Saturday in New Orleans: Rethinking the Holy Spirit in the Aftermath of Trauma

By Shelly Rambo*

ABSTRACT

How do we witness, theologically, to trauma and its aftermath? Beginning with the stories of ministers rebuilding their communities in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, I introduce Holy Saturday as a theological site from which to think about the tenuous "middle" experience of living on in the aftermath of death without having the assurance of life ahead. Drawing on insights in trauma theory, I examine the final passages in the Gospel of John and suggest that looking through the lens of the "middle" unearths a unique theology of the Spirit that speaks powerfully to the realities of trauma and its aftermath.

Introduction

It is twenty-nine months after Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast. Pastors from New Orleans area churches gather for a monthly meeting of an organization called *Churches Supporting Churches*. Pastor Dwight Webster, National Project Director, opens the meeting with apologies. "A lot of our pastors are not able to be with us this morning. Saturday, as we have come

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to know it, is funeral day in New Orleans."[1] The physical and psychological effects of Katrina are becoming more and more evident, and the post-Katrina death and morbidity rates are escalating.[2] Many of the pastors are overseeing and attending up to three funerals a day. Saturday has come to be a reminder of the ways in which Katrina lives on in their communities, of the storm that persists.

Saturday, as we have come to know it, is funeral day in New Orleans.

It is a working reality to these pastors that Hurricane Katrina sparked a deeper and more widespread storm of economic injustice, racism, and poverty. "New Orleans is the underbelly of America," Webster says. Katrina exposed it, and America wants it to go away. "They keep telling us to move on, to get over it already," says Deacon Julius Lee, a member of the group who lost his childhood home and community to Katrina. But there are all of the little things that you can't get back. "The storm has gone, but the 'after the storm' is always here." As the pastors gather to think long-term about their city and about what is needed to rebuild communities, they testify to the reality of the "after" that is "always here."

This persistence of "after" is, I claim, the difficult reality of Saturday. Despite the concrete realities of rebuilding and signs of recovery, Saturday is a reminder that death is still in their midst. It is from, and out of, this place that the New Orleans pastors minister. Most of them will step behind pulpits on Sunday and be expected to preach the "good news" of the gospel; but this "good news" is now preached through the realities of Saturday. For most gathered on Sunday, they look at the world, and their faith, through this lens. The truth of their lives and their communities is this: death persists beyond the event of death and new life cannot yet be envisioned. Saturday speaks, in Deacon's words, to the "'after the storm' that is always there."

In this essay, I explore the conceptual space of Holy Saturday as a potential resource for thinking through post-disaster experiences such as Katrina. Just as Good Friday and Easter Sunday have been locations from which to think about human experiences of death, suffering, new life, and celebration, Holy Saturday narrates a distinctive experience that resonates with the "after the storm" realities. Holy Saturday speaks to an experience of remaining and persisting beyond an ending and before something new

arises. I am not focused here on developing Holy Saturday liturgically. Many of the pastors gathered at the table do not recognize or practice the liturgy of the Paschal Triduum, in which Holy Saturday is situated.[3] The purpose of my exploration is not to get them to do so, but instead to offer Saturday as a theological locus in which they can locate themselves and their experiences. My aim is to provide theological testimony to an oft-elided reality that, in the wake of human disaster, the experience of "death"[4] persists in life, making it impossible for persons to "get back" or to "get over" the traumatic event. Insights from trauma studies reveal that boundaries between death and life are broken down by the force of a traumatic event; temporal boundaries between past, present, and future no longer hold.

In the wake of human disaster, the experience of "death" persists in life, making it impossible for persons to "get back" or to "get over" the traumatic event.

