

Final destination to heaven or hell: A theological discourse on the concept of judgment of selected tertiary students

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Abstract

This paper explored the various perspectives on the eschatological doctrine of judgment by tertiary students of San Beda University campuses. It also presented a theological discourse on this eschatological concept. The data gathered from 844 participants resulted to 'generally uncertain' which implied the need for a more relevant and effective teaching of this concept. Being a theology educator in a Catholic school, as well as having students who are predominantly Catholics, a reasonable understanding of the faith doctrine is very essential to be included in the faith formation programs. Three clustered themes came out as a result from these various perspectives, namely, judgment as: a historical reality; as the rule of God; and as personal moral accountability which merits reward or punishment. These themes then became the center of discussion and hopefully provided a clearer understanding of the doctrine for a solid foundation of Christian faith. Lastly, it is also the aim of this paper to jolt more theological reflections on life and the worldview of human existence in ever changing contextualization.

Keywords: judgment, accountability, final reckoning, reward and punishment, reconciliation with God

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1. Introduction

Every man receives his eternal recompense in his immortal soul from the moment of his death in a particular judgment by Christ, the judge of the living and the dead” (Catholic Church 1994, para. 1051). This section from the Catechism implies one’s final trial after earthly life with the possibility of either one goes to an everlasting happiness in heaven or be doomed in the fires of hell. Contrary to popular beliefs that death ends everything with regard to human existence, Christians hold that life continues after death since it is just the beginning of another existence either in heaven or hell. They also believe that judgement comes after death, and it is total and final where one banishes sinners to hell forever while the righteous enjoys the bliss of heaven eternally (Ayodeji, 2013). However, this something known and believed in by Christians needs further clarification. It is a usual question by almost every faithful as to what happens next after death. Where does the soul go after bodily death? The statement mentioned above provides an answer to the questions. It is definite, the Catholic Church says, from the moment of death, the immortal soul of the person will be meeting a judgment, a particular judgment by Christ, the judge of the living and the dead as expressed both in the Nicene and Apostle’s Creed. The understanding of judgment in this case resonates already with Christians. This knowledge is rooted probably because of the influence of the early Christian missionaries who evangelized the early Filipinos.

On the other hand, do we really understand the essence and implication of this concept to our daily life? This research therefore is an attempt to determine the understanding of the concept of judgment by selected tertiary students from two San Beda College campuses. It presents a comprehensive theological discourse on the said concept. Based on the teaching experience of the researcher, many students are confused regarding the usual understanding of judgment which is generally uncertain. Their numerous understandings of judgment such as: that the good will go to heaven; the bad will be consigned to hell, and judgment entails punishment for infidelity, and the absence of deliberate and systematic research effort done on this topic have given the researcher a very strong impetus to embark on this study. The paper hopes to build a more solid foundation of this Christian doctrine. It brings forth the development of a Researcher-Made Instrument on Eschatology (RIE) with six headings on corollary doctrines and the development of theological instructional materials that can direct and guide these San Beda campuses to determine and examine scholarly the efficiency in enforcing learning and teaching eschatology in a 21st century tertiary level education. Lastly, it is the aim of this paper to jolt more theological reflections on life and on the worldview of human existence in an ever-changing contextualization.

1.1 Context and Exposition on Judgment

The Church’s concept of judgment after death finds akin expression with the beliefs and practices of the natives of Batanes province known as *Ivatan*. The *Ivatan*’s view regarding the soul at death and after death emphasizes that:

God judges the soul after death and rewards it or punishes it according to its deserts. Those who cannot be damned because they are not too wicked, but cannot enter Heaven because they are not perfect, are given a period of purification and in this state undergo suffering (pahad). To deliver them from suffering, they need the prayers and pious remembrance from the living especially relatives. To let them know such a need for suffrage, they are allowed to appear or manifest their need to the living (anitu). (Hornedo, 1994)

