INTRODUCTION

A murmur haunts our global village. A strange mix: cries of outrage, choked sobbing interrupted by tears, and prayers recited by the families of forcibly disappeared or murdered victims throughout the world, particularly those that the system considers disposable, useless.

The blood of the innocent is "a clamor that rises to Heaven," akin to the survivors' supplicating in front of a global wailing wall. Since ancient times, the book of Genesis narrates: "YHWH said, "'What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground" (Gen 4:10). But that clamor almost always receives the paradoxical responses of silence from the divine world and indifference from the human realm. At times, this pain is soothed by the comfort that comes from the grieving experienced by the bereaved. Other times, it is sublimated by the funeral rituals of a diversity of spiritual traditions that offer solace to the family members of the departed. Seldom does the profane world hear this clamor since it is overpowered by the deafening pandemonium of the powerful or the murmur of the cowards who, paralyzed by fear, submit to the domination of criminal mafias.

Since the time in which Abel was slain by his brother Cain, as communicated by the Hebrew tradition, or from the remote memory of the dismemberment of the Mexica goddess Coyolxauhqui, Coatlicue's only daughter, slain by her warrior brother Huitzilopochtli in the narrative of the ancient Mexicas, humankind has attempted to tell the story of those who were annihilated by the violent spiral of rivalry and death that has accompanied us since our origins.

Daring to name the victims, tell their stories, demand justice, and envision forgiveness to the point of imploring mercy from on high is how we must remember their ephemeral passage through these lands. In this way, as humankind, we have experienced the (im)possible act of grieving for those who have departed. This is an attempt to overcome the trauma, as survivors who continue dwelling on this land that has been transformed into a desolate wasteland barren of life.

This book is about the (im)possible act of grieving amid the horrors of the concentration camps of our postmodern times that have sown clan-

destine burials in the territories of the Global South, from the Sahara to the Mediterranean and throughout Mesoamerica. Territories turned into hidden tombs whose geography—in the desert, the highlands, or in the depths of the seas—hides the remains of countless victims annihilated by necropower. Recently, in Mexico, we have reached an extreme, seeing dead bodies packed in itinerant morgues traveling through several cities since there is no place for them in forensic facilities. This is a scandalous image of bodies forced into exile, disposed of as trash, even after death.

However, families who dig up the remains do not consider them trash but buried treasures they search for with their hands and nails like picks and shovels. These bodies contain DNA that makes it possible to identify those who lie there dismembered, cut to pieces, or disposed of unless they were dissolved in acid by the infamous action of hitmen and executioners hired to kill by criminal mafias.

Human remains bear a promise inscribed "in the marrow of the bones"—as Isaiah, the Hebrew prophet (Is 66:14) already said with his powerful symbolic language —the endless *promise of life*. Translated into our dark times, this promise appeals to the "right of the deceased to become ancestors", according to a medicine man from Bojayá, Colombia, who heals through prayer: "because the deceased are also entitled to rights that the living have snatched away from them." This is an even more powerful reflection than that made by Walter Benjamin amid the Nazi horror in the mid-twentieth century. Those of us who have survived the deceased must assert their rights in order to dare to rebuild peace among us and with them.

Almost imperceptibly, like the weak pulse of a wounded heart nonetheless yearning for life, in these pages, we shall journey from forensic analysis to the symbolism of life, a symbolism that emerges when a "love that is as strong as death" faces horror. The epilogue of the Song of Songs celebrates this life narrative with the poem of the bridal thalamus: "Place me as a seal over your heart, like a tattoo on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy as unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like YHWH's mighty flame" (Ct 8:6).

This is how trauma and (im)possible grieving are experienced, in their nexus of meanings: the back-and-forth oscillation of absences that are inevitably painful, which at times are soothed with memory's balm as we remember the sparks of presence among us, left by those who have departed. Memories of those who are no longer with us as they used to be but continue to live in our heart. A promise that is experienced in the depths of the night, as a possibility of an (un)certain encounter in *another* different and new tem-

porality, only reached once the memory of enduring Love has redeemed us from our contradictions, finitude, guilt, and misery.

