



FROM FRAGMENTATION TO INTEGRATION: REINTERPRETING THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS THROUGH CARNLEY'S "*CHRISTUS PRAESENS*"

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The Resurrection of Jesus is central to Christian faith, yet its significance may be understood primarily as a past historical event or in relation to future eschatological hope, leaving its significance for present Christian life insufficiently explored. This study examines how participants from a Catholic university understand and interpret the Resurrection, how they perceive its teaching by religious educators and ministers, and what gaps emerge from these understandings. Employing an intradisciplinary empirical-theological approach and the See–Discern–Act framework, the study conducted three focus group discussions with 27 participants from Saint Mary's University, consisting of senior high school students, college students, and professional teachers. The findings show that respondents generally possess basic knowledge of the Resurrection and predominantly affirm it as Jesus's rising from the dead, while some emphasize symbolic, spiritual, existential, or transformative meanings. Although most respondents perceive the teaching of the Resurrection as clear and understandable, several indicate a need for greater theological depth and more explicit engagement with its meaning and implications for Christian life. The findings, therefore, reveal a range of understandings that do not always correspond neatly to Carnley's historical-event, eschatological-event, and non-event categories. Carnley's concept of *Christus praesens* provides a constructive theological resource for relating the remembered Jesus to the risen Christ encountered in the present life of the Christian community. In dialogue with Eballo's *Gamay at Hiyang*, this perspective suggests a contextual approach to religious education that can help learners move from basic doctrinal knowledge toward deeper theological appropriation and lived Christian faith.

Keywords: Resurrection of Jesus, *Christus Praesens*, Peter Carnley, Religious Education, Resurrection Theology, Filipino Christianity.

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The resurrection of Jesus is the cornerstone of Christian faith. Gary Habermas emphasizes its centrality, noting that despite theological differences, scholars agree on its foundational significance.¹ The Apostle Paul similarly warns that denying the resurrection undermines the entire Christian faith (1 Cor. 15). Yet, interpretations often limit it to a past event or a distant eschatological hope, neglecting its immediate and transformative implications. Understanding the resurrection requires contextual sensitivity, recognizing its emergence within a particular cultural and religious milieu. Pope Francis calls on theologians to move beyond reductive interpretations and help believers grasp the resurrection's present relevance.² However, in the context of resurrection studies, Simon J. Joseph highlights a methodological divide: some defend its historicity, while others question it.³ Despite this impasse, the resurrection cannot be reduced to mere history or abstract theory; it is a living and enduring reality embedded in Christian faith and memory.

Archbishop Peter Carnley addresses this challenge through his theological concept of *Christus praesens*, which bridges the resurrection as both a past event and a present experience. By emphasizing Christ's ongoing presence, Carnley reframes the resurrection as a dynamic, transformative encounter. This approach invites Christians to live out their faith with renewed

authenticity, experiencing the risen Christ as a tangible and sustaining presence in their lives.

SEE

Split-level Christianity⁴ is a prominent characteristic of Filipino religious practice, yet it is not unique to the Philippines. Similar dualities appear in other historically Christian contexts, such as the United States of America, Europe, and Latin America, where cultural and historical factors have produced analogous phenomena. This duality, often manifest as a disjunction between ritualistic devotion and the lived experience of faith, has attracted significant scholarly attention regarding its implications for belief, identity, and societal transformation.⁵

Several factors contributed to the emergence of split-level Christianity in the Philippines. First, there was a partial assimilation of Christianity. Before Christianity, indigenous Filipinos had already established religious beliefs and practices. Christianity was accepted partly because of perceived similarities with indigenous traditions, but its adoption was sometimes imposed.⁶ Despite widespread conversion, pre-colonial

¹ **GenAI Disclosure Statement:** This paper used Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) for brainstorming, sentence improvement, grammar checking, editing, summarizing long texts, and checking the manuscript's coherence and clarity. The following GenAI technologies were utilized: ChatGPT and Grammarly. These tools were used solely to assist in developing, organizing, and refining the manuscript. All interpretations, analyses, arguments, and final content remain the responsibility of the author.

Gary R. Habermas, *The Resurrection of Jesus: A Rational Inquiry* (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 1976), 2.

² Tiziana Campisi, "Pope: Theology Must Interpret the Gospel for Today's World," *Vatican News*, November 1, 2023, accessed November 24, 2024, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2023-11/pope-francis-motu-proprio-pontifical-theology-academy.html>.

³ Simon J. Joseph, "Redescribing the Resurrection: Beyond the Methodological Impasse," *Biblical Theology Bulletin: Journal of Bible and Culture* 45, no. 3 (July 30, 2015): 165-166, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146107915590765>.

⁴ Jaime Bulatao, "Split-Level Christianity," *Philippine Sociological Review* 13, no. 2 (1965): 119-21; see also Peter C. Phan, *Christianities in Asia* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 100-102.

⁵ See Alexander Lang, "Christian Nationalism: How Evangelical Christianity Became a Political Religion," *Baptist News Global*, September 13, 2023, accessed February 28, 2025; Ruth Braunstein, "Catholic Christian Nationalism Is Having a Moment," *National Catholic Reporter*, July 24, 2024, accessed February 28, 2025; Pew Research Center, *Being Christian in Western Europe*, May 29, 2018, accessed March 22, 2025; Pew Research Center, *Religion in Latin America*, November 13, 2014, accessed March 22, 2025.

⁶ See Renato Constantino, "Identity and Consciousness: The Philippine Experience," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 6, no. 1 (January 1976): 7, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472337685390031>. In addition, Cornelio observed, "That even after 400 years of proselytization and parish life under Spanish missionaries and Filipino priests, Filipinos still cling to many of their indigenous beliefs and practices." See Jayel S. Cornelio, "Popular Religion and the Turn to Everyday Authenticity: Reflections on the Contemporary Study of Philippine Catholicism," *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints* 62, nos. 3-4 (2014): 477, <https://doi.org/10.1353/phs.2014.0024>. Additional discussion was also provided by John Oliver De Luna, *Limang Daang Taong Pananampalataya: The Theological Survey of the 500-Year Journey of Filipino Catholic Faith* (unpublished manuscript, Divine Word Seminary Tagaytay, 2021), accessed January 29, 2025, <https://www.academia.edu/80324429>.



beliefs and practices persisted and became intertwined with Christianity, contributing to a gap between outward religious practice and deeper internalization of the faith.⁷ This tension is reflected in a dualistic spirituality in which Christian values may be publicly affirmed while private behavior diverges from them, partly influenced by *hiya* and fear of judgment.

