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Mata Golo, the *Ke'o Rado* Ritual, and the Death of Jesus Christ on the Cross in the Perspective of the Ngada People in Central Flores Indonesia

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Abstract:

Most traditional societies have different conceptions of death and dying. The people of Ngada in Central Flores have a conception of death and dying called 'mata golo.' Mata golo is a bad death or a bloody death. This kind of death is caused by, for instance, a natural disaster, being killed by others, being killed in a traffic accident, etc. This article presents a theological inculturation view of Christ's death on the Cross as a sign of reconciliation and peace in the perspective of mata golo among the Ngada people and in that of the ke'o rado ritual that follows it. This ritual is meant to bring about reconciliation and establish peace between the members of the clan on the one hand and the dead and the ancestors on the other hand. By using the inculturation method, we first listen to the culture. For this, the qualitative research method is used by conducting field research observations, in-depth interviews with key informants, and literature studies of previous studies on mata golo. The result is then compared with the teachings and views of the Catholic Church on the death of Christ. These two themes are then synthesized to build a distinctive theological concept, which could be a contribution to future pastoral services.

Keywords:

mata golo, ke'o rado, death of Christ, peace, reconciliation, salvation

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Introduction

There is no experience that is more frightening for humans than death. Otto Hentz argues that the greatest challenge to human hope for the future is death.[1] This challenge is very existential and even paradoxical because death is closely related to human life itself. Although death itself is ultimately unavoidable, the particular human meaning we attribute to death has definite practical consequences.[2] For some people who are struggling with suffering, death is a frightening specter, but it can be highly anticipated and even warmly embraced as a 'liberator'. Others may look at death with optimism because they have had a long lifespan and therefore do not wish to prolong it. However, in general, human beings would rather embrace life than death. That's why death is frightening.[3]

The people of Ngada Flores also experience the fear of a definitive absence due to death as described above, especially when they are faced with the form of death which in the local language is called mata golo.[4] *Mata golo* is any form of death that is categorized as unnatural due to accidents, natural disasters, homicides, and suicides.[5] This kind of death is believed to bring disharmony, turmoil, and discomfort in the family and tribe. For that reason, they must carry out the *ke'o rado* ritual as soon as possible. The *ke'o rado* ritual is believed to be able to restore a sense of security for all family and tribal members and to bring peace to people who die of *mata golo*.[6]

If the concept of *mata golo* is then to be viewed from the perspective of faith, then there is at least one important problem that must be faced

[1] Otto Hentz, *Pengharapan Kristen*, translated by Sikun Pribadi (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2015), 75.

[2] David Albert Jones, *Approaching the End – A Theological Exploration of Death and Dying* (New York: Oxford University Press), 9.

[3] T. van Wyk, "To die and let die: a just theology of ceding space," (*Acta Teologia Suplementum*, Department of Systematic and Historical Theology, Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of Pretoria, 2020), 195-196.

[4] By "the Ngada Flores community" it is meant a group of people who have the same culture and language in the Ngada Regency (Flores) - East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. In this district, there are at least three different cultural clusters, namely the Ngada Culture, the So'a Culture and the Riung Culture. The Ngada culture believes in the existence of an unnatural death referred to as *'mata golo'*.

[5] Thomas Kila,"Interview" (Dadawea – Ngada, June 15, 2021). Another expression similar to *mata golo* and commonly used by the Ngada people is *mata ngeta* or *mata po'i*.

[6] Damianus Tuba Jaja, "Interview" (Radabata – Ngada, June 12, 2021)

by the Ngada Christian people, especially about the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. The historical fact has it that Jesus Christ died on the cross. His death was bloody and therefore in the 'context' of the Ngada people's understanding, it could also be categorized as a *mata golo*. Then, how should the Ngada people grasp the meaning of this kind of death for the development of their faith? This article looks at the meaning of *mata golo* itself which must be followed by the *ke'o rado* ritual and then proposes a way to position the death of Jesus Christ on the cross in the context of this kind of cultural understanding. This process can be read as an effort to inculturate the Christian faith so that the Ngada people will understand it more and especially to help them re-interpret *mata golo* seeing it not from the perspective of a curse, but rather from the perspective of salvation. For that purpose, it is of course necessary to first really understand the concept of *mata golo* and the *ke'o rado* ritual in the culture of the Ngada people.

As is in the case people in general, death too is one of the existential experiences for the Ngada people in their daily lives. This experience of death, as Michael Pickering maintains it, is central to cultural studies.[7] We employ an inculturation study method in order to be able to have access to the belief and attitudes of the Ngada people towards *mata golo*. Basically, this amounts to listening to their experiences about *mata golo* and *ka'e rado* ritual. This inculturation study method consists of several steps. First of all, qualitative research methods are applied here by conducting field observations and in-depth interviews with key informants. Second, the data is then analyzed through a semiotic study with a constructive and critical paradigm. Third, we compare these empirical findings with previous studies already written in order to further enrich the findings. The next fourth step is to reconcile the collected data with the Scripture-based teachings of the Catholic Church on the death of Christ. Theological synthesis becomes an important process in this article, finding useful theological contributions for the future contextualization of pastoral ministry.

MATA GOLO – DEATH CAUSED BY A CURSE

Until now, only few researchers have made an in-depth study of *mata golo* and the *ke'o rado* ritual in the Ngada Flores community, apart from

[7] Michael Pickering, 'Experience and the Social World,' in *Research Methods for Cultural Studies*, edited by Michael Pickering (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 17.

research by Susan Schröter (1998) and more recently from Emanuel Suka (2016). These two researchers used qualitative research with a phenomenological approach. They collected data by interviewing some trusted informants accompanied by several pictures of the *ke'o rado* ceremony and a description of the research location. We utilized the results of their research for the writing of this article. In our findings, they both agree that there are at least two types of death that are well known to the people of Ngada Flores, namely, *mata ade* and *mata golo*.[8] This is also in line with the opinion of the key informants we interviewed. However, another researcher, Yohanes Vianey Watu, found that the Ngada people also recognize another form of death, known as *gore gote*.[9] However, in this article, we focus our attention more on the two most common types of death, namely, *mata ade* and *mata golo*. *Mata ade* means a type or manner of death that is normal and natural. This kind of death is generally caused by illness and long-term suffering. Meanwhile, *mata golo* includes all forms of unnatural death. This kind of death can be caused by murder, accident, death due to natural disaster, and other external factors, such as: being struck by lightning, hit by a tree, or hit by a vehicle. The reactions of fear, sadness, and terror are always the first to arise in the minds of the Ngada people when they hear or know that a member of their tribe has a *mata golo*. This kind of death is always associated with their familial community both in the past, present, and future. *Mata golo* presents a threat and calamity to a large family.[10]

