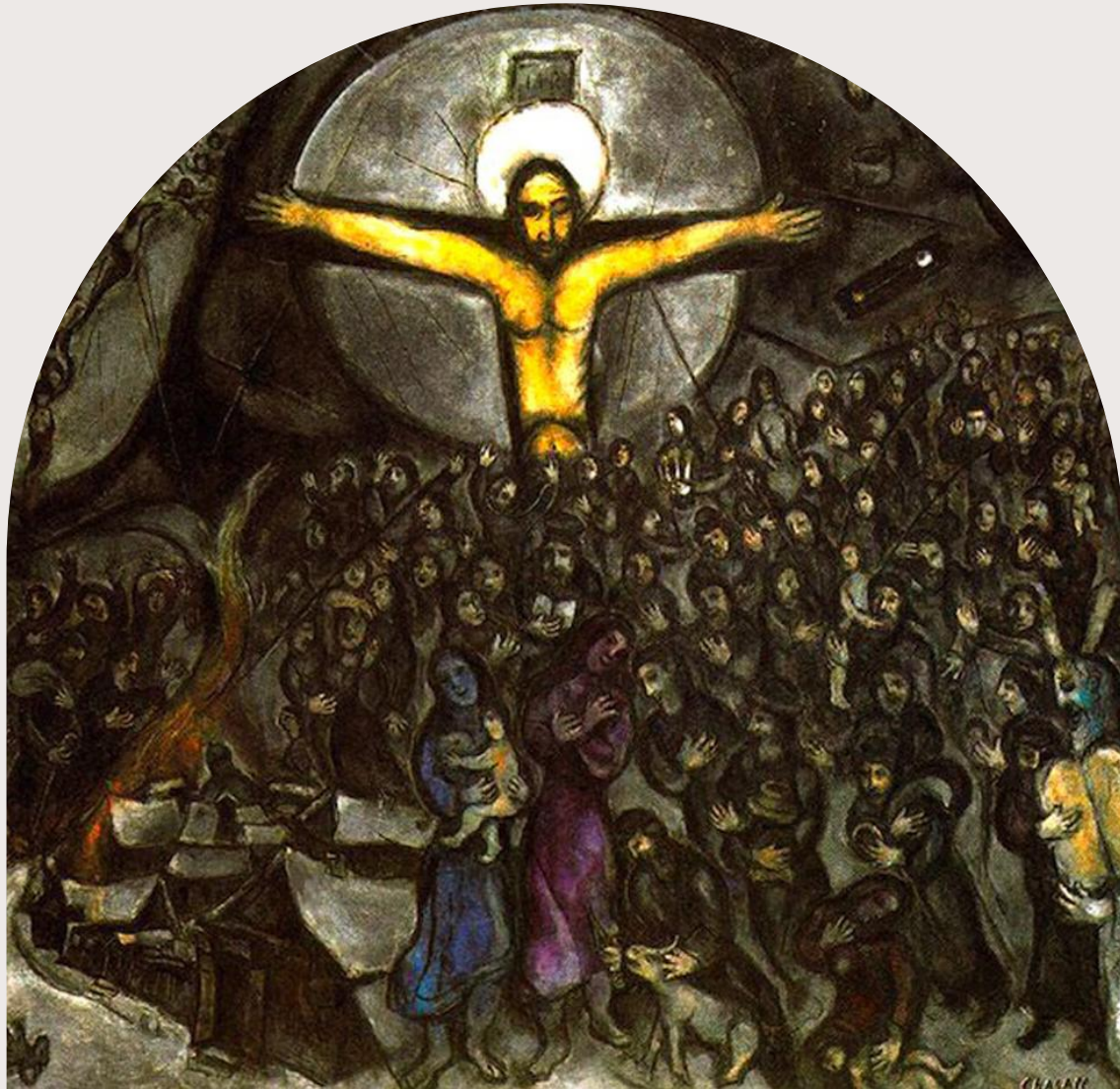




WHEN IS SUFFERING REDEEMPTIVE, AND WHO DECIDES?