It is likewise evident in the gap between Church teaching and personal practice. Studies indicate that while Filipino Catholics may acknowledge Church teachings, their practices on issues such as premarital sex and the death penalty may diverge from official doctrine.⁸ The ritualization of Christian faith further exacerbated this gap. The ritualization of Christian faith has further exacerbated this gap. Social transformation:⁹ Filipino Catholicism has sometimes emphasized ritual and personal devotion over these broader dimensions of faith.¹⁰ The devotion to the Black Nazarene, for example, illustrates this tension. When ritual practices become detached from their broader social and transformative meaning, they may contribute to a transactional understanding of faith, in which devotional acts are associated primarily with seeking divine favor rather than with personal and social transformation.

Furthermore, the process of conversion itself was historically measured by external indicators, such as the veneration of saints and participation in sacraments, rather than by a deep internalization of Christian values. As a result, evangelization in the Philippines has sometimes produced a “Christian façade,” characterized by outward conformity with limited transformative engagement with the core principles of the faith.¹¹

Another factor is the significant gap between the Catholic clergy and the lay faithful. Catholic priests are often perceived as distant “men of God” whose authority is to be respected, rather than as integral members of the community. This perceived distance may contribute to a disconnect between the clergy’s teachings and the lived religious experiences of the faithful.¹² The Catholic Church in the Philippines now faces a dual challenge. On one hand, it must address and correct popular devotions and practices that have drifted away from theological orthodoxy; on the other, it must contend with a cultural context in which faith remains divided between external ritual observance and the internalization of Christian values. Balancing respect for indigenous expressions of religiosity with the need to preserve the integrity of the Gospel remains an ongoing concern.

A meaningful theological response to these challenges necessitates a return to the foundation of Christian faith: the resurrection of Jesus Christ. As the cornerstone of Christian faith, the Resurrection provides not merely an eschatological promise but a theological horizon that should shape Christian thought and life.

⁷ See Ma. Crisanta Nelmidia-Flores, “The Folk in Filipino Catholic Christianity,” *BANWAAN: The Philippine Journal of Folklore*, accessed January 2, 2025, 18, <https://journals.upd.edu.ph/index.php/Banwaan/article/view/8554>; see also the observation of Dr. De Guzman, cited by Dr. Espiritu in “Rethinking the Panata to the Nazareno of Quiapo,” 11.

⁸ Miguel Angelo B. Amit, “Exposing Hypocrisy: Rizal’s Critique of the Philippine Religious Culture and Bulatao’s Split-Level Christianity,” *Talisik: An Undergraduate Journal of Philosophy* 3, no. 1 (2016): 14; see also Mark Gabriel Aguilar, Rainiel Bryan Domasian, and Hartosujono Hartosujono, “The Intersection of Religion and Society: Inconsistencies in the Practice of Catholicism among Filipinos,” *Simulacra* 7, no. 1 (June 24, 2024): 30, <https://doi.org/10.21107/sml.v7i1.22528>.

⁹ For further discussion, see John Dominic Crossan, “Chapter One: The Tale of Two Gods,” in *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1995), 24; and José Antonio Pagola, “Chapter Two: Life in Nazareth,” in *Jesus: An Historical Approximation*, 8th ed. (Miami: Convivium Press, 2019), 68. See Pagola, *Jesus: An Historical Approximation*, 93–284. Pagola presented the mission of Jesus elaborately in this book.

¹⁰ See Wilson Espiritu, “Rethinking the Panata to the Nazareno of Quiapo,” *Journal of Global Catholicism* 7, no. 2 (June 16, 2023): 11, <https://doi.org/10.32436/2475-6423.1127>.

¹¹ Monsignor Sabino Vengco believes that the Christian faith has not lodged deeply in the Filipino psyche: “We have been nominally Catholic since the Spanish period. It is never a case of conversion but rather political accommodation. There is not much depth in our faith. We are satisfied with what is superficial.” See Lorenzo Carraro, *500 Years of Christianity in the Philippines*, accessed December 29, 2024, 44, <https://www.comboni.org/app-data/files/allegati/4112.pdf>.

¹² See Amit, “Exposing Hypocrisy,” 12–17.



In Christian practice, however, Christians most explicitly encounter the Resurrection in particular liturgical and pastoral contexts, especially during the Easter Vigil and funeral celebrations. In the Easter Vigil, it is proclaimed within the celebration of the Paschal Mystery and the foundation of Christian hope; in funeral celebrations, it is invoked as a source of hope and consolation in the face of death and separation from the deceased.

While these contexts express essential dimensions of Christian faith, they also raise the question of whether the broader significance of the Resurrection is sufficiently integrated into the ordinary theological reflection and lived experience of Christians. This concern resonates with Anthony J. Kelly's observation that the Resurrection is so familiar that it can be "too easily taken for granted," such that its original effect on Christian faith may become a remote presupposition rather than a reality that continually shapes Christian understanding of God, humanity, and the world.¹³ Gerald O'Collins similarly identifies a "strange neglect of the resurrection" and argues for its recovery as a central rather than marginal reality in Christian theological reflection and life.¹⁴

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do respondents describe their knowledge of the Resurrection of Jesus?
2. How do respondents interpret the Resurrection of Jesus?
3. How do respondents describe the clarity of teachings about the Resurrection presented by priests, pastors, and educators?

¹³ Anthony J. Kelly, *The Resurrection Effect: Transforming Christian Life and Thought* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), chap. 1, "Placing the Resurrection: A Theological Problem." Kelly's preface also makes the point that the resurrection's effect can become a remote presupposition that only vaguely affects Christian understanding of God, self, and the world.

¹⁴ Gerald O'Collins, *Believing in the Resurrection: The Meaning and Promise of the Risen Jesus* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2012), 1–2.