There is also an assumption that *mata golo* is a warning sign from ancestors who are angry of being ignored or forgotten by family members. As a result, these ancestors let the evil forces enter the house

[8] Susanne Schröter, "Death Rituals of the Ngada in Central Flores, Indonesia" (*Anthropos*, Bd. 93, H. 4./6. 1998), 417. See also in Emanuel Suka, 'Mata Golo Cultural Ritual (An Ethnographic Study on Lolo Tribe Customary Community in Ratogesa Village of Golewa Tengah Sub District of Ngada Flores Regency of Nusa Tenggara Timur)' (*Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol.6, No.22, 2016), 36.

[9] In fact, the Ngada people also know another form of death ritual called *gore gote*. From the research of Yohanes Vianey Watu, the *gore gote* death ritual is reserved for those who die in old age. Such a death should not be mourned, but should instead be celebrated with joy. Yohanes Vianey Watu, 'Penguatan Pembentukan Karakter Berbasis Permainan Berhitung Orang Ngada' (*Lumen Veritatis*, Vol. 10, No. 2, April 2020), 191.

[10] Susanne Schröter, "Death Rituals of the Ngada in Central Flores, Indonesia", 419. Cf. Damianus Tuba Jaja, "Interview" (Radabata - Ngada, June 20, 2021)

and kill the inhabitants. Schröter's research reinforced this assumption that *mata golo* is caused by evil forces, namely evil spirits.[11] These evil spirits have always been in a relentless battle with their ancestors. If the ancestors are not respected, ignored, or forgotten, then they will allow these evil spirits or forces to enter the traditional house and kill the inhabitants.[12] Herein lies the need for the *ke'o rado* ritual to be carried out. The purpose of this ritual is to make peace with the ancestors and together with them hold the *polo* (evil spirits) accountable and kill them. In so doing, the whole family is safe again and will not experience similar deaths in the future.

THE *KE'O RADO* RITUAL: AN EFFORT TO RESTORE, PREVENT CALAMITY, AND RECONCILIATION

Ke'o rado is etymologically formed from two words, namely *ke'o* and *rado*. *Ke'o* means to clean or cut. The equivalent of the word *ke'o* which has a similar meaning is *ki'u* or *po'i*. However, in connection with the restoration ritual in the case of *mata golo*, the word *ke'o* is more commonly used. *Ke'o* in this context means cutting the line of *mata golo*, so it does not infect other family members. Meanwhile the word *rado* means throw or throw away. Concerning *mata golo*, the word *rado* refers to the act of removing all that is evil that has caused an unnatural death of a family member.[13]

[11] Susanne Schröter, "Death Rituals of the Ngada in Central Flores, Indonesia", 419. Schröter concludes from her observations that the *mata golo* is the result of the evil action of the second group of the innocent, the malevolent spirit. There are two categories of *polo* in the Ngada's cosmology. First, *polo* which refers to a particular human, and second *polo* as a spirit. *Polo* in human form is always associated with people who practice black magic or witchcraft. Meanwhile, *polo* in the form of evil spirits is the one that destroys human life. Cf. Paul Arndt. Wörterbuch der Ngadhasprache (Posieux, Friburgiae: Studia Institute Anthropos, 1961), 428.

[12] Damianus Tuba Jaja, "Interview" (Radabata – Ngada, June 20, 2021)

[13] Susanne Schröter, "Death Rituals of the Ngada in Central Flores, Indonesia", 422. Cf. Thomas Kila, "Interview" (Dadawea – Ngada, June 28, 2021.The stages in the *ke'o rado* ritual here are adopted from Susanne Schröter's own research on *mata golo* in several places in the Ngada region from 1994-1998. Schröter's particular attention in this research is the interaction between groups within a tribe/clan with other supernatural existences or forces. Included in this last group are ancestors and spirits. In addition, Schröter also examined the influence of the Catholic faith brought by the missionaries on the Ngada people's concept of *mata golo* itself. To strengthen this research, we also interviewed a number of key informants to clarify the order of the *ke'o rado* ritual.

The main purpose of carrying out the *ke'o rado* ritual is to restore relations with the ancestors who have been damaged. The ancestors are asked to forgive the mistakes of their descendants and always protect them from the attack of evil spirits (*polo*). In this line of understanding, the Ngada people, especially the members of the tribe of someone who suffered from *mata golo*, believe that the *ke'o rado* ritual provides an assurance that similar events will never happen to them again in the future. Therefore, this *ke'o rado* ritual must be carried out very carefully. The steps that have been set should not be missed.[14] Those stages are as follows.

The first stage is called *pai tibo,* and *zi'a ura manu – ngana*. The *ke'o rado* ritual begins with an act of divination, to seek and find the reason for the ancestral curse that resulted in the unnatural death. Two forms of divination commonly used are: *pa'i tibo* and *zi'a ura manu* or *zi'a ura ngana*. At the time of *pa'i tibo*, pieces of bamboo (tibo) are placed in the fireplace until slightly burned and split open. After that, all pieces of bamboo can be taken as an affirmation or rejection of the questions previously asked. Meanwhile, in the ritual of *zi'a ura manu* or *zi'a ura ngana*, someone who is experienced enough usually will examine the veins of chickens or pigs that have been ritually killed. If the results of this second divination turn out to be rejected, then *'pa'i tibo'* will be prioritized.

The pieces of the bamboo are representations of the bodies of the ancestors and the prophecy itself means first of all to establish contact with them. They must agree on the expected restoration of the *ke'o rado* ritual and each of the persons previously appointed to preside over this ritual. Until the end of the *ke'o rado* ritual, communication between the ancestors and their descendants will continue through *zi'a ura manu/ ngana* and *pa'i tibo*. At this first stage, the emphasis is more on efforts to identify the cause of the mata golo. In general, the identification will end with the question: '*polo punu kau go lobo apa*' (*polo*- an evil spirit please tell what causes it). This question is asked after a series of previous questions posed to the ancestors called *keku*.[15] The ritual presiders and

[14] Susanne Schröter, "Death Rituals of the Ngada in Central Flores, Indonesia", 423-426.

