

**In Memoriam –
P. Willie Wagener CSsR (Feb 26, 1933 - April 12, 2020)**

"GO HOME WITH PRIDE"

(Weetebula, Indonesia, april 14, 2020)

Father Fr. Wilhelm Ernst Wagener, C.Ss.R, known as Fr. Wagener, was born on February 26, 1933 in Essen-Steele. He was a second child of three siblings. After graduating from high school at Collegium Josephinum in Bonn, he made his first vows on March 25, 1954 in the Redemptorist Congregation (CSsR).

After completing his studies at the Redemptorist Philosophy-Theological College at Hennef, he was ordained a priest on March 31, 1959 by Bishop Ferche. In 1960 (60 years ago) Father Wagener was commissioned to Sumba Island - Indonesia as a missionary by the Province of Cologne at the age of 27 years. In December 1960, Fr. Wagener left his native Germany, together with Br. Martin by using the Hapag - Lloyd - Gesellschaft cargo ship bound for Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia. With great enthusiasm he sailed for weeks heading to his mission "terra incognita". Father Wagener was the third generation of the Redemptorist group who were sent to Sumba. After gruelling 5 weeks on the sea Exactly January 15, 1961 he arrived in Jakarta.

He had been detained in Surabaya because of having appendicitis which he endured a week before he arrived in Jakarta. After recovered, he sailed to Sumba by the Waikelo Motor Boat to Waingapu. On March 30, 1961, he finally reached the destination of his long journey on the island of Sumba. In the first four months after his arrival, he had the time and opportunity to get to know the culture and people of Sumba and, especially, to learn Indonesian. He was later appointed as Parish Priest in Waingapu, the capital of East Sumba. The parish territory stretches across the east of Sumba Island. Unfortunately, he had to leave his first pastoral job for 6 years because he was elected as Vice-Provincial Redemptoris of Indonesia in 1967.

In 1969 the mission area on the two islands of Sumba and Sumbawa, from Rome was upgraded to a diocese. In 1970 he was appointed as the first Apostolic Administrator for the Sumba-Sumbawa Diocese. After five years in office (1970-1975), he handed over the Sumba-Sumbawa diocese to Apostolic Administrator Fr. Hendrikus Haripranata SJ. After that, he was assigned as novis master in Elopada(1976-1977). In 1978 he was transferred from Sumba to Java to become the Rector of Wisma Sang Penebus and Prefect of our student in Yogyakarta since 1978 till 1993.

In his 15 years of work as Rector at Wisma Sang Redeemer in Yogyakarta, at the same time he also managed and accompanied the Catholic community in the Nandan region - Yogyakarta and later he built the Church of Saint Alfonsus - Nandan which is now a Nandan Parish.

His love for Sumba was expressed in this legacy. One of Father Wagener's services was to establish Panurma, the Student Affairs Committee. He took the initiative. This is so that Sumba students who are smart, but lack funding will be given a scholarship to be able to study. Fr. Wagener reached into his own pocket for the organization of this institution. However, in order to manage it, it is left to Yapnusda (Nusa Cendana School Foundation) to take care of it. Yapnusda then (once) handed it over to the Weetebula diocese, who then returned it to the redemptorist.

In 1993 he returned from Java to Sumba after he was re-elected Vice-Provincial Redemptoris. After completing his term as Vice-Provincial (1993-1996), he chose the house of St. Alfonsus monastery in Weetebula - Sumba as his residence. In this monastery house he had spent the past 23 years until his death. His activities so far have been:

Rector of the St. Alfonsus Weetebula monastery (1997-2003), Director of the Retreat House, assisted Sunday services in the surrounding parishes, pastoral ministry at Caritas Hospital, Weetebula.

Fr. Mikael Keraf shared this. " in the last conversation with me last week at Convento, he only spoke a few things: 1. Never leave the difficult and truly miserable people around you. 2. Let out anything in our lives. 3. There is only one thing is sure to be left of all that we have, namely the LORD. Then we both silent. Finally, he asked me to pray and bless him so that he can survive beyond the last moment before HIM".

Fr. Wagener called home in peace in his beloved home St. Alfonsus Monastery Weetebula on April 12, 2020 at the age of 87 years. He was buried among his brothers at Redemptorist cemetery in Wanno Gaspar. God, give him eternal rest and eternal light shining on him. Lots of people from various walks of life wanted badly to attend the wake and his funeral.

Yes.. but if you can choose the time of death, you can choose the one that really suits your taste. Or even choose not to die. In the condition of the Covid 19 pandemic like this, even gathering, in groups we must be careful. Not because it is forbidden by the government, but so that we do not transmit the deadly virus to each other.

Whereas in Sumba, death is a celebration. Together releasing the departures of our loved ones. With tears and prayers. But also with a festive party! Because of belief in a new life. Just switch from the old life. In a different realm. On the other side.

In the face of the death of old people who have spent many years working, walking, climbing, running, dancing, crying, smiling, worshipping, building hope, kindling love, persevering in faith, trying to give forgiveness ... and whatnot ... everything will one day arrive at the complete words uttered by Jesus the Redeemer on the Cross: "CONSUMMATUM EST"

Saint Augustine wrote, "At that time our souls were amazed before the Divine Majesty of God that is second to none, pushed toward the Most Powerful God in a longing that became increasingly pressing and increasingly full. That was the moment when our souls exclaimed, consummatum est!"

Go home with the champion ...

Walk with Jesus the Risen Redeemer ...

Thank you for the example of simplicity, humility, tenacity, trust and humor that always make us young Redemptorists more confident to move forward ...

Fr. Willy Pala CSSR