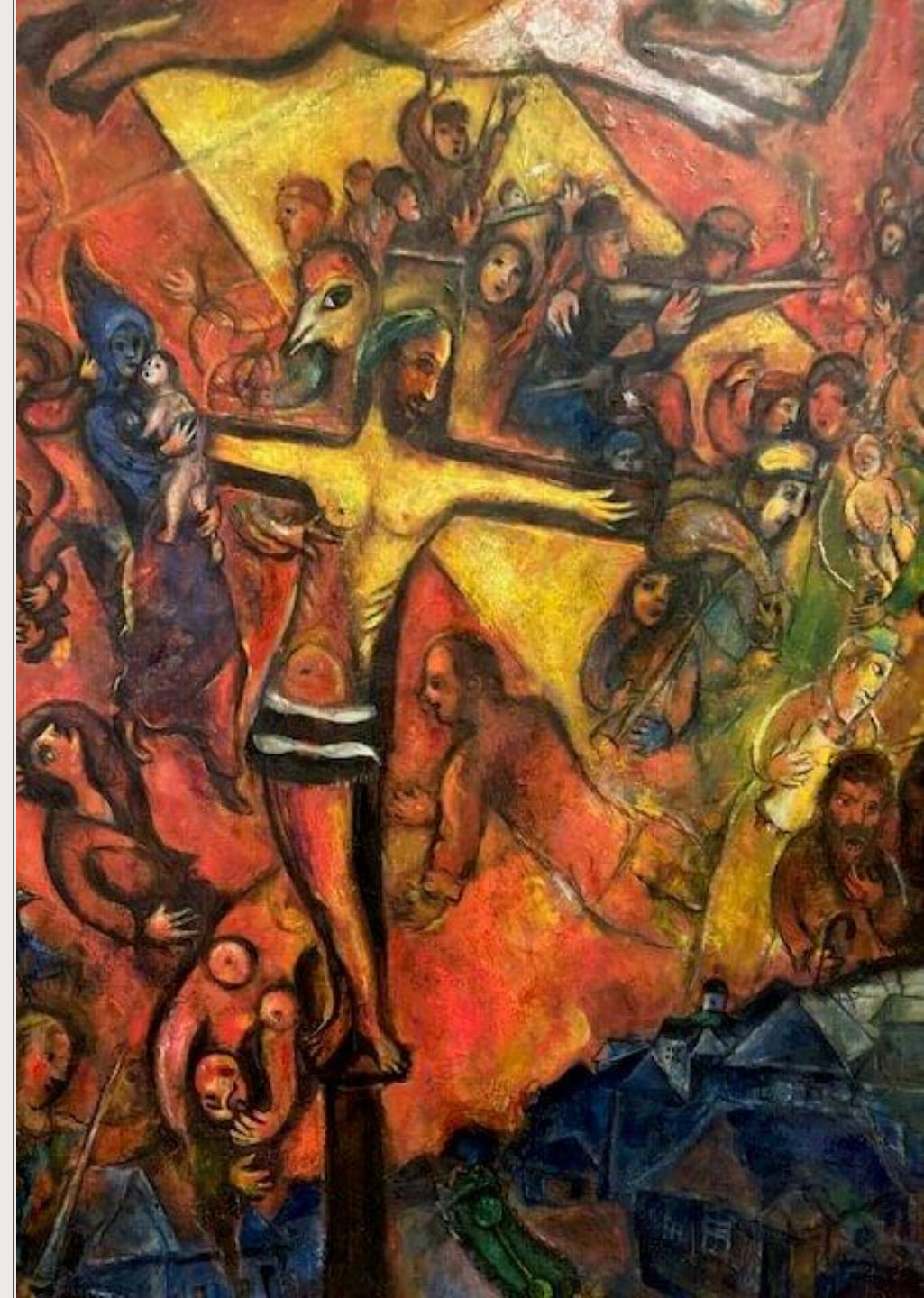
The Rev. Canon Emily Griffin

Cathedral Commons

October 14, 2026

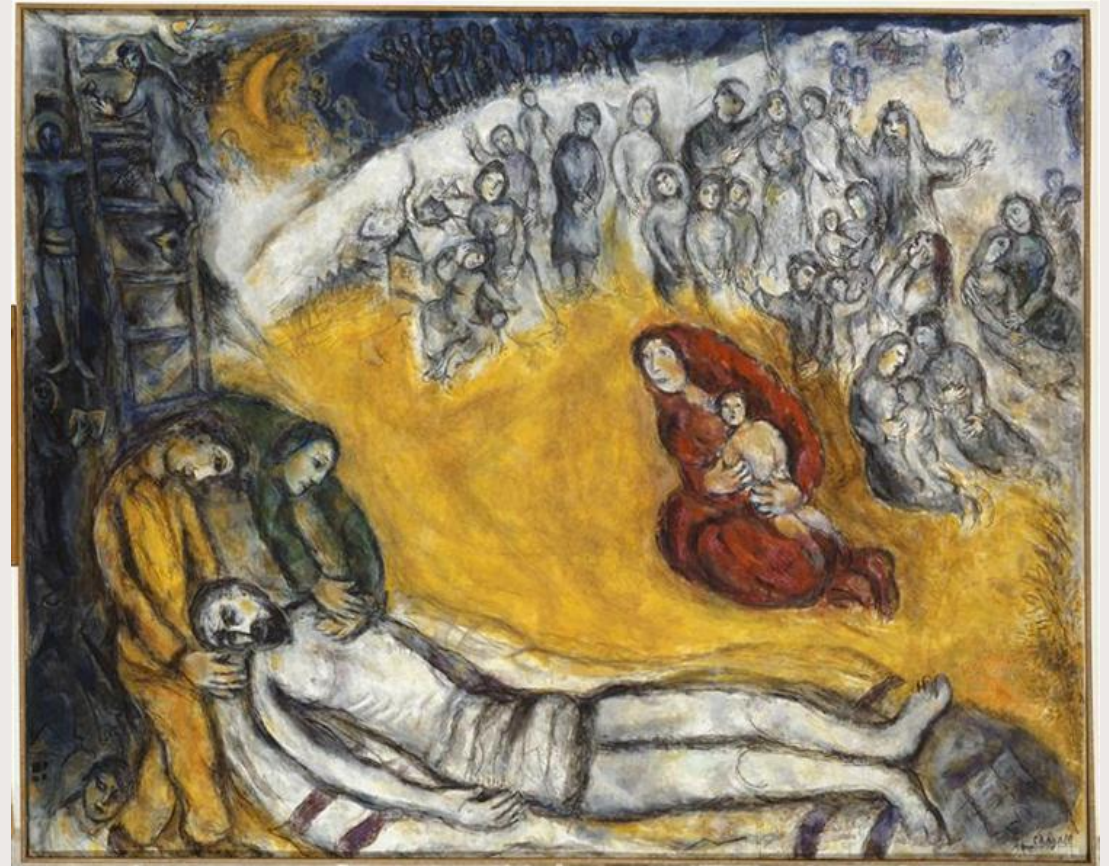
A PRAYER ON GOOD FRIDAY:

Gracious God, the comfort of all who sorrow, the strength of all who suffer: Let the cry of those in misery or need come to you, that they may find your mercy present with them in all their afflictions; and give us, we pray, the strength to serve them for the sake of him who suffered for us, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP, p. 279)



DIFFERENT KINDS OF SUFFERING

- “Voluntary”
 - *For the Sake of Love*
 - *For the Sake of Justice*
- Involuntary
 - *Illness, Disability*
 - *Natural Disasters*
 - *Consequences of Our Choices*
 - *Consequences of Others’ Choices*