Theological testimony to these shattered boundaries requires rethinking the ways in which theological texts can attest to a more complex relationship between death and life. Holy Saturday provides this testimony. In an article on reproductive loss, Serene Jones suggests that theology can provide spaces—"morphological spaces"—for unnarratable experiences of loss. It can provide form and structure to such experiences, marking out a space that otherwise is unrecognized. For example, Jones reconceives the Trinitarian event of the cross as the image of God bearing death within—a still-birthing image; this provides grieving mothers with a vision of God that speaks powerfully to the reality of their experience.[5] In a similar fashion, I claim that Saturday provides a theological space into which persons who experience trauma can enter. It can speak to the disrupted and disrupting realities of trauma. For trauma survivors, and for religious leaders working within these settings, Saturday provides a way of theologically narrating the "after that is always here."[6]

In the pages that follow, I introduce Holy Saturday in light of the experience of trauma. I turn to the Gospel of John to provide a biblical testimony to Saturday. The gospel not only testifies to a "new" form of life

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emerging from death; it also testifies to the unique configuration of the divine, as the Spirit of witness "remaining" in the aftermath of death.

Holy Saturday

[He] was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead.
(Apostle's Creed)

There is not much account of Holy Saturday in the biblical texts.[7] In the post-crucifixion biblical accounts, there are a few sentences that narrate preparations and negotiations for burial. In the literary and liturgical tradition, Holy Saturday marks the event of Christ's descent into hell. Although the "above ground" picture features the practical dimensions of physical death, there is activity in the underworld, in which Christ, unconstrained by the forces of death, travels through the regions of hell. Reference can be found in the early creedal tradition, as evidenced in the Apostles' Creed. The liturgical significance of this day has often been expressed through images of the "harrowing of hell," in which Christ releases the captives, collects the unbelievers, and ascends into heaven victoriously. It is, as such, a precursor to resurrection, a pre-victory.

Although there is a proliferation of artistic images of the descent, there is little said about its significance for the life of faith. Because of its positioning, it is often subsumed by the events surrounding it. As the second of the three days—the "middle" day—it is most frequently interpreted in relationship to Easter Sunday, as the anticipatory moment before new life arises. Christian believers often connect Christ's suffering on Good Friday with their own sufferings and experiences of loss. Easter Sunday holds the promise of resurrection, of new beginnings, not only for Christ, but also for those who profess belief in him. But Holy Saturday and the event of Christ's descent are not generally connected to human experience in the same way as these other events.

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More recently, scholars have turned to Holy Saturday precisely for its potential to testify to events and experiences of radical suffering. Holy Saturday signifies a way of honoring and acknowledging the impact of death by refusing to claim newness before its time. The pre-victory account of the harrowing rushes life and elides the profound weight of death. Behind this retrieval are the historical events that shake the fundamental core of Christian beliefs—belief in God's presence and belief in resurrection. Ignoring the space between death and life runs the risk of overlooking the "real time" of grief and loss. Reclaiming Holy Saturday confronts the impossibility of professing resurrection in the aftermath of devastating violence.

Holy Saturday signifies a way of honoring and acknowledging the impact of death by refusing to claim newness before its time.

Hans Urs von Balthasar's work on Holy Saturday is extensive, and he provides a powerful critique of the "harrowing of hell."[8] Contrary to the "harrowing" figure, Christ is not descending in victory, but rather descending as one "dead with the dead." He does not conquer death, but instead experiences and endures it. The passivity of Christ in hell conveys a message of God's solidarity with humanity that does not simply end on the cross but carries into the furthest reaches of hell. He not only dies on the cross, but also, following Nicolas of Cusa's description, endures a "second" death on Holy Saturday. I cannot attend to the richness of Balthasar's theology here, but it is important to note his insistence that Holy Saturday can no longer be interpreted as a day of life/resurrection. His rhetoric of Saturday makes clear that life does not make an appearance on the scene. Instead, there is absolute darkness and forsakenness. The significance of Holy Saturday for Balthasar is that it provides a fuller and more radical picture of God's work of redemption. There is no place that God does not go for love of humanity. For Balthasar, Holy Saturday is not a mere side-note to the work of redemption; it is the climax of the redemptive story.

There is no place that God does not go for love of humanity.