[15] *Keku* is a shout consisting of rhetorical questions. *Keku* starts from the traditional house/ residential house, along the road, to the cemetery and is carried out during the *tibo* process. *Keku* is only done by *mali* or trusted people. For example: *Kaju e…..kau da bodu puu zeta tolo nio da pu'u apa, da lobo apa.. da lima gheso gho da polo dhepo gho* (Kaju.. (name of the victim)…you fell

all the members of the tribe would eagerly await an answer from their ancestors. This hope is different from the question asked to the *polo – suanggi* (evil spirit). The order of the questions is as follows:

Kami dia we tana	we ask now
Miu ma'e da dela	you ancestor of the house
Punu mumu	reveal with the mouth
Poza lema	tell with the tongue
Wi punu da kedhi banga	reveal the young
Ano zuwu	we follow
Ano kede ano denge	we listen attentively

In addition to the requests addressed to the ancestors, the following questions are also asked to the evil spirit (*polo*):

Polo punu kau go lobo apa *Polo,* say the reason[16]

From the above expression, it is clear that the Ngada people still believe in the presence of their deceased ancestors and their role in life, especially when they are faced with *mata golo*. Why does *mata golo* occur? Only the ancestors know the cause. These ancestors have always looked after family members and they are now invited to join the surviving family members in questioning *polo* as the party accused of causing *mata golo*.

An important point during this first stage is that the ritual leader seeks to reveal the faults of the tribal members personally or communally. Usually, the error is formulated in rhetorical questions and the ancestors can reject or accept the form of error expressed. Mistakes are generally related to violations of established customary norms, for example, the procedure for building a traditional house or violations of marriage law, such as an incestuous marriage. If the wrong act is known, then all the members of the tribe must then make an oath in ritual language to

from a coconut tree, what caused it? It is because of not strong enough to withstand or because of the devil's actions?). Emanuel Suka, 'Mata Golo Cultural Ritual (An Ethnographic Study on Lolo Tribe Customary Community in Ratogesa Village of Golewa Tengah Sub District of Ngada Flores Regency of Nusa Tenggara Timur), 37.

[16] Susanne Schröter, "Death Rituals of the Ngada in Central Flores, Indonesia", 423. Cf. Damianus Tuba Jaja and Petrus Tuga Gale, "Interview" (Radabata – Ngada, June 28, 2021).

return to the correct law, which has been passed down by the ancestors. This first stage ends with a banquet together.

The second stage, *ema tana ine* (father asks mother). This stage is a welcoming ceremony made on the second day after finding the reason why one had suffered from *mata golo*. This welcoming ceremony is conveyed to all the married couples in the tribe who have been present, especially those who have come from far away. All are required to wear traditional clothes to officially start this *ke'o rado* ritual called *sega ringa*. This *ema tana ine* ritual (father asks mother) also means to welcome every deceased married couple from the tribal group. As soon as all family members who still have ties to the deceased come and gather together, both living and dead, a solution must be found so that the soul of the deceased can participate. The representation of the deceased is also made by placing a '*tobo muku*' (banana stem) which is hung from a bamboo stick planted outside the s*a'o*. They all then asked for the presence of the ancestors with several customary calls (*keku*) which are uttered while stamping their feet and singing, as follows:

Ine…ine	Mother…Mother
Miu ulu nga tutu toro	Your head is bound with red cloth
Ine miu da gesso apa?	Mother, what is the reason for?
Ine…ine	Mother…Mother
Go bhara da ike beke	white chains on the chest
Da moe de, da moe de	why, why
Ine…ine miu punu si	Mother…Mother, reveal, please
Miu po si	Speak, please
Kami wenga to'o	We want to start
Miu posa si	Speak, please
Miu punu si	Reveal, please
Kami nenga dhuju puru pu'u	We want to finish everything[17]

These words express the hope that the female ancestors will convey to all members of the tribe what the main cause of this unnatural death (*mata golo*) is. When the cause is found, all family members hope to find recovery and peace again. In addition to requests addressed to female

[17] Susanne Schröter, "Death Rituals of the Ngada in Central Flores, Indonesia", 424.

ancestors, the *ema tana ine* ritual also asks several questions to male ancestors, as follows:

Ema…Ema	Father…Father
Kami ta da toro	We are wearing the red scarf
Kami wenga keo wenga rado	We want to carry out the *ke'o rado*
Ema…ema	Father…Father
Le bhara da ike beke	The white chains on the chest
Da wa'i da lau	Someone is lying there with outstretched legs
Dia da tuka lenga zeta	with the belly upwards
Mai si	Come on
Kita wenga penga ke'o, penga rado	We want to carry out the *ke'o rado*
Kita nga penga podhu	Let's sit together
We ulu mogo	Put our heads together
Kita wenga dhoro	We want out
Kita wenga keo wenga rado	We want to hold a ke'o rado
Mai si	Come on[18]

The purpose of this petition is the same, namely to request the male ancestors to give reasons that cause a member of the tribe to suffer from an unnatural death (*mata golo*). At the end of this appeal to the female and male ancestors, the ritual leader exclaims:

Ine…ine	Mother…Mother
Sa susu mite	You black chicken
Kau ngodho…kau ngodho	Come here…come here
Ema…ema	Father…Father
Sa lalu toro	You red cock
Kau ngodho…kau ngodho	Come here…Come here[19]

All of these requests will be granted if there are natural signs that

[18] Susanne Schröter, "Death Rituals of the Ngada in Central Flores, Indonesia", 425.

[19] Susanne Schröter, "Death Rituals of the Ngada in Central Flores, Indonesia". Cf. Damianus Tuba Jaja and Petrus Tuga Gale, 'Interview' (Radabata – Ngada, June 28, 2021)

are seen as symbols of certainty, such as butterflies or birds. If these symbols appear, then the group of men who attend the ceremony will immediately run to the forest or a place some distance away from the traditional house that has been determined by prophecy the night before to bury the *tobo muku* (banana trunk) or what is commonly called '*tane tobo muku*.' On the way to the forest or a designated place outside the village, the men exclaim while carrying *'tobo muku'* with repeated words: *kau bani – kau bani*. This speech is an encouragement and support for the victim of *mata golo* to be brave (bani) against the evil forces (*polo*) that have caused his or her death. This dramatic confrontation will also end with the appearance of certain signs and symbols such as butterflies. If this symbol appears, it will be captured and destroyed so that it no longer interferes with and contacts the soul of the person dying of *mata golo*.

