

# Interfaith Dialogue and COVID-19 Pandemic: Insights among Selected Filipino Youth

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**Abstract** – *The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) presents an opportunity for all religious traditions to promote mutual understanding and common human aspirations. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to highlight the enduring power of world religions and the role played by religious leaders and faith communities in promoting the role of interfaith dialogue in the time of pandemic. Interfaith dialogue can promote human values such as the common good, human dignity, solidarity, and peace. These values are rooted in the major religious traditions of the world. Drawing from the insights of selected Filipino youth, this paper provides a renewed understanding of doing interfaith dialogue in the Philippines by promoting an inclusive-pluralist attitude among religious faiths in the face of COVID-19. Findings reveal that interfaith dialogue can promote positive values in and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.*

**Keywords** – *COVID-19, dialogue, interfaith, interreligious, intercultural, pandemic, youth*

## INTRODUCTION

“No peace among nations without peace among the religions. No peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions. No dialogue between the religions without investigation of the foundation of the religions” [1]. Hans Küng’s famous dictum linking peace and interreligious dialogue is relevant in the current coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Religions continue to provide comfort in a world torn apart by the COVID-19 pandemic. The power it generates can be used in helpful ways to slow the spread of COVID-19 or in harmful ways that might hasten the spread of the virus. The present moral, spiritual, and contextual issues have their roots in the last half century’s technological and cultural shifts. Despite secularization, Faith-Based Communities (FBCs) and religious organizations create positive collaboration in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Scholars are seeking to identify how to integrate interfaith dialogue in the context of the pandemic. A recent article suggests that “the coronavirus pandemic is developing very rapidly on a global scale. Understandably, it has a very significant impact on the whole social life, including religious life. Religious practices, which have, by their very nature, a community dimension in almost all religions, in Christian denominations as well, are also changing under the influence of the pandemic [2]. Indeed, proponents of interfaith dialogue recognize that incorporating faith into praxis helps alleviate the moral, spiritual, and temporal problems of humanity. Classical

theories of secularization claim that secular values have massively replaced traditional and religious values. However, rather than declining, religion is growing worldwide.

Traditionally, interfaith dialogue is studied within Biblical studies and comparative theologies. The study and praxis of interfaith dialogue have been reinvigorated since the advent of 9/11. However, the link between theory and praxis remains underdeveloped. Studies in interfaith dialogue focus on the specific attempts at a communicative objective [3]. Additionally, “for many other interfaith events, the objective consists of collaborative practices such as shared rituals (i.e., prayers or sermons) or attempts at integrative theological constructions for religious individuals” [4]. Leonard Swidler claims that interfaith dialogue cannot be carried out only by scholars and leaders of the world religions; the ideas and concerns of the grassroots communities must also be voiced and heard [5].

Pope Francis, in his ‘Urbi et Orbi’ Message states that “we have realized that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other. On this boat... are all of us” [6]. This insight provides an opportunity for all religions, cultures, races and ethnicities to find ways on how to promote unity in the face of COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, there is an urgent need to recognize that there is dignity indifference. Respect for others creates the foundation for interfaith dialogue. Despite having differences in faith, humans

should still be able to work side by side for the betterment of society to address the most urgent issue—the COVID-19 pandemic, mainly as it affects the vulnerable in the society [7, 8]. The dialogue of life, dialogue of theological exchanges, dialogue of spiritual experience, and dialogue of action play an essential role in global, economic and political affairs.

The state of emergency, prolonged lockdowns, and enhanced community quarantine affects the physical and psychological health of humanity and equally affects the spiritual and religious dimensions of human beings. The Philippine case is the most explicit one (as far as Southeast Asia is concerned) in terms of the highest number of cases in the entire region. Apart from the COVID-19 pandemic, there are other related human concerns and problems in the Philippines such as poverty, hunger, job loss, environmental degradation, suicide, and mental health issues.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The research aims to provide practical solutions to the problem of COVID-19 to different faith traditions. The research data will be drawn from different faith/religious leaders' insights using metanarrative analysis. The WHO envisions, “Religious leaders, faith-based organizations, and faith communities can play a major role in saving lives and reducing illness related to COVID-19. They are a primary source of support, comfort, guidance, and direct health care and social service, for the communities they serve” [9]. In this article, we delve in the role of interfaith dialogue juxtaposed from the lived-experiences of selected Filipino College students in a Catholic University. Phenomenological analysis focuses on the study of the individual’s lived experiences.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study utilized a descriptive qualitative research. The researchers employed online survey, text mining, and data validation. The respondents are university students enrolled in theology and religious education classes. Snowball sampling technique has been used to gather the respondents for interview. Consents were requested from the respondents. The online survey was conducted from June-August 2020. The respondents answered the open-ended question: How will you respond to the COVID-19 pandemic from an interfaith/interreligious perspective? Their responses were analyzed using the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) which is concerned with the detailed examination of personal lived

