

MEMORY OF RECONCILIATION— RECONCILIATION OF MEMORY

Contemporary prophets of memory have persuaded most of us: whether we feel that memory honors those who have suffered or protects the weak, we believe we have a duty to remember wrongs committed or suffered. Forgetfulness betrays those who have been violated and delivers the powerless into the hands of evildoers. Yet, as we observe how memories of wrongs committed have been used throughout history, we cannot but wonder whether such memory is more a curse than a blessing. Commenting about the war in Bosnia in 1990s, one of the most well-known prophets of memory, Elie Wiesel, has recently confessed a deep disappointment: "I realized that in that tormented land, it is memory that is a problem. It's because they remember what happened to their parents or their sisters or their grandparents that they hate each other."¹ Misuse of memory is in no way limited to Bosnia at the end of twentieth century. In many places and throughout human history, memory, which should "have been a sanctuary," was in fact "almost an abomination."²

How do we enjoy the blessings of memory without suffering its curses? Can the two be disentangled, or are they so inextricably intertwined that blessings cannot be had without curses? I believe that memory can be redeemed, at least partially. Elsewhere I have explored some simple rules for keeping the abominations of memory at bay:

"Remember truthfully!"—a rule pressed upon us by some historians, philosophers, and theologians. In relations between human beings, truth is an elusive good. And yet it is indispensable. Deceitful memories—memories by which we deceive others and sometimes even ourselves—are unjust and therefore injurious memories.

"Remember so as to be healed!"—a rule pressed upon us by psychotherapists. Wrongs committed and suffered create wounds that, if not attended, can wreak havoc in people's lives and may even prod them to harm others. Unhealed memories are ruinous, for wounded persons themselves and for their neighbors.

"Remember so as to learn!"—a rule pressed upon us above all by the prophets of memory. Memories are not only prisms through which images of the past are refracted; they are windowpanes through which we anticipate the future. Only if we remember wrongs committed and suffered will we be able to avoid having them repeated in the future.

¹Elie Wiesel and Richard D. Heffner, *Conversations with Elie Wiesel*, ed. Thomas J. Vinciguerra (New York Schocken Books, 2001) 145.

²*Ibid.*, 144.

These rules are helpful as far as they go. Yet questions remain. Can *truthful* memories not be put to the most deadly uses? Why should one not seek healing for oneself in full disregard of others or even at their expense? And won't at least some seemingly stable lessons of memory—such as only force being effective against the power of evildoers—hurl us deeper into irresolvable conflicts? Even with these rules observed, misuses of memory may still abound. To help free memory from oscillating between being a sanctuary and being an abomination, these rules need to be placed in a larger moral and religious framework. But what should that framework be?

I am a Christian theologian, so I will explore the resources within the Christian tradition for helping us remember rightly. I will focus on two defining events of redemptive history—Israel's Exodus from slavery in Egypt and Christ's death and resurrection on behalf of all humanity. More precisely, I will focus on the way in which these two saving events have been remembered in the Sacred Scriptures. Memories of these defining events from sacred history, I suggest, should serve as a larger framework to regulate how we remember wrongs committed and suffered in our everyday lives.

Some may find my suggestion to treat the memories of the Exodus and of the Passion—here "Passion" refers to the death and resurrection of Christ—as regulative memories inappropriate, counterproductive, even obscene. Have memories of the Exodus and the Passion not been gravely misused? Does not their misuse rest squarely on their regulative power as uncontested sacred memories? During some periods of Christian history Good Friday was a day of horror for the Jews. "Jesus killers," as they were deemed, the Jews had to endure Christians' murderous rage as Christians remembered the death of their savior.³ Though less misused than the memory of the Passion, the history of remembering the Exodus is not spotless either. Remembering that God ordered the obliteration of the Amalekites who attacked the Israelites from the rear during their desert sojourn (Deuteronomy 25:17-19), or that God drove out the Canaanites who inhabited the Promised Land, some more radical and militaristic Jews (and Christians!) have felt justified in mistreating non-Jews and driving them from their homes and their land.⁴ Am I then trying to drive out one demon (abomina-

³See, for instance, "Grenoble," "Languedoc," "Germany," "Kholm (Chelm)," and "Cracow" in *The Jewish Encyclopedia: A Descriptive Record of the History, Religion, Literature, and Customs of the Jewish People from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, ed. Isidore Singer, with Cyrus Adler et al. (New York and London: Funk & Wagnalls Company, corrected reprint 1916). (Also conveniently available online at <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/index.jsp>.)