This part of the ceremony will be closed with a request to the soul of the person of *mata golo*: *kau da lau witu bhou – lau keri toro – kau talo nga'o sewiwi* (you who (are) in the clump of reeds – who (are) in the red weeds – answer me with a word).[20] This statement reveals that the soul of the person of *mata golo* is still on earth. This concept builds on the belief that just as the body cannot immediately be brought to its final resting place, the soul cannot reach its final destination immediately after death. This belief was once expressed by Robert Hertz that only through a special ritual, the soul of the dead person will enter the world of the dead.[21] The restlessness of the wandering soul is now united with *'tobo muku'* and finally finds a safe place under the earth with him. The expression *'da lau witu bhou - lau keri toro'* is a sign of a comfortable place in the wilderness, far from human habitation. After this series of ceremonies, this group of men will return to the *sa'o* where the women await them with food that has been cooked and is ready to be served.

The third stage of the *ke'o rado* ritual is the so-called *bhara pa,* and *bhara zo*. This ceremony takes place as soon as the group of men returns from the forest and enters the *sa'o*. The women who did not attend the ceremony in the forest prepared a new dish. Immediately after the banquet, there begins the ceremony called *bhara pa and bhara zo*, a confrontational act during the last few moments with *polo* which has entered into the *sa'o*. Usually, reed branches brought from the forest

[20] Susanne Schröter, "Death Rituals of the Ngada in Central Flores, Indonesia", 426.

[21] Robert Hertz, *Death and the Right Hand* (Great Britain: The University Press, 1960), 34.

are planted around the stove (fireplace), then the ends are joined with eggshells. This arrangement symbolizes the evil forces that are bound and will be thrown back into the forest after the ceremony. Then a member of the tribe, approved by the ancestors, begins to play a piece of crushed bamboo (*regha*). The *regha* is hit slowly so that it makes a rattling sound. This cannot be stopped until the ritual is over, protecting all those present from the evil spirits.

After that, the door of the *sa'o* is closed so that no one else can enter and leave. Those who were in the *sa'o* also begin to sing a short song, which is addressed to the *polo* and the soul of the deceased, respectively. The contents of the song generally contain ridicule and insults to *polo*. After singing for a while they stand up one by one and start dancing while holding a sword (*sau*) in their right hand. The dancing group is only men and this act symbolizes the birth of new hope and mutual agreement for a peaceful life ahead. This dancing and singing are then followed by throwing away, as soon as possible, all the materials (reeds placed around the fireplace) called *bhara pa* and *bhara zo*. As part of this ritual, the group of men would once again hastily return to the forest and throw away everything that was assumed to have been polluted by evil forces, apart from the reeds. This ritual is a cleansing ceremony, in which all evil influences or forces are removed from the house.[22]

The fourth stage is the so-called *ike pebha,* and *wela polo*. These two ceremonies are carried out by mutual agreement and take place on the third day. *Ike pebha* means to tie very tightly, whereas *wela polo* means to kill *polo*. One of these two ceremonies can be chosen, also decided by mutual agreement. The *ike pebha* ceremony is held both at the *ngadhu* and *bhaga*, as well as in front of the *sa'o*. This ceremony consists mostly of rhymes accompanied by sacrifices and prophecies as follows:

Dia go ike mu dhenga	Let's tie tightly
Pewa mu dhenga	Bind tightly
Kami wenga tana	We will ask
Dia kami wenga le kezu pu'u	We will tear out the root of the evil
We luli mema	We will talk here
Kami we gugu gazi	We will hunt him
Bodha we mara pugu	Until he stumbles

[22] Susanne Schröter, "Death Rituals of the Ngada in Central Flores, Indonesia", 426.

Bodha we dhuju	Until we have caught him
Ngi'i go tobo golo	Because of this dead body
Kami bodha we luli	We have to recover it
We wela mata	will kill him
Kau gubhu sewidha	You of the same roof
Lenga sewidha	The same bamboo roof
Wi la'a wela polo	Go to kill the polo
Gazi bodha we mata golo	He must die the *mata golo*
Sama ne'e X…	exactly like X…
Ma'e re Ma'e weje	Don't deny, cheat not
Kami wenga wela	We will kill[23]

The *wela polo* ritual is more of a dynamic ritual full of movement and dance. Once again the men run hastily through the village, then into the forest with a *sau* (sword) in the right hand to kill supernatural beings (*evil forces*) symbolically while shouting battle cries. When returning to the village, they will be accompanied by one or two women, carrying spears and shields (*gili*). The battle ends when the group re-enters the traditional house. Before entering the traditional house they will dance and jump over the *sau* used to kill evil forces (*polo*). The *sau* (sword) must be struck with another *sau* until it produces a kind of spark or a small flash. The *sau* that is passed and hit represents the evil power (*polo*) that has been eliminated.

The *ke'o rado* ritual will end with the summoning of the ancestors (*kumi toro and his followers*) to re-enter the traditional house. After that, the *sa'o* is closed tightly. All pieces of bamboo used during the *ke'o rado* ritual, skins and bones from sacrificial animals, and *wuli* symbolized by corn cobs must be immediately disposed of in an undisclosed location in the forest. This ritual is called *se'a kula loka toko*. According to Emanuel Suka, this ceremony is also called *se de ze'e* (getting rid of or throwing away the bad). That means all food scraps and utensils or tools used during the *ke'o rado* ritual are disposed of in one of the designated places.[24] Then, the sprinkling of all those present with coconut water

[23] Susanne Schröter, "Death Rituals of the Ngada in Central Flores, Indonesia", 427.

[24] Emanuel Suka, 'Mata Golo Cultural Ritual (An Ethnographic Study on Lolo Tribe Customary Community in Ratogesa Village of Golewa Tengah Sub District of Ngada Flores Regency of Nusa

ends this series of *ke'o rado* rituals. Coconut water is believed to be a means of cleansing/purification and a blessing, especially for the close family of the person who died of *mata golo*.[25]

In general, this *ke'o rado* ritual is intended to honor and make peace with ancestors and re-examine past mistakes. Like other traditional ceremonies, the *ke'o rado* ritual creates space without time limits. This means that the battle against *polo* and the forces of evil can only be recognized through an affirmation of limitations, which involves the intervention of spiritual powers for a limited period of time. Only after this *ke'o rado* ritual is the belief revived that ancestors have been respected, that people with *mata golo* have found peace, that *polo* (evil powers or evil spirits) have been banished from the actual human life.