experience [10]. In this paper, we highlighted the interreligious insights from the student’s lived experiences.

Specifically, the authors used IPA to gain insight into how students made sense of their experiences and significance of interreligious understanding. “To choose a phenomenological research methodology requires the scholar to reflect on the philosophy they embrace. Given that there are many different philosophies that a scientist can embrace, it is not surprising that there is broad set of phenomenological traditions that a researcher can draw from” [11]. The researchers asked the participants to sign a consent form where a participant is informed about all aspects of the study, which are important for the participant to decide. After studying all aspects of the study, the participant voluntarily confirms his or her willingness to participate in a particular study and significance of the research for advancement of knowledge and social welfare [12].

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The succeeding presentations show the following results: (1) empirical results - Demographics (see Table 1) and participants’ survey answers (see Table 2); (2) phenomenological results –the importance of interfaith dialogue in the context of pandemic revealed the following results.

**Table 1. Descriptive Results: Demographics (N=40)**

Variables	Categories	N	%
Age	Below 18-year-old	10	25.0
	Over 18-year-old	30	75.0
Sex	Male	25	62.5
	Female	15	37.5
Religion	Roman Catholic	29	72.5
	Christian	4	10.0
	Protestant	4	10.0
	Buddhist	3	7.5

Table 2 shows 40 respondents of which 10 (25.0 %) are below 18-year old; 30 (75.0%) are over 18-year-old. In terms of sex, 25 (62.5 %) are Males and 15 (37.5%) are Females. In terms of religion, 29 (72.5 %) are Roman Catholics, 4 (10.0%) are Christians, 4 (10.0%) Protestants and 3 (7.5 %) belong to Buddhist religion. All the respondents signed the consent form and provided data for this research.

The descriptive qualitative results in Table 2 revealed the importance of interfaith dialogue in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The respondents answered the main research question using online interview via zoom and google forms. The researchers

highlighted the perspectives of the students in terms of doing interfaith dialogue during the COVID-19 pandemic using phenomenological analysis.

**Table 2. Descriptive Results: Phenomenological Perspectives on Interfaith Dialogue (N=40) Themes in Interfaith Dialogue in Time of Pandemic**

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Common Good
Solidarity
Love for humanity
Sense of empathy
Showing respect for the Other
Option for the poor and vulnerable
Ethical responsibility
Mission
Promoting human dignity
Removing prejudice and biases

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Using the phenomenological method, results of the participant' survey answers revealed the themes in interfaith dialogue. The following themes are Common Good, Solidarity, Love for humanity, Sense of empathy, Showing respect for the Other, Option for the poor and vulnerable, Ethical responsibility, Mission, Promoting human dignity, Removing prejudice and biases. Most of the respondents are firmly bound to promote the values found in major religions. This revealed the importance of world religions in dealing with COVID-19 pandemic.

**Common Good.** One significant insight from the students' reflections is to promote the common good (calling for the good of all). "A lot of today's violence can be rooted to discrimination, inequality, hunger, poverty, and more, contrary to other opinions, religion is not a cause to violence since any violence is not a religion at all in any of its teachings, despite into historical battles of religions, those were wars rooted to historical reasons stated before. What we need today is to promote the common good." One participant opined: "In essence, all religions have one goal in common: to like a morally-good life. That why coexistence and acceptance are encouraged amongst believers and non-believers. They all have love as their primary driving force." Another participant commented: "Often, we tend to focus on our differences instead of what we have in common. Perhaps this is the reason why we cannot seem to understand each other."