The understanding of judgment in this case resonates already with the Christian belief. This is so because they may have been influenced already by the evangelization of early missionaries. Nevertheless, evident still is

the survival of indigenous pre-Christianization beliefs and practices such as the *anitu* and *pahad*. A controversial story about a 14-year-old girl suffering from a cancer proliferated in the web a few years back. The girl wished that when she dies her body should not be buried but preserved because she hopes that doctors can still find a cure to her illness. She requested to have her body cryogenically frozen in the hope that she can be brought back to life later. The high court allowed this to happen with consent of the girl's mother. The body of the girl has now been preserved and transported from where she lived in London to the United States, where it has been frozen "in perpetuity" by a commercial company at a cost of £37,000 (Bowcott & Hill, 2016). While it is true that the girl's wish to have her body frozen for future recovery is one with which many could sympathize. However, reflecting on it from the faith's view, this elicited more theological questions such as: Does the body still matter when the person dies? What is basically the Christian teaching on judgment after bodily death? What every Christian needs to know about judgment?

The Bible is clear about the concepts of death and after death. Hebrews 9:27 says, "And just as it is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment..." The biblical passage declared human beings are to die once, after it, he or she will face judgment. In 2 Corinthians 5:10, it re-affirms the passage on judgment, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body." Another important biblical reference about the judgment after death comes from Matthew's gospel which theologians call as the "universal judgment." Some refer to this as the final or general judgment:

"When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world...' "
(Matthew 25:31-34).

Having the thought that one day we will be judged accordingly, and it is the final reckoning of our good or bad deeds enable us to feel either excited because we are prepared or afraid because we are not yet ready. These kinds of emotion are part of human nature and what we can do is to have a clear understanding of this reality, so we know what to do. The Filipino culture have inherited the belief that God rewards the good and punishes the evil.

God is not pleased with disobedience and has appointed a day to judge the peoples of the world. The Book of Revelation reminds us of that grave and solemn occasion with these words: "and I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened (20:12)." The general judgment that will take place during Christ's second coming is addressed to the entire human race, all the living and the dead, as they are summoned to the resurrection of the body on that Day of Judgment. This event is in everybody's future. A more immediate individual and personal judgment takes place at the moment of death for each person, traditionally named as "particular judgment". As Christians, we all have the responsibility for our own eternal destiny.

What about the notion of judgment by San Beda University (SBU) tertiary students? Being majority of them are Catholics and studying in a Catholic university, do they have a clear understanding on this concept of judgment as taught in their Theology classes and the Church in general? What is the relevance of this teaching in their everyday life and faith aspect in particular? To answer these questions, discussions of the results of the survey conducted from them is deemed necessary.

2. Methodology

The researcher utilized quantitative-descriptive research with the survey questionnaire as the primary tool for gathering and revealing students' perception of judgment. This practice of combining the research methods in research is known as "triangulation" which often involves "the use of a survey questionnaire to be analyzed both

quantitatively and qualitatively” (Balnaves and Caputi 2001). There were 844 college students who participated in this study from two San Beda schools in the Philippines—50.83% (429) are female while 49.17% (415) are male. The survey questionnaire is in the form of a Likert scale which is called as Self-Assessment on One’s Beliefs about Christian Eschatology on Judgment. When a Likert scale is used, “the item is presented as a declarative sentence followed by response options that indicate varying degrees of agreement with or endorsement of the sentence” (DeVellis, 2016).

From the data and findings revealed by the quantitative design, the qualitative design came to the fore, which identified, described, and synthesized the data and findings to further reveal a particular phenomenon as it exists in nature. To ensure that the questionnaire could generate the desired data and findings from the respondents, face and content validity were likewise ascertained and established by experts who were requested to validate the research instrument—survey questionnaire that was pilot tested to ensure its acceptable reliability. Face validity is the process of checking the appropriateness of a research instrument on the surface level or in its so-called face value. To check face validity, the researcher pilots test or asks a small group of about 20 respondents. They should have the characteristics that are similar to the target participants, i.e., college students in different levels. Before they take the exam, the researcher will tell them to mark the unclear items, the confusing questions, the usage of words that are more appropriate to their level (jargon). So, clarity and language of the instrument are ensured. With the help of some Theology teachers from both schools, the survey-questionnaire was administered to the participants.

