

God's Presence in Suffering

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Introduction

- Suffering as the result of evil – evil as a privation of good
- Moral evil and Natural (Physical) Evil
- Affliction in nature “arose from below, so to speak, rather than being imposed from above by direct divine will” (E. Johnson, *Ask the Beasts*, 191)
- The “Why” question – persists like an “open wound” (J. Moltmann)

The Cry of Lament

- Psalm 22
- Harrington – laments help people get in touch with their intense emotions and address God directly and without religious censorship (*Why Do We Suffer?*)
- Brueggemann – Psalms of *Disorientation*: witness to a *bold* and *transformed* faith

Jesus' Proclamation of the Reign of God

- Mark 1:14-3:6 – “snapshots” of the Reign of God
- The Leper – Mark 1:40-45 – *splagchnistheis*
- “Jesus himself was less engaged in interpreting suffering than he was in actively working to overcome it” (W. Schrage, *Suffering*, 139)

The Resurrection of the Crucified Jesus

- The scandal of the cross – see 1 Corinthians 1:18-25
- The revelatory experience of Easter
- God can be found present in the suffering one
- God's “signature” activity

The Church as the Body of Christ

- Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4:15-16
- Augustine – Homilies (Expositions) on the Psalms – the “Whole Christ” (*totus Christus*)
- It is Christ who prays for us, Christ who prays in us, and Christ who is prayed to by us
- “When we hear his voice, we must hearken to it as coming from both Head and Body; for whatever he suffered, we too suffered in him and whatever we suffer, he too suffers in us . . .” (Exp. of Psalm 62.2)