Walter Brueggemann claims that Holy Saturday is essential to a post-Holocaust Christian theology. In a brief essay on Holy Saturday in the

volume titled, *A Shadow of Glory: Reading the New Testament after the Holocaust,* Brueggemann understands Holy Saturday, the "second day," as a significant theological resource for thinking about the impact of the Holocaust on Christian resurrection claims.[9] Holy Saturday provides a necessary "pause" in the movement from death to life. He writes, "It is my simple suggestion that the Shoah—and perhaps other unbearable brutalities may qualify along the Shoah—requires Christian faith and liturgy to pause long and deeply on the second day."[10] The Shoah presses us to rethink the "rush" from Good Friday to Easter Sunday in the Christian tradition. It demands that we pause, linger, wait, and slow down before claiming victory. He is not withholding the Easter declaration from the Christian church, but he insists that "unbearable brutalities" ward against liturgical temptations to back up Easter affirmations to the second day.[11]

Reformed theologian, Alan Lewis, provides an extensive theological exploration of Holy Saturday in his book, *Between Cross and Resurrection: A Theology of Holy Saturday.* Lewis places human experience, including both global atrocities and his own battle with cancer, as the context for his doctrinal exploration of the descent. The story of the life, death, and burial of Jesus is a faith story into which a community of faith lives.[12] In the retelling of this story, the Christian community moves along the sequence of days, experiencing the somber and the ecstatic, the despair and the celebration. Tracing the doctrinal accounts of the descent, primarily in the Reformed tradition, Lewis claims that Holy Saturday narrates the rupture in *divine* history that can effectively attest to the rupture of world history.[13] For those who live into this story, Saturday is a day of prayer, in which believers begin, in silence, to invoke the Spirit, who creates new life and brings about new beginnings.[14]

For each of these scholars, Holy Saturday is the overlooked day between the "bad news" and the "good news," between death and resurrection. They see in Holy Saturday a necessary site from which to acknowledge the impossibility of life ahead. Holy Saturday refuses the triumphalism of Christian resurrection that often bears the marks of anti-Semitism and elides the impact of death. There is existential power in each of these recoveries as they discover in Holy Saturday a way to honor the absence, the death, and the impossibility of life ahead. In Brueggemann's words, the silence of

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Holy Saturday gives voice to "unvoiced" experiences. Balthasar refers to Holy Saturday as the hiatus and chasm, refusing the tendency to think of it as a stepping-stone or a bridge to Easter Sunday.

While these scholars speak to these extremities, they fail to account for one of the fundamental challenges and realities of trauma—the way in which the line between death and life is dissolved, broken down, in trauma. These interpretations of Holy Saturday focus on the significance of what takes place between death and life, yet they do not question the fundamental trajectory of the narrative—that death is behind and life ahead. The progression in reading the two events is preserved. It is precisely this progression that cannot be assumed in traumatic experience. In trauma, it is not just a matter of death lingering longer, but rather death's persistent intrusion into life. To honor the experience of trauma theologically, we have to reckon with the impossible delineation between death and life. In trauma, the "pause" is taken out of Holy Saturday; instead of having a delay on the way to life, in trauma, you have the suspension of life ahead.

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Trauma

Philosopher Susan Brison identifies the experience of trauma in her book, *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of a Self,* as the dissolution of the boundary between death and life. Giving an account of her own experience of trauma, she writes, "The line between life and death, once so clear and sustaining, now seemed carelessly drawn and easily erased." [15] In the aftermath of traumatic experience, life is often described by survivors as the experience of moving in the world as one who is not longer alive.[16] The continual threat of the past event invading one's present existence contributes to this difficult engagement with life. The delineation between death and life, and a progression from one to another, are shattered in trauma. As Cathy Caruth notes, this repetition and invasion of death into life, as evidenced in "flashbacks" (vivid visual fragments of the past), conveys the ways in which the past does not remain past, but instead returns

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in the present in such a way that it is re-lived as a present reality. Trauma researchers and clinicians suggest that the actual event of trauma is so forceful in its impact, overriding and overwhelming human capacities for integration, that the event is marked by an epistemological rupture. Its very occurrence is constituted by what is unknown and ungrasped.[17] What differentiates traumatic experience from other experiences of suffering is the degree to which processes of integration are severed as a result of the overwhelming nature of a traumatic event. In suffering, a person can "work through" a process of grief and, in time, is able to integrate that past event into her or his present understanding and way of being in the world. The progression of time slows down, but is still maintained. Bessel van der Kolk says that the mantra "time heals all wounds" is simply not true in the case of trauma. It is precisely the fact that time (as well as other fundamental ways of orienting oneself in the world) is radically disrupted in trauma that makes it impossible to assume any straightforward progression from end to beginning, death to life.[18] Trauma attests to a radical shattering that does not simply keep the events of the past "in the past"; instead, in trauma, "death" persists in life. This persistence is not only intrusive; it is debilitating. One's life becomes reoriented around managing and warding off the threat of retriggering. The concept of moving forward—or beyond—is seriously challenged.[19]