Regarding ethical consideration, the participants agreed willingly to fill out the questionnaire. They were asked first to read and understand clearly the informed personal consent forms. These forms state that they agree to participate in the study and that they are also free to decline from participating without being penalized. In addition, they do not have to answer the questions or talk about anything that will make them feel uncomfortable. Permission from the respective school officials like the Dean and Chair was also granted to the researcher for an official conduct of the study with the help of Theology professors. Further, all requirements of the Research Center and Research Ethics Board of both university and college were observed with, promptly and diligently. The survey questionnaire which is the Self-Assessment on One’s Beliefs about Christian Eschatology on Judgment was critically designed, validated, and pre-tested by professors who have the qualification and authority. The interpretation of the data was even reviewed by a professional statistician. The researcher was particularly drawn in the study and analysis of these perceptions/literatures regarding existential questions that inspire him to think critically as this was a key to the research.

3. Results

3.1 Students’ Perception on Judgment

The exploratory centerpiece of the study is the students’ perception on judgment. Using an appropriate research design and procedures, the research was able to reach a certain depth of perception of the students’ perception of hell. Table 1 shows the various propositions regarding the concept of judgment based on basic Christian doctrine which also include the popular perceptions of Christians.

Table 1

Respondents’ Level of Understanding on the Concept of Judgment

	SD	D	U	A	SA
	1	2	3	4	5
Propositions regarding Judgment					
1	Sinners will be condemned on the day of judgment.				
2	God will meet the sinful and judge their actions.				
3	God will judge the living and the dead.				
4	The good will be rewarded on the day of judgment.				
5	The general judgment will usher the end of the world and of history itself.				

6	Judgment symbolizes the second coming of Christ.
7	Those who have faith will participate in Christ' eternal life.
8	On judgment, the good will go to heaven, the bad will be consigned to hell.
9	Only God knows when judgment day will happen.
10	Judgment day is a time for which we prepare.
11	Judgment is the separation of the good and the evil.
12	Judgment is uncertain.
13	On judgment day, God will judge the righteous and the wicked.
14	On judgment day, God will overcome evil once and for all.
15	During Judgment, God will redeem, transform, and transfigure our finite lives.
16	Judgment entails punishment for infidelity.
17	Ancient Jewish prophets proclaimed a future day of the Lord.
18	It is Christ who conducts the final judgment.
19	Judgment is the end of human history.
20	On Judgment day, all people will be reconciled with God.

Table 2

Respondents' overall understanding on the concept of judgment

Item No.	Perceptions Regarding Judgment	Average		Rank
9	Only God knows when judgment day will happen.	3.41	Uncertain	1
15	During Judgment, God will redeem, transform, and transfigure our finite lives.	3.34	Uncertain	2
20	On Judgment day, all people will be reconciled with God.	3.33	Uncertain	3
4	The good will be rewarded on the day of judgment.	3.24	Uncertain	4
7	Those who have faith will participate in Christ' eternal life.	3.21	Uncertain	5
17	Ancient Jewish prophets proclaimed a future day of the Lord.	3.16	Uncertain	6
11	Judgment is the separation of the good and the evil.	3.10	Uncertain	7
13	On judgment day, God will judge the righteous and the wicked.	3.08	Uncertain	8
3	God will judge the living and the dead.	3.04	Uncertain	9
1	Sinners will be condemned on the day of judgment.	3.02	Uncertain	10
6	Judgment symbolizes the second coming of Christ.	2.92	Uncertain	11
14	On judgment day, God will overcome evil once and for all.	2.82	Uncertain	12
10	Judgment day is a time for which we prepare.	2.68	Uncertain	13
12	Judgment is uncertain.	2.64	Uncertain	14
19	Judgment is the end of human history.	2.62	Uncertain	15
8	On judgment, the good will go to heaven; the bad will be consigned to hell.	2.55	Uncertain	16
18	It is Christ who conducts the final judgment.	2.53	Uncertain	17
16	Judgment entails punishment for infidelity.	2.53	Uncertain	18
5	The general judgment will usher the end of the world and of history itself.	2.48	Uncertain	19
2	God will meet the sinful and judge their actions.	2.44	Disagree	20
	Overall Mean	2.91	Uncertain	