⁴See Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution* (San Francisco: Basic Books, 1985) 141-44; Tom Segev, *Elvis in Jerusalem: Post-Zionism and the Americanization of Israel* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2002) 6. For examples, see Ellen Cantarow, "Gush Emunim: The Twilight of Zionism?" at <http://www.corkpsc.org/db.php?aid=2401>; Rabbi Meir

tion of everyday memories) with another, even more evil demon (abomination of sacred memories)?

I am convinced that the memories of the Exodus and the Passion themselves are not the problem. The problem is rather thinned-out and grotesquely distorted versions of these memories. Misuse of the Passion memory, for example, often rests on something like the following simple syllogism.

Premise 1: The Jews killed Jesus.

Premise 2: Those who kill should be killed or at least punished.

Conclusion: We are justified in mistreating and killing the Jews.

Conveniently left out of premise 1 is the historical fact that a Roman procurator ordered Jesus' crucifixion. More significantly, the deeper theological truth is forgotten, that, according to Christian convictions, the whole of humanity—every single one of us—"killed" Jesus. As regards premise 2, it flies in the face of what is at the heart of the Christian understanding of the Passion. God came down to earth *not* to punish or kill his enemies (which we all are); instead, God gave his life on their behalf. The syllogism that justifies mistreatment of the Jews is therefore mistaken and such mistreatment utterly inappropriate.

My point is this: cut off the memories of the Exodus and the Passion from the larger story in which they are embedded and employ them in situations of conflict, and you will turn these memories into deadly weapons! Respect the inner logic of these memories as shaped by the larger contexts in which they are situated and let that logic govern how you act in situations of conflict, and these memories are likely to become instruments of peace.⁵

In the following I will, in a sense, test the above thesis about the redemptive potential of the memories of the Exodus and the Passion by giving an account of these sacred memories that underscores their power to shape everyday memories in positive ways. I will treat here the story of the Exodus as part of the Christian story and as part of the Christian Bible, our Old Testament.

THE EXODUS

In Sacred Scripture, the memory of the Exodus is put to several uses, of which I will examine only two principal ones. Consider, first, the texts that directly link Israel's Exodus experiences with their present-day treatment of slaves and aliens. These people were among the most vulnerable groups in

Kahane, "Passover—Holiday of Vengeance" at <http://www.kahane.org/meir/passover.html>; and Rabbi Meir Kahane, "The Arabs in Eretz Israel" at <http://www.kahane.org/meir/arabs.html>.

⁵See Miroslav Volf, "Christianity and Violence," at <http://www.life-peace.org/ftp/volf.pdf> or an easier-to-read version (24 pp., double-spaced) at http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/programs/2004/03/11_volf-article.pdf.

ancient societies, due, in the first case, to their servitude and, in the second case, birth on different soil.⁶ These people's vulnerability within Israel parallels Israel's vulnerability in Egypt. How are Israelites to treat them? Of the slaves we read in Deuteronomy 15:12-15 (NIV):

If a fellow Hebrew, man or woman, sells himself to you and serves you six years, in the seventh year you must let him go free. And when you release him, do not send him away empty-handed. Supply him liberally from your flock, your threshing floor, and your winepress. Give to him as the LORD your God has blessed you. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you. This is why I give you this command today.

Positive treatment of aliens living among Israelites, and not just of Israelite slaves, is also motivated by an appeal to the memory of God's redemption of Israel from Egypt.

For Israelites, properly remembering their slavery and liberation means not treating their own slaves and aliens the way they themselves were treated in Egypt. Their model is the redeeming God, not the oppressing Egyptians. To emulate the Egyptians is to return to Egypt even while dwelling in the Promised Land. To emulate God is to live out the freedom God has given them. Emulating God is significant here precisely because the relationship between God and Israel is not primarily that of an example and its imitation, with Israel imitating what God does. Rather, Israel owes its existence to the very redeeming act of God that it is to imitate. Imitating God in relation to the stranger expresses what lies at the very heart of Israel's identity and ultimately depends on God's grace.⁷ The Exodus is a story that establishes Israel's being and defines its identity, and therefore Israel must act in accordance with that story.

