

Exploring the Meaning of Easter in the Context of Moderate Religious Life for BP PAR and BP. PAM Congregation of GKI Hermon Hollo Him

Berthin S. Banga¹, Yeni I. Roragabar², Melina Hutapea³, Irianto⁴, Tresia Lesirola⁵, Dina Surya Erlangga⁶

¹²³⁴⁵⁶Perguruan Tinggi Kristen Negeri Sentani, Jayapura, Indonesia

Email : berthinbanga3@gmail.com

Abstract

The challenge of understanding the meaning of Easter in the context of moderate religious life is significant in accommodating the plurality of beliefs. Easter symbolizes transformation, forgiveness, and hope for humanity. Understanding these symbols can be a meeting point between various religious beliefs in a moderate religious life. Through important activities such as PkM in helping teenagers (BP. PAR) and Christian youth (BP. PAM) at the GKI Hermon Hollo Him congregation integrate Easter values in daily life and become witnesses of Christ in society. Activities are carried out using lectures, discussions, and question-and-answer methods. Through PkM, BP. PAR and BP. PAM GKI Hermon Hollo Him managed to deepen their understanding of the meaning of Easter, broaden their horizons about moderate religious life, and strengthen the concept of inclusiveness in the congregation. This improves relationships with God and others and enriches their contribution to society with the values of love, tolerance, and inclusiveness.

Keyword: The meaning of Easter, Religious, Moderate, BP PAR and PAM, Congregation of GKI Hermon Hollo Him

INTRODUCTION

Exploring the meaning of Easter becomes an interesting challenge in the context of moderate religious life. Easter, as the central celebration in Christianity, marks the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Cranfield, 1990; Musoni & Gundani, 2016; Nainggolan & Labobar, 2021). However, in an environment filled with a diversity of beliefs and views, understanding the meaning of Easter in a deep and relevant way for all individuals can be complex. The challenge lies in bridging differences in beliefs and interpretations and creating space for inclusive dialogue and respect for religious diversity.

The historical determination of the date of Easter, which has its roots in the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD and the ecclesiastical full moon method, displays the complex calculations involved in setting the date, regardless of precise astronomical alignment (Gastgeber, 2022; Heil & Scheerer, 2022; Sedova, 2023; Vizza, 2018). Easter became an integral part of the Christian church tradition and maintains its importance as a key moment in the liturgical calendar.

Easter is an important Christian festival that reminds people of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. However, in a moderate religious life, the meaning of Easter often requires digging deeper to reach an understanding that is profound and relevant to a society living in a plurality of beliefs and values. Christ's resurrection has future implications and affects life today, emphasizing the spiritual challenges and growth of a diverse social life (Joswanto & Hulu, 2023; O'Reilly, 2020).

Moderate religious life includes an understanding that the diversity of religions and beliefs is important to be valued and respected (Malatuny, 2020). In this context, the meaning of Easter must be explored concerning the different beliefs that exist in society (Beck, 2006). In a multicultural world, where cultural identities and personal sentiments often clash, recognizing and valuing these differences is important (Pick, 2019). Just as Jesus emphasized the unique role of Christians in standing out and bringing light and salt to the world by embracing their differences, individuals during Easter can

reflect on how embracing diversity can lead to a more harmonious and understanding society. By recognizing and celebrating the various societal beliefs, Easter can symbolize unity in diversity.

Easter is also a symbol of transformation, forgiveness, and hope for humanity. In a moderate religious life, understanding these symbols can be a meeting point between different religious beliefs (Surrey, 2015). The deep symbolism of the wounded resurrected form of Jesus Christ symbolizes divine forgiveness and reconciliation for all mankind. However, the challenge in exploring the meaning of Easter in the context of moderate religious life is to avoid exclusive or prejudicial interpretations. Instead, making Easter a starting point for inclusive and constructive interfaith dialogue is important. It is also worth highlighting that Easter encompasses universal values such as love, forgiveness, and hope (Burai & Baran, 2022; Sedova, 2023; Utley, 2022).

Easter celebrations in various contexts reflect these values through different mediums. For example, the short Easter story by I. N. Potapenko emphasizes the themes of spiritual resurrection, forgiveness, and salvation, promoting gospel values and reflection on the meaning of life (Surrey, 2015). Similarly, literary works by Croatian primary school students highlight spiritual values such as faith, love, and kindness, demonstrating the universal importance of these virtues (Musoni & Gundani, 2016). Moreover, the significance of the wounded resurrected form of Jesus Christ in the Gospels symbolizes divine forgiveness and hope, illustrating how his victory over death embodies these universal values. Easter is a time to reflect on and celebrate foundational principles that resonate across cultures and beliefs.