Semiotic analysis for building a local theology

Insofar as the view of *mata golo* and the *ke'o rado* ritual is concerned, we put ourselves first as the insider who tries to understand this experience of death. Firstly, the Ngada people understand that the human soul does not perish, but remains alive and has a relationship with all living members of their family. From their view of *mata golo* and the need for the *ke'o rado* ritual, this belief is clear. The souls of people who have died of *mata golo* must be reconciled with their ancestors and members of their family or tribe. Furthermore, the Ngada people also believe that their ancestors, whether male or female, always look after and care for them throughout their lives. Respect for ancestors, for example in the ritual of *ke'o rado* by calling their names is proof of the belief that their souls are still alive and dwell with all members of the tribe. This concept is similar to the Christian view of the human soul remaining united with the body even after one has passed away.

In fact, in the experience of the resurrection, the body remains united with the soul in this new reality, as stated in the instructions of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith article 3, as quoted by David J. Norman:

> "…it is the hope of the faithful to see our bodies resurrected in glory. In burying the bodies of the dead, the Church confirms her

Tenggara Timur), 39. Cf. Damianus Tuba Jaja, 'Interview" (Radabata – Ngada, June 20, 2021)

[25] Susanne Schröter, "Death Rituals of the Ngada in Central Flores, Indonesia", 429. Cf. Thomas Kila, "Interview" (Dadawea – Ngada, June 15, 2021)

> faith in the resurrection of the flesh; the body made of the flesh is as integral to the notion of the human person as the immortal soul to the enduring quality of personhood. The body that died (and was buried) is the one that will rise."[26]

Of course, this understanding is in line with the beliefs of the Ngada community, although it still needs to be clarified and studied more deeply.

Secondly, the Ngada people also believe that death called *mata golo* is the result of a crime or mistake committed, either by the person who died or by all members of the tribe or their family in the past. That means no death just happens without cause or reason. The people of Ngada always try to find out the main cause of death, especially the death called *mata golo*. In short, for them, a *mata golo* must be caused by wrongdoing committed against their ancestors, such that the ancestors too get angry and allow the evil spirits to destroy the order of communal living. That wrongdoing must be sought and found. This goes in line with the concept of death in the Christian perspective, which is also believed to be the result of sin. One of the wages of sin is death (*Gaudium et Spes* [GS], 18 and Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC], no. 404). Sins must be found and confessed and forgiven to get salvation.

Based on the two reasons mentioned above, the *ke'o rado* ritual that is carried out is driven by two main reasons. First, to send the souls of people who died in the case of *mata golo* to a peaceful place. The place is believed by the Ngada people to be a place where there are no longer any evil forces. For that reason, *polo* (evil spirit) must be killed and destroyed, as shown in the *wela polo* ceremony described above. Second, to rebuild harmonious relations with the ancestors. *Mata golo* is conceived of as the result of ancestral anger towards living family members, who no longer pay their respects to them. The ancestors also allow the evil spirits to attack their living family members until they die unnaturally (*mata golo*). The *ke'o rado* ceremony is expected to reopen the door of forgiveness of the ancestors for the living members of the family and thus guarantee the peace of the soul of the deceased.

From this point of view, there are several things that we underline. Firstly, on the one hand, the Ngada people perceive *mata golo* as a death due to a curse from their ancestors. That is why the bodies of the dead are not allowed to enter the *sa'o*. Likewise, at funerals, people who died

[26] David J. Norman, 'Resurrection of the Body: Continuity in Christ through Death in Christ' (*Irish Theological Quarterly*, 00 (0), 2021), 3.

in the case of *mata golo* are not allowed to be buried in a public cemetery with those who died naturally.[27] *Mata golo* is still perceived as death that is difficult to accept normally, as in Christian understanding.

Secondly, the role of the ancestors here is very decisive. They need to be respected and their names need to be called upon to explain the reason why someone suffers from *mata golo*. If the *ke'o rado* ritual is not carried out properly, then there is still the possibility of a *mata golo* occurring in the future. This is the reason why *mata golo* still incites fear. The ancestors may still allow the evil spirits to come to interfere or cause another *mata golo*. Thus it appears that the determinants of salvation here are in the hands of the ancestors who must be served and respected properly through the *ke'o rado* ritual. This point is certainly contrary to the Christian concept of salvation, where Christ died once and for all for the salvation of mankind. However, according to the Ngada people, the concept of salvation can also serve as a bridge for the process of inculturation of the faith.

Thirdly, related to the role of the evil spirits (*polo*), the evil spirit here is seen as an executor who takes human life to the point of causing *mata golo* through natural or material means.[28] Evil spirits can only work with the permission of ancestors who are not respected or feel offended. The people of Ngada strongly believe this. That is why they must always pay attention to the ways of building *sa'o*, or of maintaining and caring for all traditional house equipment, and of following the procedures for working on *Ngadhu* and *Bhaga* as the symbols of the presence of male and female ancestors. In the *ke'o rado* ritual, the ancestors are called to join with the family members to ask the reason for the death. This idea can pave a way for a process of inculturation the faith about the role of the evil spirits and the forces of darkness that draw humans to sin such that they experience death. Who must be called upon to eliminate these forces of darkness? The Church believes that only God in Christ can provide certainty for complete liberation and salvation (CCC, No. 1).

In our opinion, the three points presented above provide an opportunity for building an inculturation theology for the Ngada people when they

[27] Emanuel Suka, 'Mata Golo Cultural Ritual (An Ethnographic Study on Lolo Tribe Customary Community in Ratogesa Village of Golewa Tengah Sub District of Ngada Flores Regency of Nusa Tenggara Timur), 36-37.