But the people of Israel regress into adopting Egyptian practices, which is why God instructs them about how to treat slaves and aliens. The instructions seek to counter that regression. They consist of memory ("You were slaves in Egypt") and commands ("You must let him go free . . . supply him liberally" and "Do not deprive the alien or the fatherless of justice"). The two reinforce each other: memory grounds the commands, and the commands specify the lessons of memory. The crucial link between memory and commands is God's redemptive activity. The Israelites must remember not just that they "were slaves in Egypt" but that "the Lord God redeemed" them. Commands are *not* lessons learned from suffering. With regard to morality, suffering teaches nothing. Or rather, its lessons are contradictory—for instance, both that you should empathize with those who suffer and that you should not shy away from inflicting suffering on others to avoid suffering yourself. In regard to the memory of the Exodus, the

⁶See Leo Baeck, *This People Israel: The Meaning of Jewish Existence*, trans. Albert H. Friedlander (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1964) 46.

⁷See Emmanuel Levinas, "Difficult Freedom," in *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Sean Hand (Cambridge MA: Blackwell, 1989; repr. 1998, 1999) 252.

commands are lessons drawn not from suffering but from what God has done to alleviate suffering. The command to treat slaves and aliens favorably rests on God's deliverance in the past; the memory of past suffering *and* of God's deliverance serves to underwrite the command to be just and generous toward the weak and needy.

There is another significant use of the Exodus memory. The same tradition that appeals to the memory of the Exodus to protect slaves and aliens appeals to it to punish Israel's enemies. The story of Amalek, which is part of the Exodus memory, is paradigmatic:

Remember what the Amalekites did to you along the way when you came out of Egypt. When you were weary and worn out, they met you on your journey and cut off all who were lagging behind; they had no fear of God. When the LORD your God gives you rest from all the enemies around you in the land he is giving you to possess as an inheritance, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget! (Deuteronomy 25:17-19 NIV)

The lesson of the Exodus memory with regard to Amalek seems rather different from that concerning aliens and slaves. Amalek, who had no regard for the weak Israel, must be punished with the cruelest of punishments: extermination of its people and obliteration of their memory. The Exodus memory teaches not only merciful protection of the afflicted weak but severe punishment of the violent evildoer.

Are the two lessons of the Exodus memory contradictory, one urging mercy and the other punishment, even revenge? They are not. The single divine action in freeing the oppressed slaves provides the model for both. Just as God has freed the Israelites who were slaves and aliens in Egypt, so the Israelites should free slaves and treat kindly aliens in their midst. Just as God afflicted the Egyptians with plagues and drowned them in the Red Sea, so the Israelites must punish and exterminate those who maliciously hinder their liberation.

The Exodus memory contains two related lessons. First is that of *solidarity*: Act in favor of the weak just as God acted in your favor when you were weak. The second is the lesson of unbending *justice*: Oppose the oppressors just as God has opposed those who have oppressed you. The two lessons are closely linked; the second is the consequence of the first. In an unjust and violent world, solidarity with the downtrodden requires uncompromising struggle against their oppressors—or so the memory of Exodus suggests.

What are the implications of the "sacred" memory of the Exodus for "profane" memories of wrongs committed and suffered? The first implication is the imperative to *remember and remember truthfully*. If the afflicted are to be delivered, their suffering cannot disappear into the dark night of oblivion, at least not until justice has been done. And if their deliverance is to be an act of justice rather than an act of violence that attempts to rectify one injustice by committing another, the wrongdoing of the transgressor will have to be remembered truthfully.

The second implication is the imperative of *solidarity*. Viewing our profane memories of wrongs through the lens of the Exodus memory will help us empathize with those who suffer and come to their rescue by struggling against their tormentors.

