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Improving the Understanding of the Baat Community Regarding the Meaning of the Easter Celebration through Catechesis

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Abstract

Easter is the central celebration of the Catholic faith, commemorating the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the core event of salvation. However, the faithful's understanding of the theological meaning of this celebration is not always evenly distributed. This article aims to analyze the level of understanding of the Baat Community regarding the meaning of the Easter celebration and to examine the role of catechesis in enhancing such understanding. This study employs a quantitative research method, with data collected through questionnaires. The results indicate that the majority of the Baat Community understand Easter as the celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that brings salvation, with an agreement level of 72.1%, which falls into the "good" category. These findings demonstrate that catechesis plays a significant role in improving the faithful's understanding of the meaning of Easter, thereby encouraging them to celebrate it with deeper faith and greater comprehension.

Keywords: Meaning of the Easter Celebration, Catechesis, Baat Community

Introduction

Easter is the culminating celebration in the tradition of the Catholic Church, commemorating the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the core of Christian faith. This celebration not only holds profound theological significance but also possesses strong cultural and religious dimensions, as it is collectively expressed through rituals, symbols, and the lived practices of the faithful. In Catholic theology, the death and resurrection of Christ constitute an inseparable unity of a single salvific event.

Historically and biblically, the term Easter originates from the Old Testament tradition. The Hebrew word Pesakh means "to pass over" or "to spare," referring to God's saving action toward the people of Israel. Within Christian tradition, the meaning of Easter undergoes a theological transformation by identifying Jesus Christ as the "Paschal Lamb" (cf. 1 Cor 5:7), who through His

death and resurrection brings salvation to humanity. Therefore, Easter is understood as the most important celebration in the Church's liturgical year.

The Easter celebration is preceded by the season of Lent, a period of spiritual preparation characterized by repentance, fasting, and abstinence. This season reaches its climax in the Sacred Triduum—Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil—followed by the Easter Season, which lasts for fifty days until the celebration of Pentecost. This entire liturgical cycle not only structures worship but also shapes the religious life and daily faith practices of Catholic believers.

Nevertheless, in practice, not all Catholics fully understand the deeper meaning of the Easter celebration. This situation is also evident in the Baat Community of Saint Francis of Assisi Parish, Mamsena. Although the faithful regularly participate in Easter celebrations, some of them do not yet comprehend the theological and spiritual significance of Easter. This condition has contributed to low levels of participation in faith practices during the Lenten season, such as fasting, abstinence, and active involvement in liturgical celebrations.

The socio-cultural context of the Baat Community reveals a diversity of educational backgrounds and levels of literacy. Some members experience limitations in reading, writing, and even in the use of the Indonesian language, which affects the transmission and understanding of faith. In this context, catechesis becomes a strategic pastoral means for the Church to bridge doctrinal teachings with the lived experiences of the faithful. Catechesis, derived from the Greek term katechein (to echo or resound), is understood as a process of proclaiming the faith that connects the Word of God with the concrete realities of human life.

Through catechesis, the lived experiences of the faithful are interpreted in the light of the Gospel, enabling faith to be understood not merely at a cognitive level but also to be internalized and expressed through concrete actions. Therefore, this study focuses on efforts to improve the understanding of the Baat Community regarding the meaning of the Easter celebration through catechesis, as a form of contextual faith formation rooted in the cultural realities of the local community.

Method

This study employs a quantitative approach to examine the understanding of the Baat Community regarding the meaning of the Easter celebration and to assess the role of catechesis in enhancing such understanding. The quantitative approach was chosen because it allows for systematic measurement of the phenomena under investigation through empirical data that can be analyzed in a measurable and objective manner. The research was conducted from April to May

2024 in the Baat Community, Saint Francis of Assisi Parish, Mamsena, Atmen Village, West Insana Subdistrict, North Central Timor Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province.

The population of this study consisted of all members of the Baat Community, totaling 78 households with a population of 266 individuals. From this population, a sample of 50 respondents was selected, comprising 25 adults and 25 Catholic youths. This sampling strategy was intended to obtain a representative picture of understanding across age groups that are actively involved in church life.