Another participant argued that the golden rule can be found in major world religions. "The golden rule, religious teaching that can be found in several of the

world's major religions, 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.' 'Not always the same words but the same meaning and this teaching apply much great religious teaching. I think this could be the starting point of dialogue."

Common good can give great benefit in aiding the battles fought by people every day, not just in the pandemic, but in even in moments such as the struggle of the Black Lives Matter community, where they fight for equality against the discrimination of the larger group of white people. As the saying, what caused the uprising in the first place as George Floyd and several of his brothers and sisters before him who were racially profiled and attacked by law enforcement or white citizens, the black community stood up and gave back to the racist community a fight, some peaceful, some physical and damaging. Some stood up in peaceful protest in hopes of the peaceful conclusion of the discrimination which despite not hurting anyone was still criticized and attacked by law enforcement which also led peaceful protests to attack back.

**Solidarity.** In the current lockdown of public spaces across the globe due to the spread of COVID-19, the notion of solidarity gains new meaning. One participant opined that "humans are naturally social beings that rely on cooperation and companionship to survive. The lockdown brought about by the pandemic has kept us separated physically, but through technology, we can still interact with each other. People can form organizations and initiatives to help dampen the negative effects of COVID-19." As such, there are many examples of solidarity in the time COVID-19 pandemic. "Examples are donation drives, services to deliver food, advocacy organizations, and many more. Anyone can engage in this practice. Students can work together or propose this to their existing organizations. Adults may participate in initiatives as well or organize or organize their own. Solidarity can also be expressed in simple ways. Seniors may call their loved ones and provide mutual support and unity to help alleviate tension and separation. This does not only help us build connections in a time where we are all separated, but we are the ones responding to our duty as citizens and responsibly serving our society."

One student regrettably said that "If learned from a young age regardless of any background, they would understand empathy and kindness, and share that to the people around them, and it allows a child to grow out of selfishness and ignorance, teaching them of their ultimate effect on them and their community. Suppose churches or any religious groups could teach to the

ignorance and selfishness of those ignorant to the discrimination problem, teach them of their effect, and how such attitude of discrimination can ultimately come back and hurt them and their community violent protests. In that case, it can change how people interact and take on problems.” This could be a great challenge for religious educators and theologians who are teaching values education in a diverse classroom setting.

**Love for humanity.** At the heart of religions is the notion of love for humanity. There are commonalities in the way the pandemic has affected all peoples. “Religions have overlapping beliefs, yet one teaching is common between many religions. It is the doctrine of love. In Christianity, God commanded his people to love their neighbors as their selves, and this teaching can be found in Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and many other religions albeit, phrased differently. In today’s day and age, however, we keep forgetting this basic teaching. If we look around us, many religious sectors try to push their beliefs onto others, and it is understandable to share their beliefs as some people are very passionate about them, yet what leads to so much violence is the mindset that one’s religion is superior to everyone.”

In the Judeo-Christian Tradition, the core commandment of love can be both found in their Sacred Texts. “The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” This is a verse taken from Mark 12: 31 from the Holy Bible of Christianity. The sentence itself talks about treating everyone kindly and lovingly regardless of who they are, not that they said ‘neighbor’, not friend or family or enemies. They did not specify who exactly should be treated in this kind of manner, and it is implied that anyone can fit the category of being your ‘neighbor’ and that this does not necessarily have to do anything with worshipping a divine entity—that is what I like most about interfaith dialogue.”

Each religion teaches us to love one another then why are these types of issues still a common problem. It is common to see discrimination against Muslims in our day-to-day lives, especially in a Christian country. It is the plague of apathy that can only be solved with love. Loving others transcend the teachings of religion. Loving one another does not simply mean tolerating their existence in our world. It means treating each other with compassion and respect no matter the color, beliefs or religion.

**Sense of empathy.** During global crises, religions can empathize with those who are suffering from the

ravages of the pandemic. One student argued: “Nowadays, we always hear news about the pandemic. While the virus has caused much tension due to the lack of resources and inefficient running of our country, these have also created other problems for our countrymen. Violence erupts between those who enforce the law and those who disobey them out of desperation for food and other physiological needs. Our country is plagued with tension and violence, and this could be reduced by applying the principles of interfaith dialogue.” Moreover, according to one participant, “Instead of building lofty walls by being exclusive, we must instead build bridges that allow members of all religions and spiritual teachings to reach out across the waters of life.”