UNPACKING “UNEARNED SUFFERING IS REDEMPITIVE”

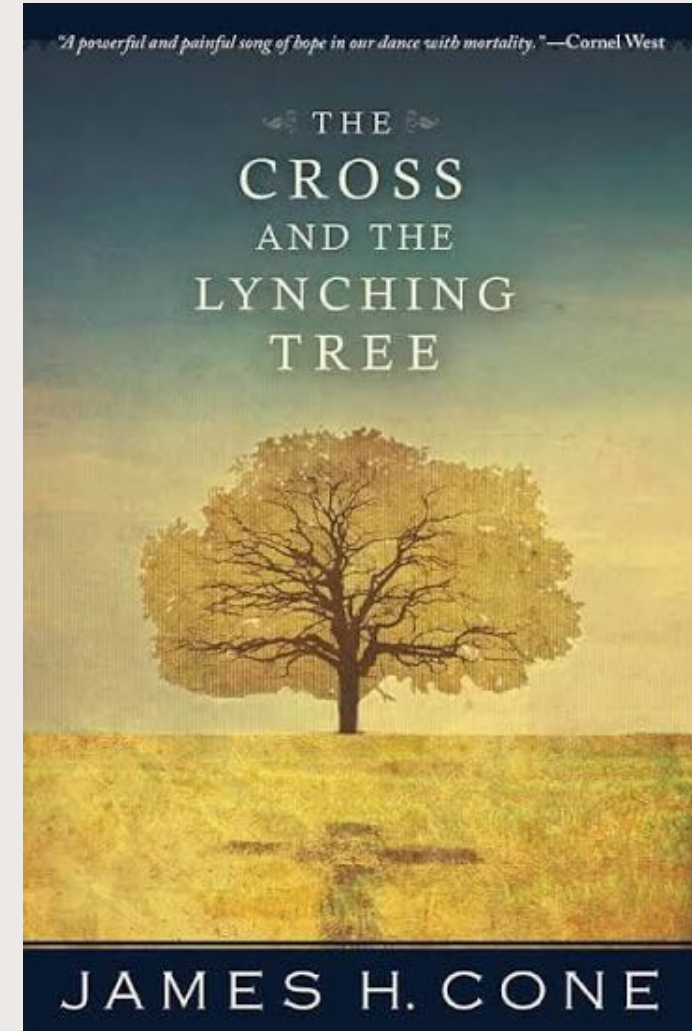


The Theology and Example of Dr. King

Redemption as “an Experience of Salvation, the Promise of Freedom that Lynching Cannot Take Away”

Things We May Learn:
Humility, Compassion, the
Preciousness of Life

Is Justification Necessary?