[28] Susanne Schröter, "Death Rituals of the Ngada in Central Flores, Indonesia", 418-419.

face the *mata golo* incident that befalls their family. The method to be used here, in our opinion, must be the translation method that Robert Schreiter introduce, as quoted by Emanuel Martasudjita.[29] Here the Christian belief about the death of Christ needs to be translated into a new situation, namely the cultural context of the Ngada people. The point is that *mata golo* and the *ke'o rado* ritual can serve as a bridge to understand Christian teachings about death, its cause, and the ultimate goal of the human soul. Most importantly, they serve as a bridge for a deeper inculturation, namely, how *mata golo* and the *ke'o rado* ritual in the culture of the Ngada people find their fullness and fulfillment in Jesus Christ, because 'He as a perfect human being saves everyone and encapsulates everything in Himself' (GS 45).[30] Following this line of thought, in what follows, we will make a theological analysis of *mata golo* and the *ke'o rado* ritual from the perspective of Christian faith in the death of Christ on the cross. Furthermore, we will also attempt a synthesis so as to find a common ground and to identify points of difference as well as to propose some practical pastoral recommendations for the process of inculturation of Christian faith for the Ngada people.

The death of Jesus Christ and the concept of *mata golo* of the Ngada people

If *mata golo* is understood as unnatural death, such as bloody death, accidental death, and murder, then the death of Jesus Christ can be literally referred to as a *mata golo*. It is so for the simple reason that Christ died on the cross, as the Scriptures say. But is this inference tenable? It is surely not easy to understand the incompatibility of meaning between these two cases of death. Theological search for inculturation of faith is therefore very urgent at this point to understand the meaning of Christ's death on the cross.

The main point of difference is about the reality of the suffering and death that Jesus experienced. Namely, that the suffering and death of Jesus was not something that happened by chance, but something that had been predicted and even known by Jesus himself in advance. According to Piotr Roszak, this awareness and will to die are completely present

[29] Emanuel Martasudjita. *Teologi Inkulturasi – perayaan injilYesus Kristus di bumi Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2021), 283.

[30] Emanuel Martasudjita. *Teologi Inkulturasi – perayaan injilYesus Kristus di bumi Indonesia.,* 285.

in Christ himself, both divinely and humanly. There is no contradiction whatsoever between these two wills.[31] Old Testament writers, such as the prophet Isaiah, predicted the suffering and death of the Servant of Yahweh to save his people. In the New Testament, this prophecy is fulfilled in Christ. Three times in the writings of the evangelists Jesus spoke frankly about the reality of the suffering and death he was about to experience (cf. Jn 3:14; 8:28; 12:32,34).

In John 3:14, Jesus spoke about the Son of Man being lifted on the cross. The statements about His imminent death prove that Jesus was well aware of the form of death He would face. This death was meant to save humanity. Most importantly, Jesus faced His death freely, based on His own choice to remain faithful to God's will. For Karl Rahner, as quoted by Julito Paraguya Jr., this has an important message. Every Christian who dies in Christ also has transcendental freedom which leads to a united relationship with God forever, even after their life in this world.[32]

So, what did the suffering and death on the cross mean to Jesus himself? The letter to the Hebrews gives a very clear answer: "In his human life he offered prayers and supplications with wailing and groaning to him who was able to save him from death, and because of his piety he was heard, and though he was Son, he has learned obedience from what he suffered" (Hebrews 5:7-8). The suffering and death of Jesus is a manifestation of the will of God His Father to save all humanity.[33] Put it more deeply, it can be understood that the death of Jesus was intended to establish the kingdom of God. Jesus demonstrated total obedience to the will of the Father not through power, but rather through the powerlessness of a child.

However, Jesus' death was also caused by the reality of sin which binds humanity. Sin divides and kills all humans. Furthermore, all humans will die because of sin.[34] Christ's tragic death on the cross was meant

[31] Piotr Roszak, 'Aquinas on Christ's Will to Die and Our Salvation (*Nova et vetera*, Volume 19, Number 1, Winter 2021), 208.

[32] Julito Paraguya Jr, 'Everyday dying: Karl Rahner's theology of death (*Pacifica*, 26(1), 2012), 81.

[33] Raymond E. Brown. *Christ in the Gospels of the Liturgical Year*, edited by Ronald D. Witherup (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2008), 168.

[34] Alfred McBride, O.Praem., *Images of Jesus – Menyelami 10 Rahasia Pribadi Yesus*, translated by

to break the bondage of sin and defeat the power of death. Because sin does separate humans from God and death is one of its consequences, as Julito Paraguya Jr. put it, 'sin leads humanity away from God, and death is its devastating punishment.'[35] God can indeed choose an easy way to defeat evil, death, and sin, without needing to be killed and died on the cross. However, he rejected it. The choice to suffer and die confirms God's solidarity with the experience of death that shackles humanity, including those who have *mata golo*. There is an urgent need to explain the meaning of Jesus' death so that comparisons can be made with the understanding of *mata golo* and the *ke'o rado* ritual of the Ngada people.

In our opinion, the death of Jesus on the cross can be used to interpret *mata golo* and the *ke'o rado* ritual for the Ngada people. First, Jesus died to fulfill God's work and plan of salvation. Since the time of the Prophets, God has revealed the fulfillment of His work and plan of salvation in His Only Begotten Son. And Jesus of Nazareth was at the end of a series of efforts by God to introduce himself through the formation and education of the nation of Israel. Since the call of Abraham and through Abraham as well, God has intended to form a nation that puts all of its life and existence on trust in God. But the history of salvation proves that it is difficult for humans to put total trust in God. Israel fell into sin. God then offered salvation and deliverance to His people until He sent His own Son Jesus Christ. Although His presence and liberation mission had to clash with the Jewish religious leaders, Jesus did not back down. He continued to present the image of a merciful God to the weak and sinful humans. Jesus did not even hesitate to forgive sins. As a consequence, Jesus was removed, arrested, tortured, crucified, and died based on various charges, such as blasphemy.

Here the punishment on the cross seems to have been chosen by the Jewish religious leaders to emphasize that Jesus was truly a blasphemer, a man cursed and cast out by God Himself. For according to the law, a blasphemer and those who mislead the people must be put to death. God's attitude that did not take Jesus down from the cross at the time of His suffering and death, further confirms the belief of the Jews that Jesus died because of opposing and blaspheming God. To the Jews, Jesus was seen as a man of disaster, a man who defied religious norms and was even accused of destroying temples. Therefore, He had to be destroyed.

Silvester Doni and Feliks L. (Jakarta: Obor, 1993), 159-160.