The third implication of the sacred memory for profane memories concerns remembering God. If the Exodus is our story, then we will be able to link the remembered suffering to a redemptive future. No matter how hopeless the situation may be, God will vindicate the afflicted and judge the transgressor. Suffering does not have the last word. No matter how horrendous, we will be able to remember suffering as a moment in the history of those who are already on their way to deliverance.

As presented here, the memory of the Exodus serves to reinforce the three rules of remembering mentioned earlier: "Remember truthfully!"; "Remember so as to learn!"; and "Remember so as to be healed!" The three implications of the Exodus memory for profane memories are a version of these rules, a version that significantly addresses at least some of the concerns about potential misuse. As to truthfulness, the Exodus memory provides a reason to be truthful when doing so is not in our interest (a God of justice is a God of truth), and the Exodus memory takes away an important motivation to be *untruthful* (we don't need to resort to deceit to achieve our ends because our ultimate deliverance is assured). As to healing, since the rules of remembering guided by the memory of the Exodus link our suffering to God's deliverance, they guard against the tendency to pursue healing at others' expense. Even if God is Israel's God, God is not a private deity to be placed at the service of particular interests. Our redemption cannot be others' damnation.⁸ As to learning from the past, the lesson is very clearly one of justice on behalf of the afflicted, not the exertion of brute power in a world dominated by the lust for power.

Yet questions remain. They concern the role of justice in the memory of the Exodus. Can the relentless pursuit of justice evident in the Exodus memory have the last word? Injustice permeates all acts of every human being and qualifies all social relations. To live is to be unjust, observed Friedrich Nietzsche,⁹ echoing Martin Luther's assessment of the human condition. If this is right, we are faced with two unacceptable options. We can simply disregard justice, as Nietzsche

⁸Here we come up against the difficult issue of the destruction of the Canaanites. Theologically completely unacceptable is the view that would see their destruction as a necessary consequence of Israel's redemption. Even when the Old Testament texts speak about God "driving out" the Canaanites before the children of Israel, that driving out is a consequence of their own misdeeds, not simply a correlate of Israel's redemption. They are not driven out so that Israel can be redeemed.

⁹Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, "On the Utility and Liability of History for Life," in *Unfashionable Observations*, vol. 2. of *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, trans. Richard T. Gray (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995) 107.

did, and abandon the world to the play of forces, thus plunging the weak into suffering. Or we can insist on the relentless pursuit of justice and end up with a world in ruins because the rectifying hand of justice would unravel the whole historically layered fabric of social life and leave nobody, living or dead, spared.

There is a third option, however. It is expressed in an old rabbinic idea that before the dawn of creation, God, having seen all the evil humanity would do, had to forgive the world before creating it. Between the complete disregard of justice and the relentless pursuit of justice lies forgiveness. For Christians, forgiveness is paradigmatically enacted in the story of Christ's Passion. Without disregarding justice, Christ's Passion points beyond the mere struggle for justice for the victims to a way of grace for the perpetrators and reconciliation for both.

For those who see the world simply in moral terms—here clearly "right," there clearly "wrong," with the righteous deserving vindication and wrongdoers deserving punishment—any talk of grace and reconciliation would not only seem sentimental but immoral. As Immanuel Kant clearly saw, for example in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, the Passion, understood as an act of grace, is an undeniable offense against dues-paying morality governed by a need to restore the balance disturbed by transgressions.¹⁰ For that memory embodies the core conviction *that the affirmed claims of justice should not count against the offender*. It is understandable that a person passionate about justice would want to reject normative claims of the memory of the Passion. And yet if salvation of the world, not justice, matters the most, it will also be understandable why a lover of humanity would want to embrace the grace of the cross—and suffer under the scandal of justice partly disregarded.

THE PASSION

Much as the memory of Exodus is central to the identity of the Old Testament people of God, central to Christian identity is the memory of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As is well known, memory of the Passion is itself historically and theologically connected to the memory of the Exodus. The Last Supper of Jesus with his disciples was a Passover Seder, and the Holy Communion of the Christian Church is a celebration of the new Exodus of the new people of God. It is not surprising then to find the memory of the Passion adopting important dimensions of Exodus memory as well as altering others.