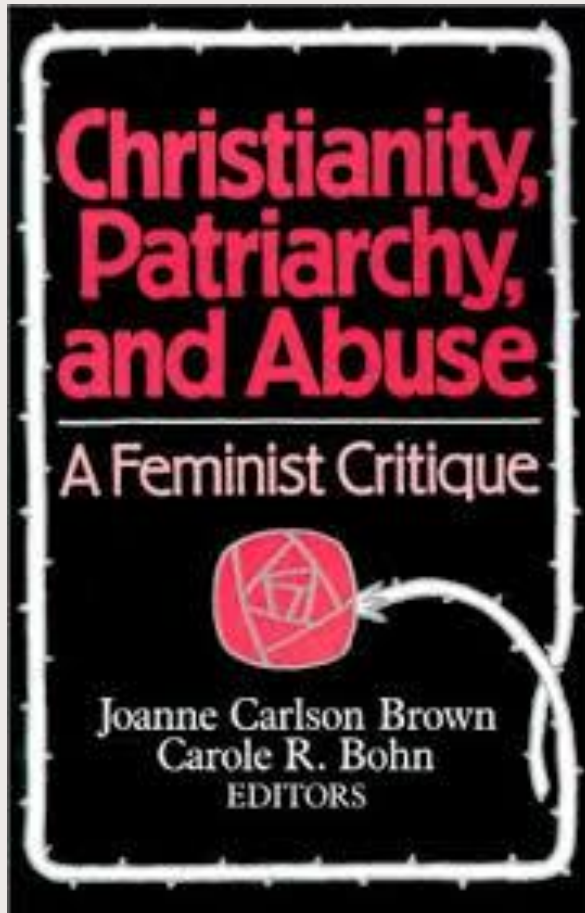
QUESTIONS

Considering the kinds of suffering we've discussed so far, when in your life has suffering (of any kind) led to a greater good?

What are your associations with the cross? How has it helped or harmed you?



THE FLIP SIDE: REDEMPTIVE SUFFERING AND ABUSE



How We Understand the Cross
The Challenges of “Sacrificial Love”
The Church’s History of Response
The Need to Make Meaning
Where is God?

WHAT ARE OUR OPTIONS?

Retaliation

Scapegoating

Manipulation

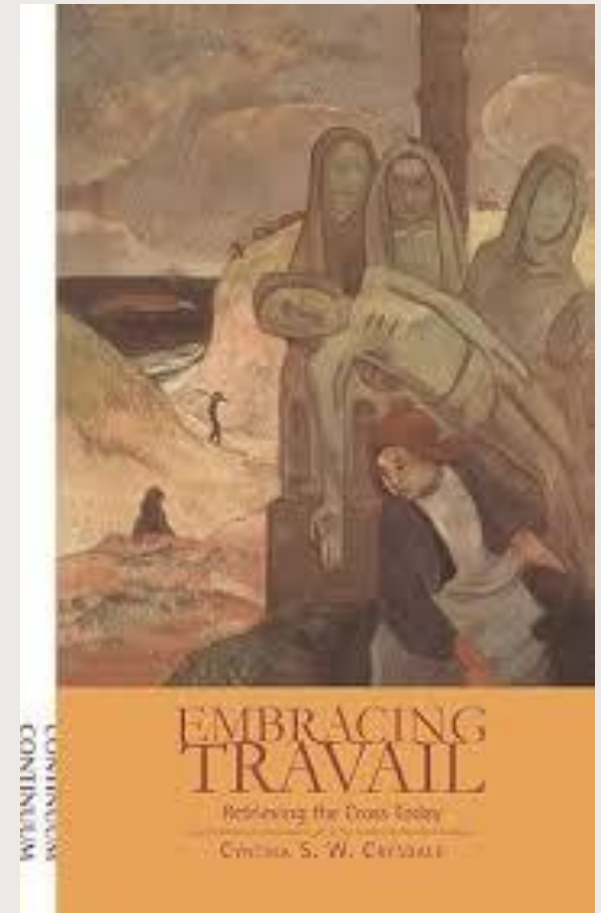
Bravado

Passive Endurance

Fighting on Every Front

The Myth of Redemptive Violence

An “Ethic of Risk”





QUESTION: HOW MIGHT AN ETHIC OF RISK BE HELPFUL?

Claiming Our God-Given Dignity

Looking at Possibilities for Responsible Action within the Limits of our Power

Grounding Ourselves in Community and a Larger Narrative

Developing Skills for Discernment

Taking Strategic Risks that Create the Conditions for Transformation

THE ROLES OF GRACE AND RESURRECTION

Different Paths:

Forgiveness

Healing

Resisting Injustice

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling...for it is God who is at work in you...”

– Philippians 2





SUFFERING AND SOLIDARITY

What Solidarity is NOT:

Laundering Our Guilt

Overlaying Our Story Onto Others

What Solidarity Could Be:

Expanding Our Circles of Commitment and Concern

Mutual Openness and Support

Freedom from the Powers of Sin and Death...Redemption?