In a moderate religious life, the meaning of Easter should reflect these values inclusively without excluding anyone from the goodness and understanding that the

celebration brings. It is important to note that in a moderate religious life, the concept of liberation and restoration presented by Easter can be the basis for efforts to improve relations between individuals, groups, and ethnicities that are torn apart by social problems. Easter is also a call to strengthen relationships with God and fellow human beings. In a moderate religious life, an understanding of the meaning of Easter should encourage individuals to act better and create peace and unity amid a diverse society (Misra et al., 1998).

In a pluralistic society, it is important for teenagers and Christian youth to learn to appreciate and understand differences in religious beliefs (Siahaya et al., 2020; Widyawati, 2021). Through exploring the meaning of Easter in a moderate context, they can gain a deeper understanding of tolerance and interfaith dialogue. As Christians, it is important for teenagers and young adults to understand their Christian mission in a changing world. Lack of equipment in understanding and skills to deal with the challenges and complexities in a moderate religious context can hinder the ability of teenagers and young Christians to effectively explore the meaning of Easter. They also face challenges in finding a balance between maintaining their religious beliefs and remaining open to the views and beliefs of others, which is an important aspect of moderation.

There is a need for activities that can help them integrate the values of Easter into their daily lives and become witnesses of Christ in the midst of society. Community Service (PkM) activities by lecturers of the Department of Theology, Sekolah Tinggi Agama Kristen Protestan Negeri (STAKPN) Sentani on exploring the meaning of Easter in the context of moderate religious life for teenagers and Christian youth in the GKI Hermon Hollo Him congregation are very important to strengthen faith, build inclusive fellowship, and foster responsible leadership

among the younger generation of the church. Through a deeper understanding of the meaning of Easter, teenagers and Christian youth can be inspired to take actions that promote social justice, peace, and service to others. They can see Easter as a call to act in society with love and care.

In the context of moderate religious life, Christian teenagers and youth need to have a balanced understanding of their own and other religions. This activity can help them see Easter not only as a religious celebration, but also as an opportunity to broaden their horizons and perspectives.

METHOD

The activity was carried out by presenting material on the meaning of Easter in the context of moderate religious life through lectures, discussions, and question and answer methods. After that, the team gave the opportunity to BP PAR and PAM to discuss the material that had been explained. PkM activities based on directed programs by a team of lecturers and staff of the Theology Department of STAKPN Sentani are expected to provide solutions to BP. PAR and PAM in interpreting moderate religious life, encouraging them to act better and create peace and unity in the midst of a diverse society.

Place and Time

The implementation of PkM activities took place at GKI Hermon Hollo Him, Sentani District, Jayapura Regency, Papua on 30 March 2024, at 10.00-15.00 WIT.

Target Audience

The target audience of this service activity is the Children and Youth Fellowship Board (BP. PAR) and the Youth Fellowship Board (BP. PAM) of the GKI Hermon Hollo Him congregation.

Method of Service

The implementation of activities to increase the awareness of BP PAR and PAM of the GKI Hermon Hollo Him congregation about the meaning of Easter in the context of

moderate religious life through lectures, discussions, and question and answer methods.

Indicators of Success

The success indicators determined from the service activities that we carried out to BP PAR and PAM of the GKI Hermon Hollo Him congregation are:

1. An understanding of the meaning of Easter that can encourage BP PAR and PAM to strengthen relationships with God and fellow humans in the context of moderate religious life.
2. Helping BP PAR and PAM see Easter as an opportunity to broaden their horizons and perspectives on moderate religious life.
3. BP PAR and PAM can understand the meaning of Easter inclusively, without excluding anyone from the goodness and understanding that the celebration brings.

Evaluation Method

The evaluation method in this activity is directly during the activity, the PkM team asks questions about the meaning of Easter in the context of moderate religious life and sees the development of BP PAR and PAM's understanding of the meaning of Easter.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The material presentation in the PkM activity was divided into three sessions, including:

1. Easter: The Foundation of Moderate Religious Life

In the context of moderate religious life, it is important for BP. PAR and BP. PAM Congregation GKI Hermon Hollo Him has an important role in shaping the character and faith of the younger generation in the church fellowship. Therefore, these two fellowship bodies need to understand and internalize the meaning of Easter as a basis for strengthening relationships with God and fellow humans. Easter, as a celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ,

is not only an important aspect of the doctrine of Christianity but also a strong moral and spiritual foundation for individuals to establish a closer relationship with God and create peace and unity in the midst of a society with diverse beliefs and cultures (Joswanto & Hulu, 2023; Sedova, 2023).