4. What gaps in understanding emerge from the respondents' descriptions and interpretations, and how can these be addressed through Carnley's concept of *Christus Praesens* and Eballo's *Gamay* and *Hiyang*?

To determine whether Kelly and Collins's observations regarding contemporary understandings of the Resurrection remain relevant, the researcher conducted focus group discussions (FGDs) with 27 participants from Saint Mary's University, comprising senior high school students, college students, and teachers. The study employs an intradisciplinary empirical-theological approach grounded in Johannes van der Ven's model, as discussed by Jana Šídlová. This approach integrates empirical methods into theological inquiry and takes believers' religious experiences as a starting point for theological reflection.¹⁵ The study was organized through the See–Discern–Act framework, with Osmer's four tasks of practical theology providing the analytical sequence: the descriptive-empirical task corresponds primarily to See, the interpretive and normative tasks to Discern, and the pragmatic task to Act.¹⁶

The study involved 27 participants aged 18 and above from Saint Mary's University: 8 senior high school students, 12 college students, and 7 professional teachers. Participants were selected through purposive and convenience sampling. Three FGDs were conducted from March 24–26, 2026, using a semi-structured guide addressing participants' knowledge and interpretation of the Resurrection and their perceptions of how clearly it is taught. The sessions were audio-recorded with participants' consent.

¹⁵ Jana Šídlová, "The Possibilities of Using Empirical Methods in (Practical) Theology," *Caritas et Veritas* 7, no. 2 (2017): 269–82, <https://doi.org/10.32725/cetv.2017.053>; H. J. C. Pieterse, "The Empirical Approach in Practical Theology: A Discussion with J. A. van der Ven," *Religion and Theology* 1, no. 1 (1994): 74–83.

¹⁶ Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008).



Permission was obtained from the senior high school research coordinator. Although no formal institutional ethics clearance was obtained, the study followed standard ethical procedures. Participation was voluntary and based on informed consent. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and rights. Student participants were not under the researcher's supervision, and participation had no academic consequences. All data were anonymized.

Data were analyzed through deductive coding. Transcripts were reviewed repeatedly, segmented into meaning units, and coded according to three dimensions: cognitive knowledge (factual and conceptual), theological interpretation (historical, eschatological, and non-event), and pedagogical clarity (clear or unclear instruction). Cognitive responses were categorized using Anderson and Krathwohl's revised taxonomy, while theological responses were interpreted through Carnley's three categories.¹⁷ Perceptions of pedagogical clarity were examined in relation to the principles for catechetical formation presented in the *Leader's Guide to the Directory for Catechesis*.¹⁸ Responses were then compared across participants and groups to identify recurring patterns, differences, and gaps.

The See phase establishes the theological and contextual background of the study. It examines the problem of *split-level Christianity*, the factors that contribute to the separation between professed faith and lived Christian practice, and the contemporary state of Resurrection studies. It also considers how the Resurrection, despite its centrality to Christian

faith, may become confined in ordinary religious experience to particular contexts, such as the proclamation of hope in moments of grief and the celebration of Easter, without its broader theological significance being fully integrated into everyday Christian life. The Discern phase then presents and analyzes the findings of the focus group discussions, examining the participants' knowledge and interpretations of the Resurrection. These findings are interpreted through the study's theological framework, particularly Carnley's understanding of the Resurrection. The Act phase considers the implications of the FGD findings regarding the clarity of Resurrection teaching and develops pedagogical directions for Religious Education, drawing on Carnley's concept of *Christus praesens* and Eballo's *Gamay at Hiyang*.

This study has three principal limitations. First, it was conducted exclusively at Saint Mary's University; therefore, its findings are context-dependent and may not generalize to Filipino Catholics in other geographic, educational, or socioeconomic settings.

Second, the 27 participants were selected through purposive and convenience sampling. The findings are therefore not intended to provide statistical generalizations but rather an in-depth account of participants' understanding within the study context.

Third, the participants consisted of senior high school students, college students, and professional teachers. Their perspectives may differ from those of clergy, consecrated religious, and older lay faithful whose religious formation developed under different historical and pedagogical contexts.

¹⁷ L. O. Wilson, *Understanding the New Version of Bloom's Taxonomy: Anderson and Krathwohl's Revised Bloom's Taxonomy* (Quincy College, 2016), <https://quincycollege.edu/wp-content/uploads/Anderson-and-Krathwohl-Revised-Blooms-Taxonomy.pdf>; Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief*.

¹⁸ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Leader's Guide to the Directory for Catechesis* (USCCB, 2021).





DISCERN

The Development of the Resurrection Belief

The belief in resurrection did not emerge fully formed in early Christianity but developed from the broader Jewish expectation of resurrection and the diverse understandings of death and life after death that existed in Second Temple Judaism. The development of resurrection belief must therefore be situated within the changing Jewish conceptions of death, the afterlife, bodily restoration, and divine judgment.¹⁹

Early Christian proclamation subsequently centered this expectation on the resurrection of Jesus. Within this developing tradition, Paul played a significant role in articulating the meaning of Jesus' resurrection for Christian faith, including its implications for the believer's transformation and the hope of resurrection. At the same time, scholarly interpretations of Paul differ regarding the relationship among bodily resurrection, transformation, and spiritual existence, demonstrating that belief in resurrection was already subject to theological interpretation within early Christianity.²⁰

¹⁹ See Claudia Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body in Early Judaism and Early Christianity: Doctrine, Community, and Self-Definition* (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2004), 6–12; C. D. Elledge, "Resurrection of the Dead: Exploring Our Earliest Evidence Today," in *Resurrection: The Origin and Future of a Biblical Doctrine*, 22–52, esp. 22; C. D. Elledge, *Resurrection of the Dead in Early Judaism, 200 BCE–CE 200* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 44, 64; Walter Brueggemann, "Genesis 1–11: Cosmic Miracles in Contradiction," in *An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination*, 2nd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 50; and Bruce Chilton, *Resurrection Logic: How Jesus' First Followers Believed God Raised Him from the Dead* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2019), 7.