As a third act, spiritualities and theologies take the stage—with their rites, symbols, and narratives of longed-for transcendence—in order to act out the experience of grieving and potentiate the reconstruction of life's meaning amid death's contradiction. It is then, and only then, as Leonardo Boff wisely said, that faith in the *resurrection* will appear as an actual *uprising* against the tragic fateful death of the innocent, rampant throughout the world since our earliest memories.[3] This has happened with the ancestral narratives of a diversity of humankind's spiritual traditions, of which Christianity is no exception.

Indeed, after the death of *Rabbi* Jesus on a cross, an ominous sign for anyone living under the *Pax Romana* in the first century of the Common Era—his group of *companions*, who accompanied him during his brief itinerant preaching in Galilee, also experienced the trauma of a violent separation, like so many grieving communities in the past and present: learning to go beyond fear into a state of shock caused by the dreadful fate of an "unfairly executed righteous person," as Gustavo Gutiérrez wrote a few decades ago. Their way of resolving it was relying on the *memory* of "the sayings and deeds" of their friend and teacher, which they kept alive "burning in the heart," as the disciples of Emmaus recalled. This remembrance had already been initiated in the ritual prayer before the empty tomb organized by the women of Jesus' group led by Mary of Magdala. Before the mass grave, which most probably would have been their master's tragic resting place, they were outraged and rebelled by practicing a life ritual amid death.

In the end, the memory of these daring women—Mary of Magdala and the other Marys—together with a few friends who remained loyal to the memory of their companion proved to be crucial in understanding the ultimate meaning of the devotion he expressed until his death: Jesus, "the Crucified One Awoke," now lives in his *Abba*'s heart.

An empty tomb and accounts of conversations and encounters enlivened by re-reading the Hebrew Scriptures, in which Israel's *Go'el* fulfills the promise of a life in plenitude made since ancient time, to vindicate the righteous in history, are the signs that from then on—and later for Christianity for all times—would point to Jesus' presence-absence.

The family members of the victims throughout all times have had to face the dilemma and the utopian project—with its ethical, political, and spiritual nature—emerging from this process of going through a collective trauma, assumed with dignity and hope. It is for this reason that before carrying out any theological reflection—which has always been *a second act*, i.e., an act

following life and love—it is necessary to focus on the philosophy of grieving and trauma, in which memory, history, and restorative justice are key principles—even more so in these times of systemic violence—so to resolve thus the conundrum of evil that is concretized in the annihilation of the righteous and the innocent of our time.

In our modern context, after the different holocausts experienced in the twentieth century, critical thinking has had to answer the question of understanding in the midst of horror, from Auschwitz to Hiroshima, Chernobyl to Rwanda, Syria to Argentina, Colombia to Mexico. This collective pain travels like an infamous journey, crossing the South Atlantic and Mediterranean seas to reach the deserts of the Sahara and Mexico.

However, amid the horror and the stories describing it, we must step back. From that void, we are compelled to inquire about the causes that can provisionally explain the inexplicable: the absurd nature of the innocent dying.

In the mid-twentieth century, Hannah Arendt[4] had already raised the urgent and radical philosophical question of the banality of evil. This dreadful question, emerging after the Jewish Holocaust, has become exacerbated by the proliferation of concentration camps for refugees and people facing forced migrations from all the countries of the world subjected today, in the twenty-first century, to a precarious and disposable life. Such "States of exception," in which many of these people and communities are detained, infest the world, as Giorgio Agamben,[5] Judith Butler,[6] and Achille Mbembe[7] have analyzed in recent years. However, in the midst of such scenes of horror, there is a glimmer of hope.

In these times of neoliberal capitalist globalization and its throw-away culture, the Global South—i.e., those *non-places* in which history's negativity is most bloodstained—has given way to a powerful critique of the *systemic* causes that generate the violent annihilation inflicted on millions in the twentieth century and the first decades of the twenty-first century. Achille Mbembe[8] has described this logic as a *necropower* that crosses borders, a true extension of *necropolitics*.

