*anima*), not the body (*corpus*), because of the human will that resulted in the sin. This sin is inherent in humans, which has an impact on death. Clement of Alexandria described sin as a rejection of God's discipline, which was described in Adam (Quasten, 1949). This contribution of Clement's (Quasten, 1949) thoughts opens up space for thinking that actual sin is what destroys the soul. It exists in human tendencies that are not in line with God's will. Clement examines the term humans are reluctant to be educated by God. The refusal of education is a symbol of human arrogance towards God. More specifically, Saint Thomas often describes sin, "*Advertio a Deo Convertio Ad Creaturam*". This meaning is more inviting to humans who always turn to God and make themselves (creations) as God for themselves.

Sin is a barrier to how humans meet God. The fact is that humans must return to their origins and meet God with holiness. The Bible gives a thought that sin must be perfected first when humans will meet God in eternity. The Bible teaches that death is the entrance into eternity to God. The dead are in sin as an axiom, the duty of the faithful to pray for their souls. In 2 Maccabees 12:42, "They also begged and asked, all the sins they had committed were all blotted out. Nevertheless, the virtuous Judas warned the people to keep themselves sinless, precisely because they had seen with their own eyes what had happened because of the sins of the fallen." The text further reinforces that they need a vehicle for prayer for the purification of souls tainted by sin.

Likewise, Origen gives an illustration that the sin that burdens humans must be removed in various ways (Quasten, 1952). In principle, baptism is a restorer of the relationship between man and God. Through baptism, the original sin is dissolved, but humans must also achieve that purification by

remission. Clement taught, "There are a number of means to obtain remission even of sins committed after baptism. Origen lists seven of them: martyrdom, almsgiving, forgiving those who trespass against us, conversion of sinners, and charity (Quasten, 1952). It is further explained that the sin that leads humans in eternity to God is hindered. Origen affirmed that prayer is not enough to be able to lead the dead to forgiveness of prayer, especially capital sin(Quasten, 1952). But without discouraging the sinner, Origen emphasized that every sin can be forgiven by the mercy and death of Christ itself (Quasten, 1952).

The Church and its teachings cannot be separated from the life of society in general. The Church lives by tradition and lives that tradition according to the catholic faith. Therefore, the open attitude of the Church always accommodates something good in the lives of the faithful in tradition. The Church remains a tradition that always nourishes faith. His note is that the Church must always remember the good works. *Sacrosanctum Consilium* provides a basis that the Church always supports the presence of tradition. It should also be realized that the Church also comes from and grows from tradition. The main task of the Church is to maintain the catholic faith in meeting with tradition so as not to deviate from the catholic faith.

### ***Sawur or Sawyer Culture***

In the Javanese tradition, there are three forms of death; disgraceful, intermediate, and primary (Karim, 2015, 2017; Suwito et al., 1970). First, disgraceful death is described when a person ends his life by committing suicide. Second, intermediate death is death that humans face by undergoing a little suffering or trial. Third, the primary death is death for defending the truth of faith. Martyrs are categorized in the third event, namely primary death. It is based on the belief in faith even though the martyrs had to suffer in order to maintain the faith. People do not spare their lives but give up for the sake of faith. Thus Jesus also gives an illustration, whoever loses his life will get it by mercy (Pradipta, 2019). Luke 9:24 "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it".

Death cannot be limited to speaking only on the human side, but all aspects of life that are related to one another. Humans living in the world are naturally bound by these aspects of life. At least these three aspects are always attached, even though humans are often not aware of them. Those aspects are anthropology, theology, and culture. These three aspects cannot be separated because when humans live and interact with others, automatically, all three are integrated into one bond that exists within humans. Even if there are people who reject God, the theological aspect remains in it. Whatever the religion, death is related to Allah.

First, this anthropological aspect examines the human side itself. Humans are the center of all the hustle and bustle of life in this world (Quasten, 1949). On this side, humans in seas humans become the center of civilization in the universe, even at a certain level, humans often make themselves as excessive centers, as is the case with anthropomorphism. Humans place themselves as the center of everything, even the center of inner offerings, because humans are a representation of God, Gen 1:27. The human arrogance that made the center the representative of the Gods could not just be blamed. God places humans above all else; even humans are identified with the image of God. This similarity is used as an *Anthropos* affirmation as a form of perpetuating power itself.

Humans cannot live without other people, which is ontologically existential. Humans have social elements that cannot be separated and are inherent in themselves. Human social interaction with others sociologically has become a basic human need. Social relations automatically form institutions that

eventually become an agreement that institutions must be followed and lived together. The goal is the harmony of humans according to their position in life in society, regardless of whether humans are equal before God.

The social institutions also provide an illustration that humans are human beings who have a different consciousness from other creations. The institution wants to explain that humans have different values when faced with other creatures. This difference in values leads people to seek various forms of rituals that are believed to be in harmony with their lives. All of that is integrated with a life together to be harmonious. On the other hand, anthropology explicitly contains elements of body, soul, and spirit. Naturally, there is a procedure for maintaining the three elements, specifically the ancestral honour in the death rate.