²⁰ See N. T. Wright, "Chapter 4: Paul and Jesus," in *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company and Forward Movement Publications, 1997), 75; Nicholas Thomas Wright, "Chapter Eight: When Paul Saw Jesus," in *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 378–93; Alan F. Segal, "Paul's Thinking about Resurrection in Its Jewish Context," *New Testament Studies* 44, no. 3 (1998): 400–419; James Tabor, *Paul and Jesus: How the Apostle Transformed Christianity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012), 1–22, 51–58; Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 219–22, 401–49, 486; Andrew Loke, *Investigating the Resurrection of Jesus Christ: A New Transdisciplinary Approach* (London: Routledge, 2021); and Thomas S. Bokenkotter, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church* (New York: Doubleday, 2005), 16.

During the patristic period, Christian writers continued to defend and articulate belief in the resurrection of the dead in response to competing understandings of the body, death, and resurrection. The writings of Clement, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, and Tertullian demonstrate the continuing effort to affirm resurrection within Christian identity and to clarify the nature of the resurrected body. These debates indicate that the meaning and form of resurrection belief continued to evolve as Christianity encountered diverse philosophical and religious perspectives.²¹

The Church eventually integrated these developments into its doctrinal teaching, and subsequent theological and magisterial reflection continued to articulate them. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas contributed to the systematic articulation of resurrection within Christian theology, while subsequent Catholic teaching continued to relate resurrection to Christian hope, salvation, faith, and the mission of the Church. Modern magisterial documents likewise continue to place Christ's resurrection within the broader theological framework of Christian faith and hope.²²

The history of the development of resurrection belief reveals both continuity and diversity in its interpretation. While Christians have consistently affirmed the resurrection as central to faith, theologians and scholars have

²¹ See Clement, "First Clement," ed. Kevin Knight, trans. John Keith, *New Advent*, accessed February 12, 2024; Ignatius of Antioch, "The Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans," ed. Kevin Knight, trans. James Donaldson and Alexander Roberts, *New Advent*, accessed February 10, 2024; Justin Martyr, *On the Resurrection*, ed. Kevin Knight, trans. Marcus Dods, *New Advent*, accessed February 10, 2024; Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, ed. Kevin Knight, trans. Peter Holmes, *New Advent*, accessed February 10, 2024; Outi Lehtipuu, *Debates over the Resurrection of the Dead: Constructing Early Christian Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 23–26; and Gerald O'Collins, *Saint Augustine on the Resurrection of Christ: Teaching, Rhetoric, and Reception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 2.

²² See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 53, "Christ's Resurrection"; John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, August 6, 1993, chap. 3, pars. 84–87; John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, December 7, 1990, par. 11; Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi*, November 29, 2007, pars. 4–9; Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium: Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World*, November 24, 2013, pars. 1, 276; and Francis, *Lumen Fidei*, June 28, 2013, pars. 15–22.





emphasized different aspects of its meaning. Gerald O'Collins observes that theologians have sometimes allowed the resurrection to be absorbed into other theological emphases, either by relating it to earlier events, such as the Incarnation and crucifixion, or to later realities, such as present Christian experience and the future resurrection.²³ More significantly, O'Collins argues that the Resurrection can be "seriously neglected" in sacramental theology, particularly when theological reflection fails to allow the risen Christ to shape its understanding of the Eucharist.²⁴ Anthony Kelly likewise argues that the resurrection should not be treated merely as another specialized topic in theology but as a central point from which Christian theology and life are understood.²⁵ David Kennedy brings these concerns together under the description of a "strange neglect" of the Resurrection in contemporary Eucharistic theology, drawing particularly on the criticisms of O'Collins, Kelly, and Luis M. Bermejo.²⁶

These observations point to a continuing challenge in resurrection theology: although the Resurrection remains foundational to Christian faith, its significance can become fragmented when it is confined to particular theological categories rather than understood in relation to the whole of Christian life.

This historical diversity provides a context for examining how contemporary participants understand resurrection. The following FGD responses show how respondents describe what they believe happened to Jesus after his death.

Table 1. Descriptive-empirical findings about the respondents' knowledge of the Resurrection of Jesus

FGD Question 1. What do you think happened to Jesus after he died?

Descriptive pattern	Participants	Based on the actual responses
Explicit affirmation of resurrection	2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 25, 27	Explicitly state that Jesus came back to life, resurrected, or rose from the dead.
Post-death existence/exaltation without explicit statement of resurrection	6, 7, 9, 23, 24, 26	Refer to Jesus being with God/the Father, going to heaven, guiding people, or continuing spiritually, but do not clearly state what they believe about the resurrection itself.
Alternative/spiritual-symbolic interpretation	1, 10, 11	P1 calls resurrection "only a story"; P10 distinguishes Jesus' body from his living spirit; P11 locates resurrection in the "hearts and minds" of others.
Insufficient information	16, 21	Describe burial/tomb circumstances without explaining what happened afterward.

The FGD responses reflect both continuity and diversity in the historical development of resurrection belief. The explicit affirmation of resurrection among most participants demonstrates the persistence of the central Christian claim that Jesus rose from the dead, as reflected in statements such as "He came back to life" (P2) and "He resurrected from the dead" (P5). Other participants associate Jesus' post-death existence with heaven, God, the Father, salvation, or continuing spiritual guidance, reflecting how resurrection belief developed beyond the event itself toward Christ's exaltation, salvific significance, and continuing presence. At the same time, P1's description of resurrection as "only a story," P10's distinction between Jesus' body and continuing spirit, and P11's location of resurrection "in the hearts and minds" of others reveal spiritual or symbolic interpretations that depart from a straightforward bodily understanding. These responses therefore demonstrate that the historical diversity surrounding resurrection belief continues to be reflected in contemporary religious knowledge: while the basic affirmation of Jesus' resurrection

²³ O'Collins, *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, 126.

²⁴ O'Collins, *Believing in the Resurrection*, 1–3.

²⁵ Kelly, *The Resurrection Effect*, ix–x.

²⁶ David Kennedy, *The Presence of Christ in the Eucharist: A Strange Neglect of the Resurrection?* (MA thesis, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, 2015), 1–3, 7–18.



remains prominent, its meaning is understood in different ways, as an actual occurrence, as connected with Jesus' heavenly and continuing existence, or through spiritual and symbolic interpretations.