What differentiates traumatic experience from other experiences of suffering is the degree to which processes of integration are severed as a result of the overwhelming nature of a traumatic event.

Can Holy Saturday, in Jones' words, be a morphological space into which those who experience trauma can enter? The experience of the uncertain "between" in trauma is one in which death and life are hinged, rather than clearly delineated. This reality is not fully captured in the previous theological proposals. Although they slow the movement to life, there remains, in these interpretations, a forward direction and assurance of life. Yet it is the persistence of death in life, the ways in which it remains, that is at issue here—the "after the storm that is always here." Holy Saturday, if read in a particular way, can witness both to the difficulty and promise of this remaining.[20] Holy Saturday exposes death and life in a potentially different arrangement; it hinges the two and provides a critical testimony

to the ways in which death persists in life, akin to the experience of traumatic survival.

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Gospel of John

I turn, briefly, to the Johannine gospel to explore a biblical testimony to this more mixed territory of death and life. Interpreting Saturday is not simply a matter of exegeting the verses between cross and resurrection. Although the gospel narrates the sequence of events from death to resurrection (Good Friday to Easter Sunday), the farewell discourse in chapters 14-17 and the final chapter of the gospel (chapter 21) challenge this linear sequence. Death is not behind and life is not clearly ahead. Instead, something of death remains and life is forged in relationship to this "remaining." The temporal ambiguities of the Johannine gospel open us to alternative readings of the death-life narrative which resonate with the experience of trauma and traumatic loss. Does the Gospel of John provide a biblical testimony to the difficult "timing" of radical suffering? Could the Saturday realities, as evidenced in the biblical text, turn us to a different way of understanding both divine and human presence in the aftermath of trauma? My affirmative answer to both hinges on a reading of the word μένω (*menō*).

The temporal ambiguities of the Johannine gospel open us to alternative readings of the death-life narrative which resonate with the experience of trauma and traumatic loss.

The Greek term μένω, meaning to remain, abide, or persist, is repeated throughout the Gospel of John and appears, most prominently, in the passages surrounding Jesus' death.[21] In the farewell discourse in John 14-17, Jesus speaks to the disciples about a different way of being forged through the event of his death. In these four chapters, he speaks about his departure and its effect on those who remain. They will be connected to him, but in a different way. He describes this distinctive relationship through the term μένω[22] To translate μένω as "remaining" preserves, I believe, an important connection with death. In the contemporary translation, *The Message,* Eugene Peterson translates μένω as life: "Live in me" (John 15). What is lost in this translation is the way in which this new relationship

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that Jesus forecasts is related to death, the way in which he is positioning the disciples as witnesses between death and life.

In chapter 21, the life of discipleship is also framed in relationship to μένω. In this post-resurrection scene, Jesus eats with his disciples after their morning of fishing, and then he engages Peter in conversation. Although Jesus' final dialogue with Peter focuses initially on love and following, the conversation is disrupted by a discussion of "remaining," prompted by the presence of the beloved disciple.[23] The gospel closes with peculiar reflections around the unanswered question, "What is it to you that he remain?" In light of discourses of trauma, the text reads like a survival narrative, in which life is described in terms of "remaining" or "living beyond" a death. The synonyms for μένω do not preserve these weightier ties to death. Although there is the assurance of comfort and presence communicated in the term μένω, it is important to remember the context in which these words are delivered—before Jesus' death and immediately following the prediction of Peter's death. The concept of remaining speaks to a way of being in which life bears the marks of death.