In the context of moderate religious life, understanding the meaning of Easter as a basis for strengthening relationships with God has deep implications for BP. PAR and BP. PAM. *Firstly*, Easter teaches the value of forgiveness and love, which are central aspects in the relationship with God (Azadi et al., 2015; Sedova, 2023). Children, youth, and young adults need to understand that through the death and resurrection of Christ, God demonstrated His immeasurable love for mankind, and as such, they are also called to practice love and forgiveness towards their fellow human beings. By strengthening this understanding, BP. PAR and BP. PAM can assist the younger generation in forming attitudes of empathy, tolerance, and forgiveness in their interactions with others.



Picture 1. The PkM team explains the concept of Easter as the foundation of moderate religious life to BP. PAR

Secondly, easter also contains a strong value of hope in the context of moderate religious life. The values embedded in religious practices during Easter celebrations contribute to fostering a sense of balance between reason and morality, especially in moderate religious

communities (Staines, 2008). The resurrection of Jesus Christ gives hope of new life and eternal resurrection, both in the present life and in the future (Cranfield, 1990; Joswanto & Hulu, 2023) BP. PAR and BP. PAM can help children and youth understand that in any situation, they can seek strength and hope in their faith in God. This can help them overcome challenges and difficulties in their daily lives with optimism and confidence.

Furthermore, understanding the meaning of Easter also strengthens relationships with fellow human beings in the context of moderate religious life. When children and young people understand the concepts of forgiveness and love that Easter teaches, they will also be better able to practice these values in their relationships with others. BP. PAR and BP. PAM can create a supportive environment for building healthy and harmonious relationships among fellowship members, where each individual is valued and treated with compassion and understanding.

An understanding of the hope contained in Easter can motivate children and youth to become agents of positive change in their communities. They can respond to the call to bring light and hope to others who may be experiencing difficulties or despair. BP. PAR and BP. PAM can provide a platform for children and youth to engage in social and service activities that strengthen relationships with fellow human beings and create a positive impact in their fellowship.



Picture 2. The PkM team explained the concept of Easter as the foundation of moderate religious life to BP. PAM

Easter also emphasizes the importance of unity in moderate religious life (Kalin, 2011). Christ's death and resurrection show that God invites all people to unite in faith and love, regardless of differences in belief or cultural background (Ahearne-Kroll, 2022) BP. PAR and BP. PAM can be a place for children and youth to experience togetherness in faith and build solid unity within it. This context provides an opportunity for them to cultivate a deep experience of fellowship and strengthen relationships with others in the context of moderate religious life.

Easter also teaches the value of social responsibility which is important in a moderate religious life. Christ's death and resurrection call Christians to act with love and justice in society, helping those in need and fighting for the truth (Musoni & Gundani, 2016). BP. PAR and BP. PAM can guide children and youth to become responsible leaders in fighting for the values of social justice and humanity, thus strengthening their relationship with God and fellow humans in the context of moderate religious life.

Understanding the meaning of Easter as a basis for strengthening relationships with God and fellow human beings also brings practical consequences in daily life. BP. PAR and BP. PAM can help children and youth to link the values they learned in the celebration of Easter to concrete actions in their daily lives. This could include the use of time for personal prayer and reflection, participation in church activities and community service, as well as supporting fellowship-building activities that promote peace, unity, and justice.

Easter is a strong foundation for children, youth and Christian youth of GKI Hermon Hollo Him in strengthening their relationship with God and fellow humans

in the context of moderate religious life. Through an understanding of Easter values such as love, forgiveness, hope, unity, and social responsibility, BP. PAR and BP. PAM can guide the younger generation to grow and develop into individuals who are strong in faith and contribute positively in their society.

Easter: Expanding Religious Perspectives

The Children and Youth Fellowship Board (BP. PAR) and the Youth Fellowship Board (BP. PAM) in the GKI Hermon Hollo Him congregation play important roles in shaping the religious identity and understanding of its members. In this context, the Easter celebration is not only a religious moment but also an opportunity to broaden their horizons and perspectives on moderate religious life (Jura, 2021; Musoni & Gundani, 2016). Easter, as an important celebration in Christianity, offers a valuable opportunity for BP. PAR and BP. PAM to reflect on the values of moderation in their religious practice.



Picture 3. The PkM team explains the concept of Easter as a foundation in broadening religious perspectives to BP. PAR

The celebration of Easter provides a foundation for understanding the meaning of simplicity, forgiveness, and love in the context of moderate religious life (Musoni & Gundani, 2016; Sedova, 2023). So, it was a moment for BP. PAR and BP. PAM to explore these values and how they can apply them in relationships with fellow congregation members and the wider community. Through a deeper

understanding of the meaning of Easter, BP. PAR and BP. PAM are expected to internalize the values of religious moderation in their daily lives.

Easter also highlights the importance of tolerance and respect for differences in religious life. This became a momentum for BP. PAR and BP. PAM to explore how they can be agents of positive change in society. Through discussions, reflections, and religious activities related to Easter, they were able to broaden their horizons about religious diversity and the importance of living peacefully together.