This diversity provides a basis for examining the respondents' understandings in relation to Peter Carnley's three methodologies of resurrection belief. Although the FGD responses cannot be assumed to systematically reproduce these theological positions, their differing emphases provide points of correspondence for the subsequent analysis of resurrection as a historical event, an eschatological event, and a non-event.

CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE RESURRECTION AND CARNLEY'S FRAMEWORK

Carnley's seminal works, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief* and *The Reconstruction of Resurrection Belief*, provide a robust theological framework that challenges conventional approaches to understanding the resurrection of Jesus. Rather than confining the resurrection to a mere historical event or an abstract eschatological promise, Carnley introduces the concept of *Christus praesens*, the ongoing, transformative presence of the risen Christ within the Church. This notion not only reconfigures our understanding of the Easter faith but also reorients the entire ecclesial experience around the living reality of Christ, as experienced through worship, the sacraments, and the community's shared memory.

Resurrection as a Historical Event

Table 2: Interpretive Analysis of Respondents' Understanding of the Resurrection

FGD Question 2: "Do you believe Jesus really rose from the dead?"

Interpretive position	Participants	Basis in the respondents' statements
Resurrection as a Historical Event	2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12, 13, 19, 23, 24, 25, 27	These participants explicitly affirm that Jesus really came back to life, rose from the dead, or resurrected. P25 specifically affirms that Jesus rose "both body and soul," while P24 appeals to "historical record and eyewitness" support.
Resurrection as a Non-Event	1, 6, 7, 9, 11, 15, 16, 20, 26	These participants interpret the Resurrection without affirming Jesus' physical return from death, emphasizing instead story, symbolism, metaphor, spirituality, hope, or continuing influence. P6 explicitly rejects a physical return, P9 distinguishes Jesus' spirit from his physical body, and P26 explicitly describes the Resurrection as symbolic rather than a physical event.
Mixed: Historical Event and Non-Event	14, 17, 18, 22	These participants combine an affirmation that the Resurrection really happened with an emphasis on its special meaning or significance. P14, P17, and P22 explicitly use a "both" formulation, while P18 affirms resurrection but emphasizes its meaning beyond Jesus simply coming back to life.
Not sufficiently determinable	21	P21 associates resurrection with faith, hope, and new life, but does not state clearly whether Jesus actually rose from the dead or whether resurrection is understood symbolically.

Based on the FGD results, the participants predominantly understood the Resurrection as an event that happened. Their responses emphasized that they believe that Jesus truly rose from the dead, that the Resurrection affirmed his identity, and that it demonstrated God's power over death. These responses were commonly grounded in Scripture, Church teaching, and the religious traditions through which participants received their faith. This was emphasized by one of the participants. He believed that there were eyewitnesses and records about the event.

Carnley's presentation of the different methodologies for understanding or interpreting the resurrection closely aligns with the historical interpretation, which emphasizes the Resurrection of Jesus as a historical event and is associated with Westcott and Pannenberg. Both represent the historical-event approach because they maintain that the resurrection of



Jesus was an objectively real historical event and that historical inquiry plays an important role in establishing its reality. Westcott grounds this claim particularly in the objective evidence of the empty tomb and appearances, while Pannenberg emphasizes the Resurrection as the historical confirmation of Jesus' divine identity and God's revelation in him.²⁷

However, as Carnley points out, such methods inherently rely on presuppositions of faith to validate what is claimed to be the foundation of that very faith.²⁸ This circularity undermines any claim to objective historical verification because, stripped of the criteria of faith, the resurrection remains an event that defies conventional modes of historical inquiry.²⁹ In effect, if one must already possess faith to ascertain the resurrection's historicity, then the event cannot serve as an independent basis for that faith. In other words, this position is quite lacking and/or incomplete in itself.

Resurrection as an Eschatological Event

Conversely, purely eschatological interpretations³⁰, advocated by theologians

such as Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann, tend to emphasize the resurrection as a supra-historical, transcendent mystery. In this view, the resurrection is accessible only through a committed act of faith, a divine revelation that lies beyond the reach of empirical evidence or rational reconstruction. While this perspective highlights the salvific and transformative dimensions of the resurrection, Carnley critiques it for rendering the event too abstract and disconnected from the everyday life of the Church.³¹ Such abstraction risks reducing the lived reality of Easter faith to a mere doctrinal assertion, failing to engage the believer's practical experience of the risen Christ.

Interestingly, the FGD revealed that none of the participants clearly expressed an understanding of the Resurrection that corresponded to this eschatological perspective. Although some participants associated the Resurrection with hope and new life, their responses were too general to establish a clear connection with the eschatological understanding described above. The present study cannot determine why the participants did not explicitly articulate this perspective. Nevertheless, the finding may suggest that the future-oriented and eschatological dimensions of the Resurrection were less readily articulated by the participants than its historical

²⁷ Peter Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief*, 36–47.

²⁸ This is what Carnley said in his critique of Westcott's and Pannenberg's position regarding Resurrection as an historical event. For further discussion see Peter Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 89–95.

²⁹ Carnley states, "This means that both Westcott and Pannenberg ..., at the end of the day, allow dispassionate historical research to fade into the background whilst they resort to a set of dogmatic affirmations to provide a context within which the particularity of Easter faith may be accepted." See Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief*, 94. He also stated that "the valiant attempts of those who have set out to prove the occurrence of the Resurrection of Christ purely as a historical event by relying on the historical reason and the techniques of critical historical research are doomed to failure." See Carnley, "Resurrection and the Ecclesial Experience of the Raised Christ," in *The Reconstruction of Resurrection Belief* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2019). O'Collins also pointed this out; see Gerald O'Collins, "Preface," in *The Easter Jesus* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1973), xi. Another criticism of historical views about the Resurrection was made by Luke Timothy Johnson. See Luke Timothy Johnson, "Chapter 1: He Is the Living One," in *Living Jesus: Learning the Heart of the Gospel* (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1999), 7. Kähler also criticizes the historical methodology employed to study the Jesus of history, saying that "the Historical Jesus of modern scholars conceals us the real Christ." See Martin Kähler, "How Does Christianity Become Certain of Its Historic Christ?" in *The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historic Biblical Christ* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960), 43.