Data were collected through direct observation and the distribution of questionnaires. Observation was used to obtain preliminary information regarding the participation and religious practices of the faithful during the Lenten season and the Easter celebration. The questionnaire was designed in the form of closed-ended questions with "yes" and "no" response options, in order to facilitate respondents' answers and to simplify data processing. The instrument was developed in accordance with the focus of the study to ensure the relevance and validity of the data collected.

The collected data were subsequently edited and analyzed using descriptive quantitative techniques. The results of the data analysis were presented in the form of percentages to illustrate the level of understanding of the faithful regarding the meaning of the Easter celebration. Furthermore, the data were analyzed and interpreted by relating the empirical findings to the theoretical framework of catechesis and Catholic faith formation. Through this analytical process, insights were obtained regarding the effectiveness of catechesis as a means of faith formation within the context of the Baat Community.

Result and Discussion

The Baat Community is one of the parish communities located within Saint Francis of Assisi Parish, Mamsena, Kefamenanu Deanery, Diocese of Atambua, and consists of four Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs). In general, all members of the Baat Community adhere to the Catholic faith, resulting in a relatively homogeneous social and religious life grounded in shared beliefs. Although occasional misunderstandings have arisen within the community's social dynamics, such issues are generally resolved through communication and communal solidarity rooted in Catholic values.

In daily life, the members of the Baat Community primarily use the Dawan language as their main means of communication, albeit with distinctive dialectical variations compared to Dawan speakers in other regions. In terms of livelihood, most community members work as farmers, employing traditional agricultural practices such as slash-and-burn cultivation and shifting cultivation systems. This agrarian way of life significantly shapes the community's perception of

time, life rhythms, and religious practices, including their engagement with the Church's liturgical calendar.

From an educational perspective, there is a noticeable variation in educational attainment among community members. While most have completed basic education, and some have attained higher education up to the undergraduate level, a number of individuals still experience limitations in literacy and are unable to communicate fluently in the Indonesian language. This condition has direct implications for the community's understanding of Church teachings and traditions, particularly concerning the meaning of the Easter celebration and faith practices during the Lenten season.

Observational findings indicate that limitations in education and literacy contribute to a lower level of understanding among some members regarding the theological meaning of Easter. This is reflected in the limited participation of certain community members in practices of fasting and abstinence, such as those observed on Ash Wednesday and on Fridays throughout Lent. These findings suggest that the depth of faith understanding among the faithful is not solely determined by participation in liturgical celebrations, but is also strongly influenced by ongoing pastoral accompaniment and faith proclamation that are responsive to the local social and cultural context.

Research Report

The research conducted for the completion of this undergraduate thesis was carried out in accordance with the procedures outlined in Chapter III of the research methodology proposal. Data collection was conducted through the distribution of questionnaires to 50 respondents, consisting of 25 adults and 25 Catholic youth from the Baat Community.

Table 1. Data of Catholic Youth Respondents

No.	Name		Age	Gender	Educational Level
1	Imelda Haumau		23	Female	University Student
2	Jesika Saijao		22	Female	Senior High School
3	Abas A. Sali		20	Male	Senior High School
4	Alfarinus Nailape		19	Male	Senior High School
5	Maria F. Omenu		21	Female	University Student
6	Jefrianus Haumau		20	Male	Senior High School
7	Gregorius Tutu		19	Male	Senior High School
8	Felix G. Omenu		19	Male	Senior High School
9	Matilda Oemanas		18	Female	Senior High School
10	Margareta M. Nailape		17	Female	Junior High School

11	Regina A. Nailiu		19	Female	Senior High School
12	Agustinus Alib		22	Male	Senior High School
13	Delviana Haumau		23	Female	Junior High School
14	Cristabela A. Omenu		17	Female	Junior High School
15	Lani A. Omenu		18	Female	Senior High School
16	Febiana Omenu		23	Female	University Student
17	Vinsencia E. Tnomat		17	Female	Junior High School
18	Charles Donusina		20	Male	Senior High School
19	Ronaldo Neonnub		20	Male	Elementary School
20	Gaudensiana C. Naitili		18	Female	Senior High School
21	Jimrianus Omenu		17	Male	Junior High School
22	Gorinda Omenu		18	Female	Senior High School
23	Delsiana Nonseo		23	Female	Senior High School
24	Imelda Omenu		20	Female	University Student
25	Imelda Painneon		18	Female	Senior High School