**Showing respect for the Other.** “Dialogue is the attitude of respect for another person and that believing that the other person has something good to say. Dialogues usually focus on the interrelationship between the diversity of religious sectors and through the encounter of these diverse people, this teaches us how to respect and have a mutual understanding with each other.”

One participant opined that “we can show respect to our jeepney drivers, and their families have no doubt begun to feel very hungry from lack of food due to lack of money to buy them. This is an instinctual feeling and is thus, an act of man. Because these drivers could not earn from their usual way of living, they chose to beg on the streets to earn some money and call attention to their unfortunate situation. Various churches, such as Caritas helped the drivers. This is interfaith dialogue in action.” Given these examples, religion has impacted and will continue to impact the COVID-19 response in many ways.

The power of prayer and reflection is important in this time of COVID-19 pandemic. “There is nothing to be gained from this global nightmare currently going on, and there are no winners or losers when it comes to innocent lives being taken away by a virus caused by the utter beliefs of man. The best thing that we can do now is to pray to God that you are alive and breathing today because a lot of innocent people have lost their lives fighting this virus on the front lines risking their lives for people they do not even know or are related to, just like how Jesus sacrificed himself for the entire world just for our sins he (God) did not know us all personally as well just as what the front liners are doing risking it all for humanity. In essence, we must all follow not what our government says but what our front liners say if we all can do that religiously, then we will

see brighter days ahead, but if not, then darker times will be upon us.”

Religious discriminations and misconceptions must be avoided since many people are discriminated against and even attacked due to misconceptions, ignorance, and hostility based on their religious difference. Interfaith cooperation helps stop that, as well as deepen people's own understanding of their faith and values.

**Option for the poor and vulnerable.** During the pandemic, preferential option for the poor and vulnerable is needed. Religions continue to provide shelter, food and health care for the least, the last and the lost. One participant said: “A simple greeting or offering your assistance to others whom you find are struggling will make their lives better and in turn may make their performance improve, thus affecting the bigger picture into a beautiful outcome. The kindness and love you offer will have been paid forward to everyone else” Religions have a role to promote preferential option for the poor and the vulnerable than just prayers.

**Ethical responsibility.** There are existing active network of global religious leaders working to promote religious-ethical responses. One participant said that “the teachings of world religions can be aptly applied in our current situations as well. Having a well-informed conscience and knowing what is right and wrong is not solely for our benefit, but through acting in accordance with moral principles, other people may benefit as well. While we pray for our well-being, we must also pray for the well-being and improvement of others and our country.”

Around the world, house of worship, churches, mosques and temples have chosen to close in response the COVID-19 pandemic. To reduce the need for in-person gatherings, religious leaders are setting up with innovative and creative options. A recently published article sums up the need to provide spiritual interventions. “The most immediate need is to provide care for those infected by the COVID-19, provide assistance in their healing process and give spiritual support to the bereaved family members. Those who have lost loved ones have to go through a grieving process. Virtual memorial services, live streaming and online eulogies are some of the creative ways to remember the dead” [13].

It is realistic to demand religious leaders use the language of religion to warn people the risk they face during the COVID-19 pandemic. “Through ethics in action—forming, informing, discerning, deciding,

action, reflection, reconsideration, and reformation—we can examine one's conscience and critically reflect on our moral choices and experiences in life, so we can correctly respond. This applies and acceptable to everyone, even in the smallest ways.”

The COVID-19 pandemic is a time to promote interfaith collaboration as well as religious leaders and adherents get involved in promoting human values. One participant said that “in order to have dialogue, both parties should keep an open mind, avoid hostility, and welcome valid criticism.”

**Mission.** The long history of pandemics demonstrates that religious factors are important in doing their mission. “The COVID-19 Pandemic has disrupted our lives and brought up new challenges for all of us. As we are all troubled mentally, physically, financially, and spiritually, now more than ever, we should reflect and turn to God. This is our mission in life” according to one participant.

Many diverse religious communities were adjusting to the new normal brought about by the COVID-19. Many parishes and dioceses are now doing live masses or virtual religious services in order to augment the need for spiritual nourishment [14]. This could be considered a continuation of their mission to proclaim the good news even in the virtual spaces.