Before examining the lessons of the Passion memory, let me note one formal difference between the Exodus and the Passion. The story of the Exodus is a story of a single people, the people of Israel, chosen and liberated by God; the

¹⁰See Immanuel Kant, "Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason," as in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason and Other Writings*, trans. and ed. by Allen Wood and George Di Giovanni, with an introduction by Robert Merrihew Adams (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

story of the Passion is a story of a single person, Jesus Christ, chosen by God for salvation of the *whole of humanity*. Christ, the new Adam, is a representative of all humanity (Romans 5:12-21). What happened to Christ happened to every human being. And since through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ the world to come has decisively entered into this present world of sin and death, the future of *all humanity* has, in a sense, already happened in Christ. When we remember the Passion, we remember the future of all humanity redeemed in the world to come.¹¹

What lessons does the Passion memory teach? How are these lessons related to the lessons of the Exodus memory? I will consider two interrelated sets of issues, that of oppression and liberation and that of enmity and reconciliation.

(1) *Oppression and liberation*. In the 1960s and 1970s, German political theologian Johann Baptist Metz placed the memory of Jesus Christ, especially of his Passion, at the center of his thought.¹² The categories of oppression and liberation were at the forefront of his interest. Christ suffered in solidarity with those who suffer, and they can find solace in his company. In the memory of Christ's Passion, all suffering people are remembered. But Christ's solace is not simply one of sympathetic companionship; it is also a solace of hoped-for liberation. For when we remember Christ, we remember his vindication by God, not just his suffering. As Christ was raised, those who suffer will be raised with him. They are not locked up in their tormented past, unable to find freedom from it. Along with Christ they are on the path through death to resurrection, and what happened to him will also happen to them.

Metz has described the Passion memory as "dangerous"—dangerous, that is, for all those who leave behind them a trail of blood and tears in search of economic profit, technological mastery, or political power, and dangerous also for the systems that support such evildoers. The dangers of this memory reside in its orientation not just to the past but also to the future. "We remember the future of our freedom in the memory of his suffering," Metz writes.¹³ "Anticipatory memory" of Christ's Passion enlists those who remember it into the service of the Crucified for the good of suffering humanity. In their own way and in their own time and place, Christ's followers who remember him repeat Christ's solidarity with the victims of deception and violence.

¹¹For a treatment of liturgical enacting of ultimate redemption in Jewish tradition, see Lawrence A. Hoffman, "Does God Remember? A Liturgical Theology of Memory," *Memory and History in Christianity and Judaism*, ed. Michael A. Singer (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001) 41-72.

¹²On memory in the thought of Johannes Baptist Metz, see Bruce T. Morrill, S.J., *Anamnesis as Dangerous Memory: Political and Liturgical Theology in Dialogue* (Collegeville MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000) 19-72.

¹³Johann Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society: Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*, trans. David Smith (New York: Seabury Press, 1980) 111.

In Metz's account, the Passion memory embodies the same redemptive pattern as the Exodus memory: *suffering and deliverance*. Metz plays the pattern in a Christian register but leaves it basically unchanged. Israel suffered at the hands of the Egyptians, and God delivered them; people suffer at the hands of the wicked, and Christ's death in solidarity with them lifts them to a new life of freedom. The lessons from the sacred memory of the Passion for the everyday memories of deception and violence are the same as the lessons from the memory of the Exodus: remember truthfully so as to be able to act justly; remember the wrongs committed so you can pay the debt of justice to those who have suffered and protect others from injustice; place the memories into the narrative of God's final redemption. Metz's account of the Passion memory shares the strengths of the Exodus memory—a transcendent framework in which the faithful God promises redemption and moral clarity in the service of the afflicted. But it also shares the major weakness of the Exodus memory, namely, its questionable appropriateness in a world shot through with ineradicable injustice.