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In these texts, Jesus reshapes the disciples' understanding of life in two unique ways, both of which are tied to μένω. First, at the heart of the farewell discourse is the strange declaration that the disciples will not fully comprehend the events that they will witness. They cannot, he says to them, bear them now. In the discourse, we find a pre-death excursis on the kind of life that the disciples will lead *after* his death. He is reshaping their lives in relationship to an event that they will not fully grasp. As he is speaking, he states that they will not be able to receive his words as they hear them. He tells them that they cannot bear the things that he is telling them now (16:12). They will be guided into them belatedly. There is also indication, in the surrounding passages, that the disciples understand little of what is taking place, signaled in Jesus' question, "Have I been with you all this time, Phillip, and you still do not know me?" (14:9). There is deep uncertainty in these passages about what is, and is not,

known. There is a sense that the aftermath of death will be a tenuous place of unknowing, rather than a firm ground from which to proclaim the resurrection. The term μένω, spoken in this context of death, seems to take into account the epistemological uncertainty and the belatedness. Instead of saying that the disciples will know the truth of the events that are taking place *now*, he introduces a spirit who will remain (μένω) with them, guiding them into the truth *at a later time.*

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Second, he promises them a "remaining" spirit. The figure of the παράκλητος (*paraclete*) is highlighted in this gospel, and yet it is difficult to translate.[24] The *paraclete*-spirit is promised in anticipation of a time of transition, when the disciples will begin to make sense of their lives in his absence. The Johannine gospel, understood to be a later account of the life and ministry of Jesus, and thus most removed from his actual physical presence, attests to God's continuous presence in light of the growing sense of Jesus' distance. Although the *paraclete* is often interpreted as the promise of God's continuous *presence* in light of the departure of Jesus, the lens of trauma highlights other aspects of this term, namely the potential testimony of the spirit to absence. Drawing from the previous insight about death as something "ungrasped," the *paraclete*-spirit is, then, the figure that not only moves forward with the disciples but also witnesses to what was not fully known or comprehended. The persisting, abiding, remaining of the spirit speaks to a different kind of accompaniment that takes into account the persistence of death rather than its finality.

Although there is no precise definition of *paraclete,* it is typically associated with the forensic act of witness, of bearing witness or advocating for another. In this context, "bearing witness" is not simply a matter of conveying an account of the things that Jesus has done or said; instead, this term 'remaining,' speaks to another level or dimension of what it means to be a witness, to persist amidst what cannot be fully known, to persist, in juridical terms, in the absence of all the evidence. To bear witness to the things that Jesus did means, as well, to contend with the ways in which

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these events also elude them. The *paraclete* is the figure remaining as witness to both the realities of death and the ways in which they persist beyond an ending.

I suggest that, through this word μένω and the accompanying figure of the *paraclete,* the gospel reorients our understanding of the relationship between death and life. Both terms do not simply speak about life ahead but speak about a way of being at the juncture of death and life. In these Johannine passages, there is a marking out of a distinctive "between" territory, in which death and life, absence and presence, come into a tenuous interaction. The distinctively Johannine vocabulary of "remaining" does not simply mark a vacuum; instead, it forges a place of witness between death and life, figured in the *paraclete*-spirit.

The distinctively Johannine vocabulary of "remaining" does not simply mark a vacuum; instead, it forges a place of witness between death and life, figured in the paraclete-spirit.

The distinctive pneumatology of the *paraclete,* and its significance, is largely unexplored. But the experience of Saturday turns us to this figure. Its placement in the Johannine text—promised in the face of death but never clearly arriving, presented as witness to what cannot be known in the present—speaks to Saturday and its tenuous relationship between death and life. This "remaining" spirit persists between death and life, hinging the two in a fragile but powerful relationship.

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I suggest, through this reading of the gospel, that our familiar theological trajectory from death to life is disrupted by a biblical testimony to a more unclear relationship between death and life. Instead of seeing death as a past reality and life as the promise of what is to come, the text places us continually, as readers, in the position of receiving the question posed at the end of the gospel: "What is it to you that he remain?" A recovery of this theologically disruptive "between" has the potential to resist the voices that tell persons to "get over" and "get on" with life. But it also positions readers in a critical place of witness, in which our lives are reoriented in

relationship to unnarratable realities of death without a clear vision of what is ahead. Instead, we are reshaped as those who remain, as witnesses between death and life. In the face of Deacon Julius's "persisting storm," there is a Spirit of witness that persists after death and before resurrection. This Saturday Spirit does not erase the sting of death. This Spirit is, rather, the breath on which any Easter proclamations must be carried.