³⁰ Simon Joseph's article also presents the eschatological view of

the resurrection. However, the elaboration was more about rationalizing and emphasizing the Jewish eschatological view of the resurrection. See Joseph, "Redescribing the Resurrection: Beyond the Methodological Impasse," 158–61. Jürgen Moltmann likewise understands the resurrection in an eschatological framework, arguing that the raising of Christ from the dead is understood "in the modus of promise." For Moltmann, the resurrection is a historical phenomenon whose meaning is understood in relation to its future and therefore points toward the eschatological fulfillment that grounds Christian hope. See Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 192. Another perspective on the resurrection as an eschatological event is provided by Novakovic, who underscored Paul's view of the resurrection of Jesus as the beginning of the resurrection of the dead. See Lidija Novakovic, "Jesus' Resurrection and Theology," in *Resurrection: A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: T&T Clark, 2016), 164–65.

³¹ Carnley observed "Bultmann and Barth, by beginning with an unequivocal affirmation of the eschatological nature of the raised Christ, quite simply abandoned any attempt even to try to do what Westcott and Pannenberg set out to achieve. ... this allows the possibility of a very superficial hearing of the stories which leads back in the direction of a mundane restoration" Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief*, 143



reality or symbolic significance. Consequently, participants appeared more inclined to describe the Resurrection in terms of its historical reality or symbolic meaning than in terms of its eschatological implications.

Resurrection as a Non-Event

Carnley also examined the non-event approach to resurrection belief, in which the resurrection is not understood as a response to a post-mortem event. Rather, faith is grounded in the completed life, death, and significance of the historical Jesus, while the resurrection story functions as an expression of that faith rather than as a record of an objectively occurring event. Proponents of this reductionist thesis, such as Willie Marxen³² and Don Cupitt³³, argued that resurrection faith does not depend on a post-mortem event but on the disciples' retrospective commitment to Jesus' message.

Looking back at the FGD responses, some participants emphasized the symbolic, existential, and transformative significance of the Resurrection. Rather than focusing on the historical reality of Jesus' resurrection, they highlighted the enduring value of his teachings, the hope he still inspires, and the personal transformation associated with the Resurrection narrative. These responses do not necessarily establish that the participants adopted the specific positions of Marxsen or Cupitt. Rather, they indicate that some participants articulated the meaning of the Resurrection primarily in terms of its symbolic, existential, and moral significance rather than its historical occurrence.

Carnley's critique of the non-event approach is significant because he does not consider the resurrection adequately explained by reducing it

to an expression of the disciples' faith. His broader discussion places particular emphasis on the resurrection appearances and on the relationship between the objective and subjective dimensions of the Easter experience.³⁴ Thus, while the FGD responses of some participants show an orientation toward the symbolic or existential meaning of the Resurrection, these responses should not automatically be equated with Carnley's description of the non-event position. Rather, they indicate a partial affinity with that category insofar as the participants emphasize the meaning and transformative significance of the Resurrection without clearly affirming its historical occurrence.

Mixed Interpretations

Notably, several FGD responses presented perspectives that do not correspond neatly to the methodological positions or interpretations examined by Carnley. While Carnley's framework provides an important theological lens for interpreting the participants' responses, the empirical data reveal understandings of the Resurrection that sometimes extend beyond the historical-event, eschatological-event, and non-event categories. In particular, some participants combined elements associated with different positions, while others emphasized dimensions of the Resurrection, such as its symbolic, existential, spiritual, or transformative significance, in ways that cannot be reduced to a single category. This suggests that the participants' understandings of the Resurrection are not necessarily confined to established theological positions but may involve more complex and integrated constructions of meaning.

³² Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief*, 156–157.

³³ Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief*, 163.

³⁴ Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief*, 160



From Fragmentation to Integration: Carnley's Christus Praesens

The empirical findings reveal a pattern more complex than a simple division between historical-event and non-event interpretations. Participants affirmed the Resurrection in different ways. The findings, therefore, reveal both correspondence and divergence between the participants' responses and the theological approaches examined by Carnley.

This divergence is significant for the present empirical-theological inquiry. Rather than treating Carnley's categories as fixed classifications, the analysis uses them as interpretive frameworks to examine how participants understand and combine different dimensions of resurrection belief. The findings consequently suggest that contemporary understandings of the Resurrection may cross the boundaries of established theological positions, bringing historical, symbolic, and existential dimensions into varying relationships.

This pattern provides a point of contact with Carnley's constructive discussion of resurrection faith. In *The Structure of Resurrection Belief*, Carnley examines the relationship between the raised Christ and the remembered Jesus. He argues that the risen Christ recognized in Easter faith is not a new or anonymous presence but is identified as the very Jesus who had been remembered as the crucified teacher and master.³⁵ In this sense, the recognition of Christ's presence in the present is related to the memory of Jesus as he was in the past.³⁶

This relationship becomes more explicit in Carnley's discussion of remembering and knowing. He argues that the Church does not remember Jesus merely as a figure of the past. Rather, the Church remembers Jesus "in order to recognize the *Christus praesens*."³⁷ For Carnley, therefore, the Church's memory of Jesus is related to its recognition of Christ's living presence. He further argues that the "memory of Jesus" forms an integral part of the cognitive nucleus of Easter faith because it provides the basis by which the present presence of Christ can be identified.³⁸

Carnley develops this argument by distinguishing remembering Jesus from merely retaining historical information about him. The memory of Jesus serves as an identifying mark by which the Church can recognize the presence of Christ.³⁹ This does not mean that the risen Christ is reduced to a memory of Jesus. On the contrary, Carnley explicitly rejects the idea that Jesus "lives" only in the mind and memory of the Church. The Church remembers Jesus precisely to recognize the *Christus praesens*.⁴⁰

The significance of this distinction becomes clearer in Carnley's treatment of Easter faith as remembering and knowing. The remembered Jesus refers to Jesus of the past, whereas the Jesus known in the Easter faith is the risen Jesus, whose presence is encountered through the Spirit. Carnley consequently maintains that Easter faith involves both remembering Jesus and knowing the risen Christ.⁴¹ The two dimensions are therefore related without being collapsed into one another.