(2) *Enmity and reconciliation*. But has Metz understood Christ's death and resurrection adequately? Solidarity with those who suffer is an important aspect of Christ's work on the cross. Sufferers through the ages have found comfort at the foot of the cross and hope in front of the empty tomb. But Christ did not die only in solidarity with those who suffer but also as a *substitute* for the offenders, for those who cause suffering, for God's enemies and ours. Moreover, in the New Testament, substitution is arguably the dominant dimension of Christ's work and solidarity a subordinate one. The sacred memory of the Passion will be flawed if it contains only the pairing "suffering/deliverance." It must also include the more dominant couplet "enmity/reconciliation."¹⁴

Consider the Apostle Paul's explication of the significance of the Passion in Romans 5, the culmination of a long argument that started at the beginning of the epistle. In Romans Paul writes only of reconciliation with God, but he clearly has also reconciliation between persons in view. Later in the epistle, he will insist that God's embrace of humanity provides a model for human beings (Romans 15:7).

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him? For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! (Romans 5:6-10 NIV)

¹⁴On the relation between the pairings "suffering/deliverance" and "enmity/reconciliation" see Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace. Theological Reflections of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996) 22ff.

Solidarity—or even more profoundly, love—is at the heart of the Apostle Paul's account of Christ's death. Surprisingly, even scandalously, the text does not mention solidarity with victims but with perpetrators—with those who are "powerless" because they are "ungodly," unrighteous, "sinners," deserving God's wrath, "enemies." When handled improperly, atonement understood as suffering on behalf of the evildoer is dangerous. Certainly, all notions of substitution that involve a third party being punished for the sins of the transgressor are theologically completely unacceptable. And yet understood as taking upon oneself the consequences of another's transgression, substitution is full of promise. What are some of its implications for the question of memory?

First, the grace of God toward the people of Israel displayed in the Exodus—grace irrespective of their worthiness or lack of it—is extended through Christ to all of humanity and each person within it. Consequently, perpetrators too are the beloved of God who must be freed from the power of their evil desires and the guilt of their evil deeds, and that not just by God but in a significant sense also by those whom they have violated. Second, to be fully healed, victims need more than just the space in which to thrive in freedom and safety. They also need more than having the evildoers judged. Bound in a perverse bond with evildoers by having suffered at their hands, victims can be truly liberated and healed only if the perpetrators genuinely repent and the two are reconciled with each other.

If in his death and resurrection Christ not only identified with those who suffer but brought reconciliation to those who are estranged, the memory of the Passion cannot be only an anticipatory memory of his—and our—resurrection from death into new life. It must be also an anticipatory memory of his *creation of a reconciled community out of deadly enemies*. This is exactly what we commemorate in Holy Communion. Central to the rite is reconciliation of each human being with God. Inseparable, however, from reconciliation with God is reconciliation between human beings. As Alexander Schmemmann puts it in *The Eucharist*, in this holy rite "we create the memory of each other, we identify each other as living in Christ and being united with each other in him."¹⁵ In the Eucharistic feast, we enact memory of each other as those who are reconciled to God and to each other. Our past marked by enmity is given new hope.

The memory of the Passion is hopeful because it anticipates both deliverance from oppression and reconciliation between the victims and the perpetrators (or rather, reconciliation between those who were reciprocally both victims and perpetrators). The midday darkness of Good Friday that is our sins and sufferings will be overcome by the new light of Easter morning.

What are the lessons of the Passion memory? As with the Exodus memory, divine action provides the model for human action. But God in Christ is not pri-

¹⁵Alexander Schmemmann, *The Eucharist—Sacrament of the Kingdom*, trans. Paul Kachur (Crestwood NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1988) 130.

marily the example who demands imitation. Above all, God liberates us from exclusive concern for ourselves and empowers us to reach out in grace toward others, even perpetrators.

First, the memory of the Passion teaches *unconditional grace*. Since God in Christ reconciled *all* human beings to himself while they were still God's enemies and called them to belong to a single community of love, human beings in turn must seek to reconcile with each other—with every person, no matter what offense they have committed. No offense is imaginable that should *as such* elicit the withholding of grace, let alone merit the exclusion or obliteration of the offender.

The second lesson is that of *justice*, and it overlaps partly with the lesson from the memory of the Exodus. In Christ's reconciling death, the sinner was redeemed only by previously being condemned as sinner. Reconciliation between human beings cannot proceed therefore in disregard of justice; it rather requires that the claims of justice be recognized as valid and be respected.