In Table 2 (Overall Participants' Understanding on Judgment), as indicated by the overall mean of 2.91, the respondents' generally perceived uncertainty regarding the statements about judgment. They are uncertain regarding all statements regarding judgment except for one. They disagree to just one item, that is, that *God will meet the sinful and judge their actions* (2). There is general uncertainty about the statements made on Judgment. An indication that the respondents are largely unfamiliar and unaware of them. Or they may have heard about them but have not taken interest. Or the statements, some of them at least, confuse them so they have set them aside and no longer bother about them. Either way, agree or disagree, they don't particularly care. They may not only be uncertain; they could be indifferent. Therefore, and all the more, exposition is called for.

4. Discussions

Referring to the result of Table 2, the respondents expressed uncertainty to all items except for one, namely, item 2 which reveals that they disagreed to the idea that *God will meet the sinful and judge their actions*. With uncertainty, answers expressed for nineteen (19) out of twenty (20) statements, the general implication that may

be made is that the youth did not feel sufficiently knowledgeable or convinced about the content as to either agree or disagree. This can mean that the topic of judgment is not within the scope for the students' consciousness. Or they may not have taken interest in it, or it is not often brought to their attention. It is also possible that they abhor the idea and automatically shut it out of their minds when the subject is brought up. Whatever the reasons it is clear that effort must be expended to make this topic relevant to today's youth.

The lone statement *God will meet the sinful and judge their actions* to which the respondents disagree gives us an opening to a dialogue on judgment with the respondents. Our reflection/discussion on judgment shall then proceed from these 20 propositions who are clustered into three major themes, namely, judgment: (1) *as a historical reality*; (2) *as the rule of God*; and (3) *as personal moral accountability which merits reward or punishment*. It is important to take note that two or more propositions that share common theme were clustered together rather than treated individually.

Judgment as a historical reality - The general judgment is associated with the notion of the end of the world. It is about the "last days". Traditionally, the emphasis has been on judgment, reward and punishment. Recently, other theologians suggested a different and more positive view. They shift the eschatological focus to transformation and renewal and God's kingdom where God will be "all in all". From this perspective the focus is on God's promised future and the power of that future to transform the present. Hart has this contribution on God's promised future:

The power of the future to transform the present lies chiefly in the capacity of God's Spirit to capture our imagination and to open up for us a new vision of God's promise and the present which it illuminates, thereby stimulating alternative ways of being in the world in the present...living towards the future ... It is in terms of a transfigured present that we are able to think and speak about God's promised future. (Hart, 2001, p. 75)

History is the story of human motivation and action. It is the collective and cumulative personal life of the world. McKeating gives a rationale for the last judgment in relation to history. He posits:

History never fully reveals the interior world of human activity and the inner core of meaning remains hidden. It is precisely because of the opaque and ambiguous nature of human history that the rationale of a Last Judgment becomes clear. What is hidden will one day be revealed. Without the final judgment, without some form of ultimate accountability on all the thoughts, words and actions of human beings, there would be no guarantee that truth and honesty will prevail. The Last Judgment is the disclosure and manifestation of the decisions of human beings, acting out of freedom for good or evil. Such an event represents the transcendental need and demand to ultimately know the truth of things. (McKeating 2009, p. 117)