[35] Julito Paraguya Jr., 'Everyday dying: Karl Rahner's theology of death', 80.

In the Jewish view, Jesus' death was a natural consequence of resistance to the law.[36] In short, this is a cursed death that can be called *mata golo*.

Jesus' death, as something according to God's plan and will, could have been unacceptable, had God not resurrected Him. It was the resurrection that opened the eyes and hearts of the disciples that Jesus was indeed justified by God.[37] He is the true messenger who introduces God and His will as a liberator. God himself wanted His Son to die on the cross. This is a bloody death that could have been categorized as a curse if there had not been a resurrection.

Second, the death of Jesus is penance for sin. In the Old Testament, the ritual of blood played an important role in all sacrifices. Regarding the meaning of blood, the writer of Leviticus formulates it as follows: "The life of a creature is in him, and I have given the blood to you on the altar to make peace for your souls, for blood makes peace through the soul. That is why I said to the Israelites, one of you shall not drink blood" (Leviticus 17:11-12).

The central idea in this quote does not at all imply that God is angry because of man's sin. Neither does it imply that God must be appeased by the blood offered by man, or by the death of a sacrificial animal in exchange for the man who should be put to death. On the contrary, God sees how humans have been corrupted and weakened because of that sin. Therefore, God as the owner and source of life seeks to restore human life by offering a source of life for humans in blood sacrifices. The sacrifice here becomes very evident in Jesus who voluntarily went to Jerusalem to accept the suffering and death He already knew and allowed Himself to be sacrificed.[38] In this blood sacrifice, God gave His own, namely the blood as a symbol of life, on the altar, so that people may be reconciled through life, strengthened in their lives by the gift of life from God.

Based on this understanding, the death of Jesus on the cross can be interpreted as a perfect sacrifice. On the cross, Jesus as the Son of

[36] Raymond E. Brown. '*Christ in the Gospels of the Liturgical Year',* 165.

[37] Georg Kirchberger. 'Salib Kristus, Derita Manusia, dan Kehendak Allah', in *Jatuh? Bangun! Jati Diri Kristiani dalam Sorotan,* edited by Georg Kirchberger (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1993), 102-104

[38] Fleming Rudledge. *The crucifixion: understanding the death of Jesus Christ* (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2015), 310.

God who knew no sin was willing to become a victim of human cruelty by shedding His blood as a source of a new life for humans who had been converted by His death on the cross and by His resurrection. It is this blood sacrifice that, according to Fleming Rutledge, is the main message of salvation through Jesus Christ. Without this blood sacrifice, the declaration of Jesus' death would lose its meaning, both theologically and ethically.[39] The death of Jesus on the cross proves that God is willing to be the source of life for humans. God never ceases to want people to "have life and have it in abundance" (John 10:10). Jesus was killed on the cross so that he could redeem all humanity.[40] This concept is different from *mata golo* which is always perceived as the result of *ante mortem* sins and mistakes in the tribe or family that have not been restored. One who dies in the case of *mata golo* is the victim of mistakes and sins that one clearly does not know about. Furthermore, their death has not become a reparation for sins and mistakes. It will even remain a curse, as long as the *ke'o rado* ritual has not been carried out.

A synthesis for the process of inculturation of the Christian faith and practical recommendations

To sum up, what we have said so far, there are several points of agreement and of difference, when it comes to making a comparison between the death, *mata golo,* in the view of the Ngada people, and the death of Christ on the cross. There are at least two meeting points that can be the subjects of analysis. The first relates to the cause of death. The Christian faith recognizes that Christ's death on the cross was the result of human sins. Christ gave himself to a tragic death on the cross to deliver the world from all evil (cf. Gal 1:4). According to Nicolas Corte, "the most realistic way to understand the life and especially the death of Jesus is none other than to understand it as the ultimate battle between the forces of darkness spearheaded by the devil and the Savior of humanity."[41] Here the death of Jesus on the cross is a form of His solidarity with those who had to die because of sin, because of the power of darkness, even though He was without sin. Through His death, Jesus

[39] Fleming Rudledge. *The crucifixion: understanding the death of Jesus Christ,* 304.

[40] Ladislaus Boros. *Living in Hope – Future Perspective in Christian Thought*, translated by W.J. O'Hara (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), 31.

[41] Nicolas Corte. *Who is the Devil?* (Manchester: Sophia Institute Press, 2013), 35.

became one with humanity.[42] More than that, with His resurrection Christ, revealed the true destiny of mankind, namely to live with God forever. He is the God of the living and not the God of the dead.

The idea above can enlighten the Ngada people when they have to deal with *mata golo*. *Mata golo* is often assumed to be a consequence of violating customary law or loss of respect for ancestors. The Ngada people believe that *mata golo* is caused by evil forces or evil spirits who are always in constant conflict with their ancestors. The loss of respect for their ancestors causes the ancestors to be 'wrathful' and allow the evil spirits to destroy one's life with a cruel death, namely *mata golo*. With the *ke'o rado* ritual, all families can be sure that the victims of *mata golo* and all those left behind have been guaranteed life and salvation.

The second meeting point concerns how to deal with the victim. Jesus died on the cross as a sacrifice for the sins of humanity. Jesus' death on the cross was not an accidental event, but an event that had been predicted and even known to Jesus himself. In the eyes of His opponents, especially the Jewish religious leaders, Jesus' death was the consequence of "violations" of the law. For them, Jesus' presence brought disaster and calamity. On the other hand, for the believers, the life and death of Jesus on the cross is the most serious warning for reconciliation and repentance. The cross now becomes the tree of eternal life, reminiscent of the tree depicted in the Book of Revelation as being in 'the paradise of God' whose fruit would feed the faithful and whose leaves were for 'the healing of the nations.[43] This kind of idea might be able to refresh the understanding of the Ngada people regarding those who suffered from *mata golo*. Those who experience *mata golo*, are often considered to be the bearers of disaster, a catastrophe for all members of the family. This assumption is completely unfair, considering that the victim who suffers from *mata golo* does not know what wrong he/she has committed. The fate of those who are bullied is almost the same as the experience of Jesus himself. He was judged by the Jewish religious leaders as a carrier of disaster and a curse for the entire nation, then he was killed without accurate proof of guilt. To them, Jesus' death was the death of a condemned person. Thus, the death of Jesus can be understood as a

[42] Niko Syukur Dister. *Teologi Sistematika II – Ekonomi Keselamatan*. (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2004), 589.