Table 02: Data of Adult Respondents

No.	Name	Age	Gender	Occupation	Highest Educational Level
1	Maria E. Saijao	40	Female	Housewife	Elementary School
2	Regina Pinneon	42	Female	Housewife	Elementary School
3	Susana Masaubat	43	Female	Housewife	Elementary School
4	Dominggas Saijao	49	Female	Housewife	Senior High School
5	Maria Bona	79	Female	Housewife	Elementary School
6	Paulus Fanu	70	Male	Farmer	Elementary School
7	Simon Toleu	80	Male	Farmer	Elementary School
8	Siprianus Fatin	56	Male	Farmer	Elementary School
9	Matias Nailiu	67	Male	Farmer	Senior High School
10	Antonia Fanu	70	Female	Housewife	Elementary School
11	Katarina Nailiu	56	Female	Housewife	Junior High School
12	Dionisia Neonnub	38	Female	Housewife	Junior High School
13	Anselmus Neonnub	49	Male	Farmer	Elementary School
14	Maria Kolo	60	Female	Housewife	Elementary School
15	Yustina Sni	45	Female	Housewife	Junior High School
16	Venidora Efu	47	Female	Housewife	Elementary School
17	Wilibrodus Naisanit	48	Male	Civil Servant	Higher Education
18	Aprolinda M. G. Eta	40	Female	Civil Servant	Higher Education
19	Agustinus Haumau	55	Male	Farmer	Elementary School
20	Stefanus Omenu	56	Male	Farmer	Elementary School
21	Maria Hati	59	Female	Housewife	Elementary School
22	Martinus Neonnub	39	Male	Farmer	Higher Education
23	Trentus Fanu	59	Male	Farmer	Elementary School
24	Magdalena Una	46	Female	Housewife	Elementary School
25	Maria A. Masaubat	40	Female	Housewife	Junior High School

Questionnaire Results

Based on the questionnaire distributed to 50 respondents—consisting of 25 adults and 25 Catholic youths from the Baat Community—the results are presented in Table 02 below.

Table 03: Detailed List of Respondents' Answers

No.	Question	Yes	%	No	%
1	Have you ever commemorated Easter as the death of the Lord?	49	98	1	2
2	Have you ever participated in the Easter celebration?	39	78	11	22
3	Do you know the meaning of the Easter Feast?	44	88	6	12
4	Do you understand Easter as a celebration of salvation?	46	92	4	8
5	Is the Easter celebration beneficial to your life?	47	94	3	6
6	Are you always actively involved in the Easter celebration?	32	64	18	36
7	Do you commemorate the Passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ during Easter?	39	78	11	22
8	During Easter, do you remember the sacrifice of Jesus the Savior?	47	94	3	6
9	Is Easter marked by the Sacred Triduum?	37	74	13	26
10	Do you understand Easter as a day of forgiveness and salvation?	43	86	7	14
11	Have you ever fasted and abstained on Good Friday?	29	58	21	42
12	Have you prepared yourself for the Easter celebration?	50	100	0	0
13	Are there Easter symbols that have special meaning for you?	37	74	13	26
14	Have you ever reflected on the tradition of the Easter meal?	11	22	39	78
15	Do you commemorate the Way of the Cross as a sign of liberation or repentance?	46	92	4	8
16	Do you celebrate Easter by reflecting on the life of Jesus in your daily life?	13	26	37	74
17	Have you ever participated in Easter celebrations at church?	33	66	17	34
18	Do you have a special prayer that you recite during Easter?	23	46	27	54
19	Do you have a special tradition that is practiced every year during Easter?	11	22	39	78
20	Do you commemorate Holy Saturday as the day of the Lord's resurrection?	45	90	5	10

The data above present the respondents' answers in the form of "Yes" and "No," accompanied by their respective percentages.