Another purpose for judgment is to vindicate the good that often goes unacknowledged and forgotten; the many hidden acts of generosity and kindness, or acts of heroism done by countless people day by day. At the last judgment the triumph of God's grace will be revealed and the goodness and truth will have the final victory. God's judgment is often associated with punishment and wrath, particularly in the Old Testament. There has been a remarkable change, however, in the human concept of God in the light of the Christ-event. Here, the mystery of God's love, revealed in the incarnation and redemption, is of such grandeur and magnanimity as to erase forever the image of a vengeful god. It tells all that the God of Jesus Christ is a Father who does not bear resentment for the sins of his children, but is always ready to forgive. (Luke 15:11–32).

One important question is relevant to ask? When will this final judgment take place? In the days leading to the last month of the year 2012 there was frenzied worldwide talk about the end of the world. This was due to the claim of some that the end of the world coincided with the closing of the Mayan long term calendar in December 21, 2012. Down the centuries there have been people predicting the end of the world on some future day. All those who have made predictions have been proved false. Phan (1994, p. 117) calls our attention to an

observation made by St. Thomas on these false prophets, “for what Jesus refused to tell the apostles, he will not reveal to others. Therefore, all those who have been misled to reckon the aforesaid time have so far been proved to be untruthful ... The falseness of these calculations is evident, as will likewise be the falseness of those who even now cease not to calculate.” It is pointless and presumptuous to attempt to fix the date of the “Day of Yahweh”. The respondents rightly sensed this was a matter they could neither agree nor disagree about.

Judgment as the rule of God - The second coming of Christ differs from the first. And knowing the distinction helps us to appreciate both properly. In his first coming, Christ met death and humiliation for the sake of sinful humanity. In his second coming he will be riding high in exultation and glory with the Father’s joy. On the part of believers, the great expectation is the fulfilment of the promise of resurrection of both the living and the dead; of the transformation of humanity, of all life and the cosmos as these are taken up into God’s eternity. This is the future that has been promised.

The participants seem not to be aware enough of this promise as to have agreed. And they are likewise uncertain, or possibly indifferent, as to whether Christ will be the judge on Judgment Day. Again, they need to be clarified with this teaching to have an appreciation of Christ’s person and role in people’s lives and in the history and future of the world. Now, where do humans find the true ground for the hope for “restoration of all things”? On what do they anchor certainty of the reconciliation without limits? What is their justification for universal salvation and for the world that is newly created to become the eternal kingdom? Moltman (2004, p. 250) interestingly has a reflection about Christ’s death and sitting as a judge saying that, “it is only in the depths of Christ’s death on the cross in Golgotha that we find the ground, anchor and justification of our confidence and hope. In the crucified Christ we recognize the *Judge of the final Judgment*.” In here, we expect no other judge on the judgment seat but the One who was crucified for the reconciliation of the world. Even more poignantly, through his descent into hell, in pure obedience to the Father, he takes hell and all those who are in hell into his forsakenness by the Father, experiencing and saying that yes, they are in hell. Christ thus puts himself on the side of the damned, one with the damned, seeking the Father where he is not to be found. Through his descent into hell, and by joining all those who are in it, who are in the non-time, by being on the side of the damned, himself the damned One who takes them into the trinitarian fellowship with the Father (Moltman, 2004).

With this kind of judge, would there really be someone going to hell? Hell remains a possibility for many because of human freedom. But having set aside the idea of eternal punishment from a retributive justice, we place our hope in the power of the risen Christ to effect in the damned who have suffered accordingly to turn from rejection to confront accountability; from accountability accepted to progress into expiation, and finally move from expiation to the state of grace. In an outcome of universal salvation, those raised from heaven have enjoyed a foretaste the longest; those rising from purgatory after a long wait and maturing; those from hell may have undergone the heaviest suffering, but are the most graced. It is only God who knows how he will blend justice and mercy to the once damned.