³⁵ Peter Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 267–68. Carnley states that the raised Christ recognized by the first witnesses was "the very presence" of their remembered master and teacher and that recognition of the Spirit of Christ involves memory of Jesus as he was.

³⁶ Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief*, 267–68.

³⁷ Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief*, 298. Carnley explicitly says that the Church "remembers Jesus" in order to recognize the *Christus praesens*.

³⁸ Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief*, 296.

³⁹ Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief*, 296–98.

⁴⁰ Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief*, 298.

⁴¹ Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief*, 298–302.



This provides an important point of contact with the empirical findings. The participants' responses sometimes separate the historical and symbolic dimensions of the Resurrection, while other responses combine them. Carnley's account does not require these dimensions to be treated as mutually exclusive. Instead, his discussion shows how the memory of Jesus and the present recognition of the raised Christ are related within the structure of Easter faith.

Carnley develops this relationship further in his discussion of the Easter narratives. He argues that the stories of the empty tomb and the appearances are insufficient to prove that the Resurrection occurred as a historical event.⁴² This conclusion, however, does not lead him to discard these narratives. Rather, he argues that they can be understood as signs or pointers to an eschatological, heavenly reality and to the present experience of the living Christ.⁴³

Carnley therefore describes the Easter stories as being told and retold not simply to provide a literal report of the Easter event but to alert hearers to a possibility of present experience and to direct their attention toward "*the eschatological reality of the presence of Christ in our midst*."⁴⁴ This is an important point for the present study because Carnley does not simply replace belief in historical resurrection with symbolism. Instead, he connects the Easter traditions with the present recognition of Christ's presence.

He makes this relationship particularly explicit when he states that the stories of the tomb and appearances and the present experience of the Spirit of Christ, identified as the

"*presence of Jesus*," "*hang together*" in a "*purposive, synthetic unity*."⁴⁵ The language of integration, therefore, is genuinely present in Carnley's text. However, it is important not to attribute to him the specific formula that he "synthesizes the historical, eschatological, and experiential dimensions." What Carnley actually describes is the relationship between the Easter narratives, their eschatological significance, and the present experience of the Spirit of Christ.

The Reconstruction of Resurrection Belief develops this relationship further. Carnley addresses the question of how the "life-giving Spirit" experienced in the Christian community can be identified with the presence of the Risen Jesus who lived in the past.⁴⁶ He consequently gives particular attention to resurrection faith as a form of present knowing and to the continuing presence of the Raised Christ through the Spirit.⁴⁷ In this context, Carnley develops the relationship between remembering and knowing more explicitly. The memory of Jesus provides the basis for recognizing the presence of the Raised Christ, while the encounter with that presence can, in turn, clarify and sharpen the memory of Jesus. In resurrection faith, therefore, remembering and knowing are reciprocally related. Carnley expresses this relationship by stating that believers "remember him whom we now know, and we know him whom we remember."⁴⁸

Thus, the empirical findings may be described as revealing a fragmented range of understandings of the Resurrection, while Carnley's constructive account provides a theological resource for examining how these dimensions relate. The

⁴² Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief*, 363–64. Carnley states that the empty-tomb story and appearance narratives are insufficient to prove the Resurrection as a historical event.

⁴³ Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief*, 364–66. He describes these narratives as signs or pointers toward an eschatological and heavenly reality and toward the present experience of the living Spirit of Christ.

⁴⁴ Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief*, 367

⁴⁵ Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief*, 366–67.

⁴⁶ Carnley, *The Reconstruction of Resurrection Belief*, chap. 8, "Faith as Remembering and Knowing."

⁴⁷ Carnley, *The Reconstruction of Resurrection Belief*, chap. 8, "Faith as Remembering and Knowing."

⁴⁸ Carnley, *The Reconstruction of Resurrection Belief*, chap. 10, "A Uniquely Referring Memory?"



historical Jesus remains essential to the Church's memory, while the raised Christ is understood in relation to the present recognition of his presence. Carnley's *Christus praesens*, therefore, provides a way of understanding resurrection faith in which remembering Jesus and knowing the living Christ belong together.

The concept of *Christus praesens* is therefore particularly useful for the present study because it provides a way of relating the Jesus remembered from the past to the risen Christ encountered in the present. Carnley connects the Church's memory of Jesus with its recognition of the present Christ, stating that the Church remembers Jesus to recognize the *Christus praesens*.⁴⁹ It allows the Resurrection to be considered not merely as an isolated claim about the past but also in relation to Christ's continuing presence within the Christian community. At the same time, this present presence remains identified with Jesus rather than becoming an abstract spiritual experience detached from him.⁵⁰

Thus, the movement from fragmentation to integration in this study does not mean that the historical, eschatological, and non-event positions are simply combined into a new fourth position. Rather, Carnley's reconstruction helps illuminate how the different dimensions appearing in the empirical data can be placed into a theological relationship. The historical Jesus is remembered, the risen Christ is known in the present through the Spirit, and the Easter narratives direct the community toward the eschatological reality of Christ's presence.⁵¹ In this sense, *Christus praesens* provides the

conceptual point at which memory, resurrection faith, present experience, and eschatological hope converge without being reduced to one another.⁵²

Act – Religious Education: an avenue for holistic Christian formation

Table 3: Normative Evaluation of Respondents' Perceptions of the Clarity of Teachings Regarding the Resurrection of Jesus

FGD Question No. 3: Do priests, pastors, or teachers explain the Resurrection of Jesus clearly?

Perception of Clarity	Frequency (n)	Summary of Responses
Clear	16	Respondents generally described the teachings as simple, direct, detailed, consistent, and easy to understand. Some noted that teachers connected the Resurrection with Jesus' death and its significance for Christian faith.
Not Clear	11	Respondents attributed lack of clarity to conflicting interpretations or teaching styles, insufficient detail, overly general explanations, and greater emphasis on the meaning or purpose of the Resurrection than on explaining what actually happened.
Total	27	The responses indicate a generally positive perception of clarity, although a substantial group expressed a need for deeper, more consistent, and more explicit explanations.