Picture 4. The PkM team explained the concept of Easter as a foundation in broadening religious perspectives to BP. PAM

In addition, Easter also emphasizes the importance of appreciating the suffering of others and participating in efforts to help those in need, thus becoming a calling for BP. PAR and BP. PAM to engage in social and kindness activities that serve and impact the congregation. The celebration of Easter is not only about celebrating the resurrection of Christ but also about putting His teachings into practice in our daily lives (Joswanto & Hulu, 2023; Misra et al., 1998).

Easter also invited BP. PAR and BP. PAM to reflect on their roles and responsibilities as young people in maintaining religious and moral values in a changing society. This context becomes a moment to strengthen their communion with the teachings of Christ and take an active role in building an inclusive and loving fellowship. Through this PkM activity, they can explore more deeply the

meaning and relevance of Easter in the context of modern life.

Easter is not only a moment of religious reflection, but also a valuable opportunity for BP. PAR and BP. PAM to broaden their insights and perspectives on moderate religious life. In the spirit of Christ's love, they are invited to live a life of love and tolerance, and to be role models for other young people in living a balanced and meaningful religious life.

2. Easter: Kindness and Understanding Inclusion

The Children and Youth Fellowship (BP. PAR) and the Youth Fellowship (BP. PAM) in the GKI Hermon Hollo Him congregation have an important responsibility to convey the meaning of Easter in an inclusive manner to its members. In this context, Easter inclusivity includes the understanding that the message of salvation and love contained in this celebration does not limit itself to one group only, but is relevant to all people regardless of religious background, age, or social background (Sheikh, 2023). Therefore, BP. PAR and BP. PAM are expected to be effective mediators in communicating the inclusive meaning of Easter to congregation members.

Easter, as a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is an important moment for Christians to reflect on the love and forgiveness that extends to all people. This point became a calling for BP. PAR and BP. PAM to broaden their horizons on the message of salvation conveyed by Easter and ensure that all members of the congregation feel its inclusivity.

In the context of the church, Easter should be interpreted as a call to accept all people indiscriminately and give unconditional love to others (Lohor & Nampar, 2021). BP. PAR and BP. PAM has the responsibility to promote an

attitude of openness, acceptance, and inclusiveness among congregation members, which are values reflected in the inclusive meaning of Easter. The importance of understanding the meaning of Easter inclusively also entails respecting the diversity of beliefs and traditions within the congregation. BP. PAR and BP. PAM should ensure that all members of the congregation, regardless of ethnic, cultural, and racial backgrounds, feel recognized and valued during Easter celebrations.

In addition, Easter is also an opportunity for BP. PAR and BP. PAM to reflect on their role in building an inclusive and loving fellowship. They are expected to be role models in extending love and understanding to all people, regardless of differences. In communicating the meaning of Easter inclusively, BP. PAR and BP. PAM should pay attention to the needs and perspectives of the diverse members of the congregation. This involves a sensitive and responsive approach to the needs of the congregation, as well as efforts to create space for everyone to participate and contribute to the celebration of Easter.

Easter also emphasizes the importance of solidarity and caring for those in need. BP. PAR and BP. PAM are expected to engage in social and charitable activities that strengthen their commitment to service to others. This reflects the spirit of Christ's love that extends to all people, without exception. The inclusive meaning of Easter reflects the call to accept, love, and forgive all people unconditionally. This is the call for BP. PAR and BP. PAM to be agents of positive change in promoting inclusiveness, love, and peace within the congregation and the wider community. Through teaching, service, and example, they can broaden congregation members' horizons and

understanding of the universal message of salvation delivered by Easter.



Picture 5. BP PAR and PAM GKI Hermon Hollo Him

CONCLUSION

Community Service (PkM) activities for BP. PAR and BP. PAM GKI Hermon Hollo Him has achieved several important goals: *First*, building an understanding of BP. PAR and BP. PAM about the meaning of Easter as a basis for strengthening relationships with God and fellow humans in the context of moderate religious life. Values such as forgiveness, love, hope, and unity, which help shape attitudes of empathy, tolerance, and forgiveness in interactions with others, are understood by them.

Second, through PkM activities can broaden the insights and perspectives of BP. PAR and BP. PAM about moderate religious life, so they can strengthen their fellowship's perception of the values of simplicity, tolerance, respect for differences, social responsibility, and solidarity. This helps them to be open-minded and caring for the social environment. *Third*, through understanding the meaning of Easter inclusively, BP. PAR and BP. PAM can improve their understanding of creating an inclusive and loving environment within the congregation where every individual is valued and treated with compassion and understanding. Building an attitude of openness, acceptance, and inclusiveness among congregation members, as well as respecting the diversity of beliefs and traditions in the community.

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