The second is a theological perspective. The concept of Allah should be understood by all who believe in Him by various names. At least there is a place that provides space for the relationship to God to be channel properly. Theology wants to bridge that human life has a limit; by itself, humans must return to that origin. The Javanese concept is often expressed with the term *manunggaling kawulo Gusti* (Sumodiningrat, Gunawan Wulandri, 2014), which is often understood to be reunited with God. This is the point of physical death as the bridge. The term united to God certainly contains a logical consequence that humans must always be clean and pure from all the things of the world. Because it is explained that in the Book of Job 1:21, he said: "Naked I came out of my mother's womb, naked also I will return to it. The Lord who gives, the Lord who takes, praise the name of the Lord!"

Job gives the theological picture that when humans are born with nothing, they will also return to God with nothing. This implies that man must be in a state of pure purity before returning to that God. Naked is a symbol of holiness that God has provided humans in holiness, but the human tendency is to reject God's upbringing. This pattern is the seed of sin that pollutes humans. Therefore, Job illustrates that humans must be clean and pure when God calls them.

The third is the side of culture or local wisdom. Every culture has a way of how humans deal with their whole life with the universe. This cultural wealth provides a view of how society has a cultural wealth that displays and expresses its way of relating to God. This mindset is passed down from generation to generation both orally and in writing, more specifically, the culture of death. Broadly speaking, this culture is mostly passed on orally (Astiyanto, 2006) The lack of written references has resulted in many interpretations of the acceptance of the oral culture. However, every culture shows its way of how God is the ultimate goal in human pilgrimage. Therefore, the human journey in this context is interpreted according to that cultural understanding.

According to Karim (2017) and Suwito et al. (2015), *SAWUR* or *SAWER* culture is offered in Javanese and Sundanese culture. *Sawur* or *sawer* is a ceremony of respect for the dead, especially when the corpse will be buried. The two cultures have almost the same meaning of death rites in the context of *Sawur* or *Sawer* (Aufa, 2017). Interviews with several observers and adherents of this rite resulted in several findings related to the *Sawur* or *Sawer* rites. This rite is a ceremony for the body to be buried in the cemetery. Before they leave home, the family throws something away as reparation as well as providing a symbol for the journey of their life.

Table 1. Elements used in Sawur or Sawyer rites after Sundanese and Javanese cultural leaders interview

<b>Jawa (<i>Sawur</i>)</b>	<b>Sunda (<i>Sawer</i>)</b>
Rice with turmeric (Raff, 2013)	Land
Money	Rice
Flowers	Charcoal
	Chalk
	Teak wood
	Flowers

These rituals have similarities, as well as differences. Based on interviews with Sundanese and Javanese cultural leaders of the two cultures, an explanation of the meaning of the elements used in the *Sawur* rite emerged, first, in the context of Javanese culture (Bratawidjaja, 2000). Based on the four observers of this rite, it at least gives an idea of why the *Sawur* rite has always existed (Karim, 2015). Rice-colored yellow is a symbol of purity, just like gold is a precious metal that cannot rust over time (Raaf, 2013). Likewise, human life after death must be pure. Money is a worldly symbol that must be abandoned. Humans facing God no longer deal with material symbolized by money, but only with purity of heart without bringing material. At the same time, flowers are a symbol of the fragrance of his life's charity in the world which must always be remembered and continued (Kurnianto, 2020).

The three elements also symbolize that the deceased can no longer provide a living for the living, especially the elderly. So the removal of the three elements is a form of providing the last sustenance before leaving for Allah in heaven. This understanding is still the pros and cons when *sawur* is termed providing the last living. This becomes contradictory in the *sawur* process on child mortality. At this level, children do not yet have the responsibility to provide social support, but they must provide the last income, which is symbolized by the *sawur* rite. With these two views, the author is more inclined to the first understanding, which seems to be in line with Christian thought according to the book of Job 1:21.

The second is Sundanese culture (Isnendes, 2019; Surjadi, 1974). Based on interviews with several leaders of Sundanese culture and compared with literature, there are major ceremonies in phases in the world, namely Birth, During Life, and Death. In the context of death, the six elements give great spiritual meaning. However, Bratawidjaja (2000) mentions ceremony of *Sawer* has slightly shifted its meaning because these elements are also applied to marriage ceremonies with different meanings. The Sundanese traditional *sawer* ceremony, originally reserved for the death ceremony, has shifted slightly due to the influence of Islamic culture (Mahmudah & Saputera, 2019). This can be seen from the procedures since death, treatment, and burial, which show more understanding of the Islamic religion. The most obvious thing is seen in Hasan Mustafa's explanation, "After the corpse is wrapped up, then the head is placed to the north, the feet are to the south, then a prayer is made (Mustapa, 2002)". This shows that the Islamic tradition is more dominant than the Sundanese tradition itself, so the cultural elements that have been passed down from generation to generation are starting to disappear, especially the *sawer* rite in the realm of death. Once again, according to observers of Sundanese culture, it is emphasized that the *sawer* rite still exists; only a few of its successors have begun.