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[1]The reference to Saturday as funeral day first originated with Pastor Aldon Cotton, a leader of *Churches Supporting Churches*. LeDayne McLeese Polaski, Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America Project Director and active member of *Churches Supporting Churches* writes about it in a short article titled, "Saturday is Funeral Day." In that article, she quotes Pastor Sam Johnson as follows: "In the African-American community, Saturday is the traditional day for funerals—these days, I sometimes attend three funerals on a given Saturday, and there is seldom a Saturday that goes by when I don't have at least one" (*PeaceWork*, no. 4 & 5 [2007]: 2).

[2]See the report compiled by Dr. Kevin U. Stephens, Health Director for the City of New Orleans, and staff: Kevin U. Stephens Sr, David Grew, Karen Chin, Paul Kadetz, P. Gregg Greenough, Frederick M. Burkle Jr, Sandra L. Robinson, and Evangeline R. Franklin, "Excess Mortality in the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina: A Preliminary Report," *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness* 1, no. 1 (2007): 15-20. Also available online at the City of New Orleans web site, accessed 31 January 2008, http://www.cityofno.com/Portals/Portal48/Resources/Stephens.pdf. See also the article by Steve Sternberg, "New Orleans Deaths up 47%," *USA Today*, 22 June, 2007.

[3]The Paschal Triduum is the three-day celebration of the death and resurrection of Christ. It spans Maundy Thursday to Easter Sunday. Originating in liturgical reforms of Vatican II, it was intended to set these days apart from Holy Week. It is often referred to as the Easter, Paschal, or Holy Triduum. Holy Saturday has a recognized place in the celebration of the Triduum. I refer to Holy Saturday as Saturday throughout most of the essay, pointing less to the liturgical development than to the significance of the sequence of days for interpreting Christian faith.

[4]I refer to "death" as a synonym for a radical ending, as it is experienced in trauma.

[5]L. Serene Jones, "Hope Deferred: Theological Reflections on Reproductive Loss," *Modern Theology* 17, no. 2 (April 2001): 227-45.

[6]We see similar reference to being "Good Friday people," which draws a connection between the experience of Christ's sufferings and the experience of human suffering. Sheila Cassidy, *Good Friday People* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., 1991). By recognizing the impossibility of "getting over," I do not deny the presence of resurrection and new life;

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I insist, however, that these claims must be interpreted in light of the disruption between them.I am not removing the claim to resurrection, but I assert that it needs to be reclaimed through what I understand to be the "persistence" of Holy Saturday, of the realities of life-in-death and death-in-life.

[7]The silence is fitting, Hans Urs von Balthasar says: "Death calls for this silence." Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale,* trans. A. Nichols (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1990).

[8]Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale;* Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory,* vol. 4, *The Action,* trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998); Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory,* vol. 5, *The Last Act,* trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998); Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord,* vol. 7, *Theology: The New Covenant,* trans. B. McNeill (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989); Balthasar, *Heart of the World,* trans. Erasmo S. Leiva (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1979).

[9]Walter Brueggemann, "Readings from the Day 'In Between,'" in *A Shadow of Glory Reading the New Testament after the Holocaust,* ed. Tod Linafelt (New York: Routledge, 2002), 105-15. Brueggemann acknowledges his debt to Hans Urs von Balthasar, 115, n. 11, and the "long day's journey of the Saturday," towards which George Steiner points; see George Steiner, *Real Presences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 231-32.

[10]Brueggemann, 110.

[11]Brueggemann notes the danger of the three-day sequence, and the tenuous place of Holy Saturday in it. He offers three common mis-readings of the second day in the sequence: 1) extending the first day; 2) pushing the second day towards the third; or 3) collapsing the second day into the first. Ibid., 110-11.

[12]Like Brueggemann, Lewis acknowledges the work of Balthasar. Alan Lewis, *Between Cross and Resurrection: A Theology of Holy Saturday* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 2, n. 1.