The two lessons together—the lesson of unconditional grace and the lesson of justice—translate into the pursuit of forgiveness and reconciliation. In an act of unconditional grace, the claims of justice will be set aside, provided the perpetrators are willing to receive forgiveness of their misdeeds *as forgiveness*, which is to say, as long as they recognize themselves as sinners and thereby distance themselves from their deeds and restore to the victims at least some measure of what the original violation took away.¹⁶

What does remembering the Passion along the axis of enmity/reconciliation add to a framework for the memories of wrongs committed and suffered? The additions, which amount to a shift in the framework as a whole, concern the person doing the remembering, the deed remembered, and the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim. Let me explicate the bearing of the Passion memory on our everyday memories from the perspective of the victim and in first-person singular.

First, when I remember a wrong committed against me at the foot of the cross, I do not remember it as a righteous person but as an unrighteous person who has been embraced by God, my unrighteousness notwithstanding. I may not have transgressed against the person who has violated me (though in most cases, some transgression on my part will be involved), but I have "sinned against God and neighbor." As the one who remembers having been violated, I am not in the light, whereas the person whose deed I remember is enveloped in darkness.

Second, seen through the lens of the memory of the Passion, wrongdoing committed against me is, in a significant sense, already taken care of, atoned for,

¹⁶See Miroslav Volf, "Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Justice. A Christian Contribution to a More Peaceful Social Environment," in *Forgiveness and Reconciliation. Religion, Public Policy, and Conflict Transformation*, ed. Raymond G. Helmick and Rodney Lawrence Petersen (Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 2001) 27-49.

hidden by God from God's own eyes. It is a wrongdoing for which Jesus Christ died on the cross. Does the wrongdoing then continue to exist? It does, but it exists only in the unwillingness of the wrongdoer to receive forgiveness and be reconciled with God and the fellow human beings whom she has wronged. As a Christian, I therefore remember the wrongdoing in its paradoxical existence as that which is and, at the same time, has been overcome. It may seem that such remembering takes transgression too lightly. But to remember a transgression as such in an unqualified way is either not to see it through the lens of the Passion or not to take the Passion seriously enough.

Third, since the memory of the Passion is a memory of the anticipated final reconciliation, I will remember every wrongdoing against the horizon of (at least potential) future reconciliation with the wrongdoer. For, as scandalous as it may seem, in Jesus Christ and apart from my own say in the matter, God *has* made me and the person who has wronged me to belong to one community of love.

The enmity/reconciliation side of the Passion does not set aside the implications of the Exodus memory for our profane memories but reframes them, just as the Exodus memory itself has reframed the three rules: "Remember truthfully!"; "Remember so as to be healed!"; "Remember so as to learn!". First, the commitment to truthfulness remains. In addition to giving a proper grounding to the commitment to truthfulness (by insisting that God is the God of justice and therefore of truth) and in addition to taking away the main motivation for untruthfulness (by securing deliverance and therefore undercutting the need for deceit), the memory of Passion forms a subject capable of pursuing truthfulness. I can "purify my memory" by making it more truthful because my identity is tied neither to the guilt of the other and therefore to my accusation of the other nor to my own innocence and therefore to my self-justification. At the foot of the cross I can accept a differentiated view both of myself and of the other, a view not schematized by the stark polarity of light on one side and darkness on the other.

Second, the commitment to remembering the wrongdoing will still remain in the service of the opposition to the wrongdoing, but that opposition will now take the form not of "punishment" but of grace. I will remember the offense so as to condemn it and so as to be able to work for justice. But I will remember it also so as to be able to release from the consequences of condemnation the offender who has repented and mended his ways.

Third, the commitment to remembering out of concern for my own protection and well-being as a victim remains, but I will not see the violation endured as an intrusion of darkness into the brightness of my innocence but as a condemnable injustice committed against a person who, in his own way, is condemnably unjust. This will help free me from the frustration (if I am weak) or the destructiveness (if I am strong) that results when I remember wrongdoing while operating within a stark polarity of total innocence and total culpability.

Finally, as regards to healing, the dangers of exclusive care of the self at the expense of others has been warded off not only by insertion of the wounding and wounded self into the story of divine judgment and vindication. The memory of the Passion gives that story itself a new and ultimate goal in the divine creation of the community of love.

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