One participant commented: “The best I can for the current situation is to always be informed of what's happening and do my best to signal-boost correct and factual information for others to read; charity, fundraisers, charity mission and donation drives so that I and others can aid those who are in far greater need; and keep using my voice to demand justice for those who can't or for those who are too busy trying to survive to even properly express their anger for an unfair system.”

**Promoting human dignity.** In a theological sense, human dignity is the recognition that human beings possess an intrinsic worth and they are worthy of respect simply because they are human beings. One student said: “Interreligious dialogue aims to bring people of varying religions together. It does not mean that one has to believe in the same thing as the other. This simply places an emphasis on how there must be respect towards others from different religions. We are all human beings who have the freedom to choose what we believe in because it is a human right. Furthermore, it promotes religious tolerance which encourages us to judge less and accept more.”

Once we begin to look for a common ground, we can start to identify our similarities with other people.

From there, we can discern what is the truth out of all the stereotypes and prejudices in the world. After this, we can instill it in our minds and apply it in our actions through the way we think and converse with others. Interreligious dialogue enables us to build bridges and forge bonds with others as we become united in our love for our neighbors and our God. “Challenging as it may be, a step to understanding other religions is to forego all religion stereotypes and biases.” School curricula, workplace policies, and such have been reformed to be more inclusive of people with different beliefs. Interreligious dialogue, also known as interfaith dialogue, has become a way of peace for the world in which we live. It is necessary as it allows people to understand the faith that comes with mutual understanding and respect that allows people to live and cooperate despite their differences.

Interfaith dialogue does not exist for the purpose of proselytizing others into a single religion or culture, nor is it to create a melting pot of syncretism in which all religious identities are united into one. Interfaith dialogue is the task of learning more about those who are radically different from oneself and the society in which you live. It teaches us to coexist with people who have different beliefs, cultures, and worldviews other than our own.

### **Discussion**

The re-emergence of interfaith dialogue, and its value as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been a successful way to lessen the impact of the pandemic on different religious communities. Religion has always been man's other method of trying to give meaning and purpose to human life. The purpose of interfaith dialogue is for people further to increase their understanding of other religious systems and institutions and still have mutual respect. We can look at interreligious faith dialogue as a way of attaining peace in the world. As globalization arises and the cultural, racial, and religious diversity in our nation increase, it is much more crucial for us to achieve this interreligious faith dialogue, because we become more exposed to other people of different faiths and religions.

Conflicts between people who have different beliefs can happen, but this can be avoided by strengthening mutual respect and enhancing our sensitivity to each other's feelings despite the other people's differences of beliefs and relationship with God. It is only right for two people with different religions to share aspects of their respective faiths and understand and accept each

other's differences. Interfaith Dialogue allows different people to come together, discuss and explore each other's religions, get rid of ignorance, clarify the doubts about other religions, and promote interreligious understanding to avoid conflict between the respective religious communities. The goal of interfaith dialogue is not conversion but completion—becoming fully human being. One can collaborate on various projects such as social justice, peace, solidarity, the common good, human dignity, participation, and care for creation. These issues are universal, and all people can do it.

Why is interfaith dialogue difficult? It is difficult since everything is always in a different context and interpretation; one must be open to accepting other ideas and freely giving opinions with respect. No religion is similar to the other. Thus, no religion is perfect. There will always be aspects where there are inconsistencies, but the important thing is the collaboration, the sharing of ideas to understand each perspective. When these inconsistencies are not addressed, these will possibly result in exclusivity, violence, and inequality.