[43] Douglas J. Davies. *The Theology of Death* (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 26.

form of solidarity with those who suffered from *mata golo*.

Besides the aforementioned two meeting points, there are also at least two different points that are worth studying. The First is about the awareness of death itself. If Jesus as the Son of God had known His tragic death on the cross, then it is not so with the victim of *mata golo* unless he/she intends to commit suicide. *Mata golo* is not wanted or known by anyone. Therefore, this death must be read again in the light of faith. The Christian faith has it that only God alone can know with certainty human suffering and death. Jesus is God and He knows the exact moment of His death. The death of a human being is under the authority and power of God. God has power over death and life, including a person who died in the case of *mata golo*. So, this death does not have to be a terrible and frightening event for the whole family. The *ke'o rado* ritual can still be performed, but no longer for the reasons of fear of a curse or similar death in the future. By understanding the Christian faith in death as mentioned earlier, the *ke'o rado* ritual can be read as a liberation ceremony that must be completed by faith in the death of Christ on the cross.

The second point of difference relates to the purpose and meaning of death. The death of Jesus in the Christian faith is believed to be a salvific death. Jesus died first to fulfill the work and plan of salvation of God the Father. It is a God who from the beginning of the creation of the world wanted human salvation. The same will was also perfectly united in Jesus.[44] This stands in stark contrast to the fact of *mata golo*. *Mata golo* for the Ngada people is perceived as a 'bad death'. It is regarded as a death that brings fear and disaster to all family members left behind. The problem now is how to direct the concept of 'salvation' in the case of *mata golo*. For Ngada people, salvation is obtained by performing the *ke'o rado* ritual. This idea can be integrated with the faith in the death of Jesus on the cross, which in itself is a sign and warning for humans to always repent and be reconciled with God. Thus, *mata golo* is also a warning for the family to immediately carry out a restoration or cleansing ceremony not only into the family communally but also into each individual. Ritual restoration (*ke'o rado*) is carried out with the sole purpose of keeping the family members (communities) safe. In our opinion, this can be enlightenment for the importance of rituals of repentance and personal

[44] Nicholas E. Lombardo. *The Father's Will Christ's Crucifixion and the Goodness of God* (United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2013), vii.

reconciliation. The rituals serve as a reminder to believers not to fall again into the sinful deeds that caused Christ's death. More than that, they bring back another possibility to enjoy the fruits of salvation brought by Christ himself in the community of believers.

It is now the time to draw some pastoral advices from the common ground and points of difference mentioned above. What pastoral advices could we draw from them for the process of inculturation of the Christian faith for the Ngada people when they are faced with *mata golo*? Although "*mata golo*" at first glance has many differences with the Christian concept of death, there are seeds of Christianity in this element of culture that needs to be developed. The ritual cannot be removed, because it is an integral part of the cultural identity of the Ngada people. However, elements of Christianity can be incorporated into it. For example, if people think that a "*mata golo*" occurred because of the wrongdoings of the perpetrator, family member, or extended family, then after the *ke'o rado* ritual, confession of sins can be done together in the family. This is also important in the context of inculturation, in that it guides the culture to the Christian values. Or the traditional ritual can end with a Mass celebrated together in the family, as an affirmation that Christ is the pinnacle of salvation. In this way, the rituals bring about harmonization of relations with ancestors and others in the extended family, whereas the joint celebration of the Eucharist brings the entire family into harmony with the larger family, namely the Church and the Saints, in union with God as the source of all salvation. This is what Karl Rahner, as quoted by Shannon Craigo-Snell, calls a 'paradoxical unity, that is, the union between the creative commitment of believers in their real-life struggles in this world with divine grace or the offer of salvation that comes from God Himself.[45]

Thus, the people of Ngada should not perceive the death of Christ as a form of deficiency, but rather as a perfect and final answer to their anxiety, consolation, and hope for liberation. They should also perceive it as an opportunity to surrender their family members who have died unnaturally with Christ. They, at the same time, should see it as a moment of repentance for those who are still alive. For, indeed the death of Christ and His resurrection signifies the definitive destruction of the power of death and the victory for eternal life for all who believe in Him.

[45] Shannon Craigo-Snell. *Silence, Love and Death – saying 'yes' to God in the theology of Karl Rahner* (Wisconsin: Marquette University Press, 2008), 232.

Concluding remarks

In the view of the Ngada people, *mata golo* is a form of 'bad death' - a death that is frightening and terrifying. This kind of death always raises questions, leading people to find out the root cause. This effort then gives rise to a ritual called '*ke'o rado'* the ritual of restoration and cleansing. In this ritual, all mistakes and neglects that occurred in the past are rediscovered, acknowledged, and pardoned. If this ritual is carried out properly and correctly, then the whole family experiences a sense of security and peace in their life.

A person suffering from a *mata golo* does not know why he/she must be the victim. This, of course, differs from the picture of Christ's death, in which Christ was fully aware of the already-determined purpose and end of his own life: being slain on the cross. More than that, the death of Christ on the cross was solely aimed at saving humankind from the bonds of death and eternal death. The death of Christ is a death that saves. So, the death of Christ on the cross is not a *mata golo*, but a form of solidarity with humans, including those who are bullied due to *mata golo*.

The message of Christ's death is that people are always able to repent and renew themselves and make peace with God. This holds likewise in the case of *mata golo*: each family member is invited to participate in the *ke'o rado* ritual as a form of confession of wrongdoings, self-renewal, and cleansing. Death both in the perspective of the Ngada people and also in the Christian perspective, has, therefore, one single message: it must bring salvation, peace, and trust to humans in the future, but on the condition that they are willing to repent and renew themselves and reconcile with others. For the Ngada people who have embraced the Catholic faith, however, death including *mata golo* has made them now focus on the future, which has been anticipated in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Therefore, they should also dare to carry out God's plan for the future in the case of *mata golo*.

This last concept can enlighten the concept of *mata golo,* which is often considered to be a curse in the future for all the family members left behind. The future cannot be read from the tendency of the present, from what is happening now. Rather, it must depart from the vision of the coming of the Judge of the world, Jesus Christ. The appearance of Christ who has risen from the dead can be a source of strength and comfort to those who are confronted by a case of *mata golo*, which is no longer a

bad death, but also as a death that is open to salvation and eternal life.

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