In the oral tradition, there are still some understandings according to the tradition that uses facilities as symbols that are full of meaning when delivering the body. The first is a land, and this is a symbol of where humans came from and will return to their origins (Indonesia, 2013b). The second is rice which is a symbol of the source of human life. This ritual illustrates that rice is sown (*sawer*) because humans no longer eat the sources of earthly life but heavenly. The third is charcoal, which is a symbol of human

fragility, so humans must always rely on God's mercy through the prayers of those left behind. Fourth is white chalk, which is a symbol of holiness, meaning that humans must return to God in holiness. The fifth is teak as a symbol of authenticity, so humans who die must return to the source of that authenticity, namely God himself. Lastly are flowers. This symbolizes the fragrance during his life in this world; may what has been lived by the deceased will always be remembered and become an example.

The inclusion of religions in Indonesia at least contributed to the color of the rites in becoming more diverse. Slowly and surely, this rite began to shift and was presented with the theological value given by religion (Hanafiah & Sukadari, 2021). There is evidence that the ideas will collide and produce a new form, of culture, that the theological intervention of religion will determine. At the extreme level, these early rites have been transformed into new meanings that are integrated between religion and culture. All of this happens because humans want to show that new values are relevant to contemporary culture, let alone strengthened by theological values in religion. In this concept, death is no longer required, a very complicated rite. This is the shift in the meaning of the *sawur* or *sawer* rite in death. Religion plays a role in the shift in the meaning of the *sawer* or *sawur* rite.

### ***The Dialogue The Catholic Church And Culture***

Inculturation theology in a catholic perspective offers culture as a universal entry point in the appreciation of faith (Martasudjita, 2021; Sagala, 2020). The spirit of *ecclesia semper reformanda* is a jargon that continues to be echoed. The Catholic Church does not kill the noble values of culture and also does not abandon the faith in matters of death rites (Luzbetak, 1991). In fact, the Catholic Church interprets the *sawur* or *sawer* rite as an extraordinary theological value. Ecclesiastes 5:14 says, "As he came out of his mother's womb, so will he go, naked as when he came, and he does not get anything that can be carried in his hands by his labors."

The new theological value offered in the *sawur* or *sawur* rite lies in the text of this Ecclesiastical. The picture is seen in naked terms. The word naked is like holiness that is described as not carrying anything when facing God as when born from the mother's womb. The image of abandoning all worldly forms is symbolized in the *sawur* or *sawer* rite. Throwing away yellow rice, money, and flowers is a form of release from worldly attachments. So when a person goes to Allah, these objects must be thrown away, *sawur* or *sawer* when the body is lifted from the house to the cemetery. Behind all the events of the *sawur* or *sawer* rite, this gives a vivid picture so that humans can maintain their holiness by leaving the fragrance of their names and putting off worldly problems.

This *sawur* or *sawer* rite can be categorized in the realm of theology. The offer of the tipology can be called Purifying Theology. This means that the rite gives the meaning that people who have died and will be buried must leave all worldly affairs. The *sawur* or *sawer* process is a symbol of self-purification before facing God. By itself, the rite gives meaning so that the soul faces God with holiness, without any more worldly ties. Saint Paul emphasized that they returned to God wearing a spiritual body, not a physical body. More clearly, Paul asserts in 1 Corinthians 15:44, "What is sown is a natural body, what is raised is a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body". This is the meaning of human purification that the destruction of the body does not necessarily result in the destruction of the soul. The soul will be resurrected with holiness without carrying a natural body. That is Purifying Theology.

From both sides of this culture, at first glance, there are many differences, especially the elements used in the ritual. But on the whole, there is identification that all points to God. They provide

complementary understanding without reducing the essence contained in them. The culmination of the ritual is a hope where humans can enter eternity with the God they believe in. The context of this rite occurs for all religions without exception, so their return to Allah must be marked by this rite.

## Conclusion

Death is a mystery of God that cannot be intervened by humans. Even so, humans have a way of appreciating and living the death rites according to their culture like *Sawur* and *Sawer* rites. *Sawur* and *sawer* are traditions of respect for the death of Javanese and Sundanese. These various death rites indicate that death has an extraordinary place compared to other rites. The procession of death in any series of rites shows the great value of the mystery of death. Rites and ceremonies are a form of revealing the mystery; by itself, the catch of each culture is a reflection of the appreciation of the mystery of death.

The rite is an interpretation as well as the meaning of something that is not reached by the human mind. As a result, humans try to arrange rituals according to beliefs in the form of that culture. The difference in viewpoints is significant evidence of how humans are very limited so that the expression of limitations is manifested in various forms of rites that are understood, believed, and carried out as long as it becomes an agreement in the culture of a particular society.

On the other hand, a transformative theology is offered, namely, through the *sawer* or *sawur* culture, humans are brought to transcendent values. Material possessions do not matter when humans die. This is an illustration that humans should not be greedy for the life of the world. In Luke 19:8, "But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Lord, I will give half of what I have to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone I will give back four times as much." There is a transformative value that happened to Zacchaeus when he was still alive. Likewise, this is described in the gospel of Mark 10:25 "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." These two texts give an illustration that material things become an obstacle for everyone in God's kingdom. They are releasing all forms of material that are poured into the event of *sawur* or *sawer*.

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