God’s triumph over evil through his love for man is a major eschatological message. It is pointed out that in the coming of God, the eschatological doctrine about the restoration of all things has these two sides: God’s judgment, which puts everything to rights and God’s kingdom which renews life. In a most optimistic and glowing language, he declares how this judgment operates:

All sins, every wickedness and every act of violence, the whole injustice of this murderous and suffering world, will be condemned and annihilated, because God’s verdict effects what it pronounces. In the divine Judgment all sinners, the wicked and the violent, the murderers and the children of Satan, the Devil and the fallen angels will be liberated and saved from their deadly perdition through transformation into their true, created being, because God remains true to himself and does not give up what he has once created and affirmed, nor allow it to be lost.
(Moltman 2004, p. 248)

Such a viewpoint would have greatly been appealing to the participants and had they been more exposed to

this view would have agreed to propositions (14) and (20). To the participants, the notion of judgment has always been colored with horror. In a very reassuring tone, Moltman continues that, the “Last Judgment: is not a terror. In the truth of Christ, it is the most wonderful thing that can be proclaimed to men and women. It is a source of endlessly consoling joy to know...” (2004, p. 248) It is therefore important to highlight that on Judgment Day, all people will be reconciled with God and God will overcome evil once and for all.

Judgment as personal moral accountability, thus merits reward or punishment - Complementing the doctrine of judgment as historical reality and rule of God, the last clustered significant theme is its treatment as personal moral accountability for every one of us. It is thus called “Particular Judgment” that takes place at the moment of one’s death. In the particular judgment, Moltman (2004) explains that human beings are confronted by the whole and entire truth of the life they have lived, and are, thereby, made their own judge. One’s spiritual performance is not being assessed by an external authority. It is not a judgment passed on humans by God. The judgment concerned takes place as the disclosure of the reality that one’s entire history has distilled. The decision for eternity has been made in one’s lifetime and becomes irrevocable upon death. Whatever appears cannot be denied. There is no place to hide.

Phan (1994, p. 67) elaborates on how this particular judgment takes place and how it should be understood theologically in the context of dying. According to him, particular judgment “should be understood in the context of dying itself for human beings’ death are primarily a personal act in which an individual takes his or her history to a final, definitive and irrevocable end.” In this act of dying that is freely accepted, a person expresses a definitive position vis-a-vis God, a position that he or she has taken throughout life but that is now recapitulated and made irreversible in this last personal act of dying. In so doing a person judges himself/herself. God demands an account of human lives not for negative or moralistic reasons, but out of positive regard for them. This is so because being responsible and accountable is simply expressing the dignity and value of human life, as created in the image of God. What this tells humans is that God is not indifferent to what they do with their lives. Humans are held to account because God takes human life seriously in as much as it counts for eternal life. Humans are made to account for how they lived.

Now, the next question is, what is the outcome of judgment? Judgment is undoubtedly directed at what is good and evil in the world. To pass this final test and end up in heaven, there is a particular requirement such as charitable deeds done by one died (Oftestad, 2018) or as Christians believe, one must be in a state of grace and is perfectly purified from sin (Catholic Church 1994, para. 1023). But to say that the impact of judgment is reward and punishment; heaven or hell, is to place the action as a contest between Good and Evil. But God may not be put at the same level as evil and human sinfulness. God’s resolve to be for humanity cannot be put on the same category as human rejection of God. This tendency for “symmetry” must be totally demolished, because it has opened the way to a much-diminished idea of God.

Humans have been accustomed to a double outcome of judgment: the righteous are rewarded with eternal bliss; the wicked punished with eternal damnation. But such an outcome is hard to accept in the light of God’s love and mercy. What speaks against a double outcome of Judgment is the experience and belief that God’s love and mercy is more powerful than human sin. In God himself love outbalances wrath. The preponderance of God’s grace over his anger means that judgment and the reconciliation of the universe are not at odds with one another.