Interfaith dialogue is a necessity in modern times, and the first step in establishing it is to forget the past, ignoring troubling debates, and providing key points for different religions, which far outnumber polemical issues. The world as we know it is chaotic and there are many alarming situations that have already arisen, but when people engage in interreligious dialogue, we can learn to nurture and keep our society united. Everyone is considered a seeker in life. We try to understand the truths about ourselves and others and the world around us. And if we try understanding each other, we can seek out people of different religions in life as there is always something to learn. Religion has been a part of human culture ever since, and it has many of its characteristics and practices but despite knowing that people may have a different religion or beliefs from your own, know that all religions in the world are the feathers of the same bird; God with different colors. With that being said, know that in spite of the differences each one of us may have, we must learn to connect with one another, understand and tolerate the ways of others, and respect each other to give value to our common humanity. “Dialogue has been proposed as a remedy to the polarized discussions arising from contentious social issues. These discussions are characterized by personal attacks, anger, close-mindedness, lack of questioning or listening, and a focus on what one will say next rather than what one's

"opponent" is saying. In dialogue, the parties must agree in advance to see each other as equals, to strive for empathy with the other's position, to avoid stereotyping, and to listen fully before speaking." [15]

By furthering the efforts of interfaith Dialogue, FBC's and religious organizations envision that it can be the stronghold of world peace and order. There is a reason why we need to encourage people in interfaith dialogue activities. When people of various religious traditions engage in interfaith activities, this may develop into joint programs and, similarly, joint programs that may build trust. Indeed, "religion is an important actor on the global stage and dialogue between and within different faiths is increasingly being used as a means of harnessing religions' capacity to promote coexistence, religious literacy, and shared values" [16].

Agreeably, these issues of interfaith dialogues may be avoided through the following means: 1) as with conventions, the allocation of the proper target market would increase participation amongst specific demographics; organizers must learn to segregate partakers into at the very least groups of age as this would endorse more attention and focus from the involved parties; 2) candidates to the dialogues must be oriented to be unbigoted in their approach when conversing with someone from a different religion as being open-minded would equate to education that would, later on, develop into respect and understanding for the etic culture; 3) finally, the organizers of interreligious dialogues must imbibe in participants that the convention is not a medium of propaganda or a channel to evangelization. Politeness must always be observed, and veneration must be kept, despite the potential rejection of other participants. After all, this movement propagates the idea of meeting bridges and must always remain at that as its nature.

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed that other religions could be a positive force that will change the world [17]. In fact, religious communities more than 80 percent of people around the world adhere to a religion, according to a study conducted by Pew Research Center. Human beings need to have balance and give each other the chance to voice out and be heard. One needs to listen and discuss the differences, but one must learn to accept everyone's religious differences at the end of the day. One should be one with each other for a new and better world. By interacting with people with different religions or faith traditions and understanding the differences also recognizing the similarities, we can work together for peace, harmony, justice, and healing

in this world. Moreover, results revealed positive human values. This research further validates the claim that there is a link between health, religion/spirituality and COVID-19 [18].

In his Message, Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, urges all people to find deeper meaning in this shared human suffering. For Cardinal Tagle, "the pandemic is making the suffering of vulnerable people – migrants and refugees, the elderly, the sick, the poor and unemployed – even deeper. We urge our governments to ensure access to healthcare and social protection for everyone – particularly the most vulnerable. We pray that our leaders rise to the challenge of promoting unity and a shared responsibility in all of our countries" [19]. The same message of solidarity among all peoples was also mentioned by Pope Francis in his recent encyclical *Fratelli tutti* (brothers and sisters all) saying that "true, a worldwide tragedy like the Covid-19 pandemic momentarily revived the sense that we are a global community, all in the same boat, where one person's problems are the problems of all. Once more we realized that no one is saved alone; we can only be saved together" [20]. This landmark document on human fraternity and social friendship emphasizes on the role of world religions in building bridges with all people regardless of their gender, race, social status, and religious background.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This paper's central argument is that religious and non-religious might contribute to lessen or mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on their communities. As such, coordinated interfaith efforts complemented with the use of science and public policies provided significant effect on human relationship and values. The argument of inclusivity gives grounds for mutual understanding amongst groups despite differences. Conviviality, which is living together or coexistence, is promoted, respected, and understood, and the differences are seen as a way of life where faith-based communities and religious institutions collaborate. Using the phenomenological method, results of the participant's survey answers revealed the themes in interfaith dialogue. The following themes are Common Good, Solidarity, Love for humanity, Sense of empathy, Showing respect for the Other, Option for the poor and vulnerable, Ethical responsibility, Mission, Promoting human dignity, Removing prejudice and biases. Most of the respondents are firmly bound to promote the

values found in major religions. This research revealed the importance of world religions in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. The power of interfaith dialogue can be used in helpful ways to promote positive human values.

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