Based on the analysis of questionnaire data, it can be observed that the majority of members of the Baat Community possess a fairly good understanding of the fundamental meaning of the Easter celebration. Most respondents understand Easter as the commemoration of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and as a faith event that brings salvation. This is reflected in the high percentage of positive responses to the main indicators related to the theological meaning of Easter, with percentages exceeding 85% for most statements.

In addition, the members of the Baat Community demonstrate a strong faith attitude toward

the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as Savior. Most respondents expressed their belief that Easter is a celebration of forgiveness and salvation and that it provides tangible benefits for their lives as Christians. These findings indicate that the Church's teachings on Easter have generally been received and understood by the faithful, particularly at the level of conceptual understanding and religious conviction.

Nevertheless, the research findings also reveal an imbalance between faith understanding and practical lived experience. Although most respondents stated that they understand the meaning of Easter, the level of active involvement and participation in Easter celebrations has not yet reached an optimal level. A considerable proportion of respondents acknowledged that they are not actively involved in Easter celebrations or are not yet able to internalize the meaning of Christ's sacrifice in their daily lives. This suggests that faith understanding has not been fully internalized into everyday religious practice.

With regard to liturgical and symbolic aspects, the level of understanding among community members tends to vary. Most respondents are aware that Easter is marked by the Sacred Triduum and understand the meaning of the Way of the Cross as a sign of repentance and liberation. However, understanding of liturgical symbols, special prayers during the Easter season, and distinctive Easter traditions remains relatively low. This is evident from the high percentage of respondents who do not understand the tradition of the Easter meal or the specific traditions celebrated annually during the Easter season.

These findings indicate that members of the Baat Community have a stronger grasp of the fundamental aspects of faith, while their understanding of symbolic, liturgical, and ecclesial cultural practices remains limited. These limitations are likely influenced by factors such as educational background, literacy levels, and the lack of continuous and contextually grounded faith accompaniment.

Overall, based on the interpretation of the percentage scale, the results show that 72.1% of the Baat Community fall into the category of having a good understanding of the meaning of the Easter celebration. However, 27.9% of the community remain in the category of inadequate understanding. These data underscore the importance of catechesis as a means of faith formation to deepen the understanding of the faithful, not only at the level of knowledge, but also in the lived experience and concrete embodiment of faith in everyday life.

Discussion

The analysis and interpretation of the research data were conducted based on specific indicators and detailed components in order to determine the research variables. The collected data were categorized according to respondents' answers to the questionnaire, namely "Yes" and "No." Subsequently, the data were analyzed and interpreted to obtain the percentage distribution of respondents' answers in each category.

The percentage scale and its corresponding interpretation are presented in Table 04.

Table 04: Percentage Scale and Interpretation

No.	Percentage Range	Interpretation
1	80–100%	Very good condition
2	70–80%	Good condition
3	60–70%	Limited condition
4	40–50%	Poor condition
5	< 50%	Very poor condition

Based on the percentage scale and its interpretation, the results indicate that 72.1% of the members of the Baat Community understand the meaning of the Easter celebration, which means that the community's understanding of Easter is classified as good. However, there remains 27.9% of the community who do not adequately understand the meaning of the Easter celebration, indicating a very poor level of understanding within this group.

Conclusion

Easter is an event of faith that reveals the mystery of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the culmination of God's salvific work for humanity. The resurrection of Christ signifies victory over sin and death and serves as the foundation of the call for believers to live in repentance and continual renewal of life. Therefore, Easter should not be understood merely as an annual liturgical celebration, but as a lived reality of faith that must be internalized and manifested in daily life.

The findings of this study demonstrate that catechesis plays a crucial role in helping the members of the Baat Community gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of the Easter celebration. Through catechesis, the faithful acquire a more profound comprehension of the theological and spiritual significance of Easter, enabling faith to move beyond conceptual knowledge toward lived experience and active participation in ecclesial life. Thus, catechesis serves as a strategic means of faith formation that encourages the faithful to continuously develop their understanding, attitudes, and praxis of Christian life in a sustainable manner.

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