The outcome humans subscribe to is universal salvation; with the double outcome as a temporary condition that will not be eternal. The historical path to salvation proceeds by way of divine election and rejection; but the eschatological goal is universal salvation. From this perspective, the outcome of judgment is to divide humanity into three states: one that is ready for heaven, the other as needing purification to eventually join those in heaven; and the third state is that of rejection, which is hell. But hell needs no longer be seen as eternal. For God Himself is hopeful that those who take the path of rejection will somehow come around and make a change of heart under the warmth of His patient compassion. God will doubtless not violate human freedom to choose. But God is

confident his mercy and love will triumph in the end. Rejection cannot be eternal. The proposition for universalism is grounded on the Christian doctrine of the restoration of all things in God. In his suffering and dying Christ suffered the true and total hell of God-forsakenness. In the self-surrender and the raising of Christ surely it cannot be just a few of the elect who have been reconciled with God, but the whole world and the cosmos. Likewise, it is not just believers whom God loved, but the whole of humanity. Both divine election and rejection must serve universal salvation. And indeed, the resurrection shows that universal rejection has been overpowered by universal election. Thus, the Last Judgment has no double outcome, but serves the universal establishment of the divine righteousness and justice, for the new creation of all things. Indeed, of all human beings, after purification, upon transformation.

5. Conclusion

The impetus and direction that undergird the development of this research came from the troubled questions of students about judgment. Essentially, about how they felt this was incompatible with the love and mercy of God. A new explanation seemed needed. Both young people and adults today still hold on to an understanding of the “last things” from a distant tradition, still tinged by medieval thinking. Now, since the participants have a vague eschatological understanding on judgment, the researcher humbly advances the recommendation of organizing workshops for the faculty with an updated and relevant content and approach on the topic. It would also be helpful to create new reference materials and lesson guides that capture and incorporate the reflections of this article and those coming from the workshops.

Judgment day is the final reckoning for all the actions that human persons have done either good or bad. Judgment takes place at death. It determines the state of condition after death. The “general judgment” exacts some form of ultimate accountability on all the thoughts, words, and actions of human beings; otherwise, there would be no guarantee that truth and honesty will prevail. The judgment on history represents the transcendental need and demand to ultimately know the truth of things, through the disclosure and manifestation of the decisions of human beings, acting out of freedom for good or evil. In the “particular judgment”, God holds each of us accountable for how we live our lives. In taking us to account he shows how he values each of us, saying he is not indifferent to how we act and live, for this has bearing on our coming home into his eternity.

Jesus has given two clues, which any person, sincere in his faith, will, or can, follow. The first of this is the admonition: “Judge not and you shall not be judged”. God alone has the prerogative of judging a person because he alone sees into the heart of the person. Since God simply validates the judgment each one passes on the life, should not one decide to devote their lives to preparing to participate in judgment and foster universal salvation? The whole of Christian life is a journey of continuing purification, expiation, and transformation. The same is true of the worship of the church. The meaning of salvation can be seen in the holy sacrifice of the mass—where the people of God are gathered as one community. Same is true with the afterlife where all people will be gathered to praise God face to face. This is the judgment on universal human salvation.

The *Researcher-made Instrument on Eschatology (RIE) on Judgment* unveiled one and only superordinate emergent theme based on the students’ disagreement on eschatological perception that God will meet the sinful and judge their actions which implied that student participants of this study believed that God is not a punitive God, but He is a loving and compassionate God. More so, it can also be derived from students’ eschatological perception on judgment the following subordinate themes emergent which may have implications in teaching the doctrine of Christian eschatology in the 21st Century tertiary education as follows: 1) Judgment as the end of the world and history, 2) God’s Judgment between Righteous and Wicked, 3) Judgment in God’s Perfect Time, 4) Reward and Punishment from Judgment, 5) Redemption from Judgment, 6) Reconciliation with God on Judgment, 7) Christ’s Final Judgment and, 8) Uncertainty and preparedness.

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