The FGD findings indicate that the majority of respondents perceived the explanations of the Resurrection provided by priests, pastors, and teachers as clear and understandable. However, the responses of the 11 participants who perceived the teaching as unclear point to concerns that extend beyond simple comprehensibility. These participants identified conflicting interpretations, insufficient detail, overly general explanations, and an emphasis on the significance or purpose of the Resurrection, with

⁴⁹ Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 298. Carnley explicitly relates remembering Jesus to recognizing the *Christus praesens*.

⁵⁰ Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief*, 267–68, 298. Carnley relates the present recognition of Christ to the remembered Jesus and describes the raised Christ as present as Spirit.

⁵¹ Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief*, 298–302, 367. Carnley develops Easter faith in terms of remembering and knowing, and later describes the Easter narratives as directing attention toward "the eschatological reality of the presence of Christ in our midst."

⁵² Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief*, 267–68, 298–302, 366–68.



insufficient attention to what actually happened. The finding, therefore, suggests that clarity in Resurrection teaching involves presenting the central Christian claim and providing learners with sufficient theological depth to engage questions concerning its meaning, basis, and implications for Christian faith.

This concern is relevant to the broader task of religious education. Roy John Del Rosario observes that Catholic religious education in the Philippines must respond more adequately to contemporary socio-religious realities⁵³, while J. C. Go emphasizes the importance of developing critical thinking in Catholic religious education, particularly in matters of faith and morality.⁵⁴ The participants' responses, particularly those calling for greater detail and more profound explanation, therefore point to the need for religious education that goes beyond the mere transmission of familiar religious formulations and creates opportunities for learners to inquire, question, interpret, and reflect critically on the content of faith. Such an approach is consistent with the recommendations of Fides A. del Castillo and Rebecca Cacho, who emphasize the importance of participatory and student-centered approaches in Religious Education.⁵⁵

This concern also aligns with the vision of Catholic education articulated in the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP II). Baring notes, PCP II did not prescribe precise methodologies for religious education; rather, its vision provided guideposts for Catholic educators in developing

appropriate forms of religious formation.⁵⁶ In light of the present findings, this vision emphasizes the necessity of an educational approach that does not stop at the clear transmission of Resurrection doctrine but seeks to deepen learners' engagement with and appropriation of the faith.

Carnley's concept of *Christus praesens* further illuminates this pedagogical direction. In Carnley's reconstruction, the risen Christ is not simply an object of information about the past; the Church remembers Jesus in order to recognize the presence of the risen Christ in the present.⁵⁷ For religious education, this approach suggests that teaching the Resurrection should lead beyond familiarity with its biblical narrative toward reflection on its significance for Christian faith and life. Catechesis can thereby help learners relate the Jesus remembered by the Church to the risen Christ encountered in the life of the Christian community.

To translate this theological insight into a contextually appropriate catechetical approach, Eballo's *Gamay at Hiyang* paradigm offers a useful pedagogical resource. Drawing on the catechetical practice of Fray Juan de Oliver, Eballo emphasizes the importance of communicating Christian teaching in forms that are accessible and appropriate to learners' cultural and experiential contexts. The approach highlights *gamay* and *hiyang* as principles for developing catechesis that begins with what learners already know and experience and communicates theological concepts in ways that are appropriate to their context.⁵⁸

⁵³ See Roy John R. Del Rosario, "Catholic Religious Education in Philippine Catholic Universities: A Critique on Catholic Religious Education in the Philippines" (paper presented at the DLSU Research Congress 2017, De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines, June 20–22, 2017).

⁵⁴ For further discussion see J. C. Go, "Critical Thinking and Catholic Religious Education: An Empirical Research Report from the Philippines," *International Studies in Catholic Education* 10, no. 2 (July 3, 2018): 184–202, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19422539.2018.1492261>.

⁵⁵ See Fides A. del Castillo and Rebecca Cacho, "Perspectives of Youth on Religious Education in the Philippines," *Religious Education* 119, no. 1 (December 13, 2023): 43–58, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00344087.2023.2289264>

⁵⁶ Rito V. Baring, "The State of Religious Education in the Philippines: A Review of Literature," *Hapag* 12, no. 2 (2015): 139–59. Baring explains that PCP II provided an important grounding for Catholic education and offered guideposts for Catholic educators rather than prescribing precise methodologies.

⁵⁷ Peter Carnley, *The Structure of Resurrection Belief* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 267–68, 298–302.

⁵⁸ Arvin Dineros Eballo, "Gamay at Hiyang: Reconstructing Fray Juan de Oliver's *Declaracion de la Doctrina Christiana en Idioma Tagalog* as a Catechetical Paradigm," *Religions* 13, no. 9 (2022): 832, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13090832>.



Applied to the present study, the respondents' varied and sometimes fragmented interpretations should not be dismissed as deficiencies; rather, they may serve as starting points for deeper theological formation. Through a dialogical, contextual, and analogical approach, learners can begin with their existing understandings and experiences and gradually relate these to a fuller Christian understanding of the Resurrection. Carnley's concept of *Christus praesens* provides the theological orientation for this movement by relating the Jesus remembered by the Church to the risen Christ present within the community of faith, while Eballo's *Gamay at Hiyang* provides a contextual pedagogical orientation for communicating and deepening this understanding. Such an approach may help address split-level Christianity by helping learners connect what they profess about the Resurrection with how that faith is understood and lived out.

This study found that participants generally possessed a basic understanding of the Resurrection and affirmed it primarily as Jesus' victory over death and a foundation of Christian faith. While most considered its teaching clear, several participants expressed a need for greater theological depth and engagement with its significance for Christian life. Their responses also revealed varied interpretations that did not always correspond neatly to Carnley's historical-event, eschatological-event, and non-event categories.

These findings point to a gap between knowing the Resurrection as doctrine and appropriating its significance in lived faith. Carnley's concept of *Christus praesens* offers a constructive theological perspective by relating the Jesus remembered by the Church to the risen Christ present within the Christian community. In dialogue with Eballo's *Gamay at Hiyang*, this

approach provides a basis for a more contextual and dialogical religious education that begins with learners' existing understandings and leads them toward deeper theological appropriation. The study, therefore, concludes that religious education can contribute to a more integrated Christian formation when the Resurrection is taught not only as a doctrine to be understood but as a faith to be encountered, appropriated, and lived.

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