[13]Lewis writes, "And the slow, deep, self-critical reflection that is required of Christians to honor the legacy of Auschwitz can begin with no other premise than an "Easter Saturday" conclusion—that the Holocaust represents another stunning failure on God's part, a huge discontinuity in the Eternal's promised movement from creation to the *eschaton:* a rupture in *divine* history no less than in human or in Jewish" (ibid., 276).

[14]Although Lewis claims that he does not develop Holy Saturday in a mystical direction like Balthasar, the epilogue takes on a contemplative tone: "Prayer then, the sound of silence upon Easter Saturday and every day which reenacts it, is the last breath of our self-relinquishment, the freedom we give God at last to *be* God, gracious, holy, and creative, precisely in those crises where our bodies, intellects, and souls cry out in tears of anger and bewilderment that God is dead" (ibid., 464).

[15]Susan J. Brison, *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of a Self* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 9.

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[16]I refer to the experience of trauma as a "death" because it is often described as such by survivors.

[17]This is explored on a philosophical level, and it is also reflected in recent neurobiological studies that suggest that traumatic experiences bypass cognitive areas of the brain and instead are stored in the limbic system. See *Traumatic Stress: The Effects of Overwhelming Stress on Mind, Body, and Society*, ed. Bessel A. Van der Kolk, Alexander C. McFarlane, and Lars Weisaeth (New York: Guilford, 1996); Joseph LeDoux, *The Emotional Brain: The Mysterious Underpinnings of Emotional Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996); J. Douglas Bremner. *Does Stress Damage the Brain?: Understanding Trauma-Related Disorders from a Mind-Body Perspective* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2005).

[18]Again, this can be explained through neurobiology as well. Trauma impairs the storage process of memories. The route of processing typically goes from the amygdala to the hippocampus, and then to the pre-frontal cortex. The hippocampus, responsible for situating experiences in space and time, breaks down in cases of trauma. Memories remain in the amygdala, the alarm system of the brain; they remain, however, without recognition of context and time. This is why a past event is relived as present; it has failed to be integrated *as a past event.*

[19]For a helpful introductory essay to the phenomenon of trauma and its impact on human persons, see Bessel A. van der Kolk and Alexander C. McFarlane, "The Black Hole of Trauma," in *Traumatic Stress*, 3-23. Van der Kolk suggests that the loss of hope in the future is a major symptom of trauma. One of the primary tasks of trauma clinicians, he believes, is to restore the capacity for imagination and delight: "We are hope and imagination merchants." Bessel A. Van der Kolk, "The Body Keeps the Score: Integration of Body and Mind in the Treatment of Traumatized People" (lecture, The Trauma Center, Brookline, MA, January 24, 2007).

[20]I am making the case for Saturday as more than an empty space or a holding space. Instead, I want to explore it as a space defined by persistence rather than waiting, of remaining rather than anticipating. This distinction may seem insignificant, but it reflects the biblical testimony to an "actively passive" presence in the aftermath of death.

[21]It is present in the other gospels, but it is featured in the Gospel of John and is connected with the figure of the Spirit throughout. It appears 118 times in the Christian scriptures, 68 of which are in the Johannine gospels. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and Gerhard Frierich, "μένω," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964).

[22]Most English translations translate μένω as "to abide." The King James and New Revised Standard versions are two examples of this. The New International Version uses "to remain," and The Message "to live." All scriptural citations in this article are from the New Revised Standard version unless otherwise noted.

[23]The repetition of the love questions and the imperative to follow comprise familiar conceptions of what it means to be a disciple (a model of imitation). Peter, here, is one who will follow Jesus *to the death.* John 21 features, as well, the prediction of John's death,

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suggesting that, in following Jesus, he will meet a similar end. This disruption occurs right after Jesus predicts Peter's death.

[24]Raymond E. Brown, "Appendix V: The Paraclete," in *The Gospel According to John XIII-XXI*, Anchor Bible (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1970). See also ibid., "Appendix I: JohannineVocabulary," in *The Gospel According to John I-XII*, Anchor Bible (Garden City, NJ, Doubleday, 1966), 497-518.