In the face of the pain and outrage experienced by systemic victims, contextual theologies today must assume the critique of abysmal line proposed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos[9] in Portugal and the necessary decoloniality postulated by Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui[10] in Bolivia—together with the valuable background of the radical critique of instrumental modernity that Iván Illich developed last century in Cuernavaca, Mexico[11] in an attempt to "account for the hope that is within you" (1 Pe 3:15).

The underlying question for Christian resurrection theology is how to think through and sustain hope for a life of plenitude in times of global collapse. This hope transfigures the painful countenance of suffering people and communities into expressions of the new utopian world that God desires. That action comes from the eschatological imagination that enlivens Christian communities by accompanying the victims in their multiple forms of resistance and denouncing the causes of systemic violence that today we can identify as capitalism, patriarchy, colonialism, and, symbolically, a sacrificial version of religion.

Thus, the decolonial theology of the resurrection we are formulating arises within this context of late modernity under the dominion of instrumental reason. We can only understand this decolonial theology of resurrection within the realm of "life before death" before systemic violence, i.e., that realm deconstructed by the family members of systemic victims who have been killed, forcibly disappeared, and disposed of in clandestine burials or enclosed in modern-day concentration camps. It is within this realm of "life before death" that the victims of systemic violence *resist* experiencing that horror that lacks dignity, justice, or hope. It is thus through experiencing that uprising that they *re-emerge*, which is the postmodern and decolonial way of saying that they "resurrect" with hope in the midst of horror.

Therefore, the practices and narratives of victim-related social movements are a step toward human and *theologal* wisdom. These multiple forms of resistance to hegemonic logic enable us to understand, with greater clarity and strength, the murmur of the innocent and the righteous in history, a murmur that does not clamor for revenge but demands justice with truth, preparing the way for forgiveness. Perhaps one day, we shall be able to envision the reconciliation of a divided and mortally-wounded humankind in this horizon opened up by an outrage against violence, formed as a praxis of relentless hope in the search for the forcibly disappeared and the demand for justice with truth.

Hence, it is in the memory of the innocent that have been victimized by current necropower—a memory that we construct as survivors—that the murmur for hope within this broken world will be uttered. This murmur is the beginning of that *spirituality* emerging from the injuries inflicted on the wounded social body: an experience of dignity with resilience and hope, marked by compassionate love.

It is then that the biblical narrative of the resurrection will take on its full depth, truth, and hope in the *salvaged* life of the righteous in history, redeemed from absurdity, contradiction, and oblivion. From that ancient discourse of the mother of the young Maccabees in the Hebrew First Tes-

tament, we shall explore the bold exhortation made by Paul of Tarsus to the nascent Christian community in Corinth when he heralded the resurrection of Jesus from the dead as "a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles." It is then that we shall be able to understand the accounts of the empty tomb and the appearances of Jesus to his grieving community in their prophetic and eschatological depth.

Such an eschatological venture is experienced today by the communities of survivors who keep alive the memory of the innocent victims in the heart of the divine world amidst the horror surrounding us.

To summarize, in these times of horror caused by systemic violence, a *decolonial* theology of the resurrection cannot be but an experience of *uprising* against the powers of death that rule this world. Resurrecting is thus a verb in the gerund, i.e., expressing ongoing actions, narratives, and symbols of dignity.

A praxis of resurrection as uprising is thus the only way of confessing the *unfathomable source of Life* that religions call God, not only with our lips but also with our heart. This praxis will be carried out through memory, narrative, and celebration exercises that rescue the victimized from oblivion, telling their stories as anticipations of dignity and life. However, this praxis will be in vain unless it promotes justice for both the victims and their survivors to repair the damage to whatever degree possible, bringing the perpetrators to trial and learning the truth that will eventually allow for reconciliation. Thus, the praxis of the resurrection as an uprising will herald the possibility of hope for humankind in the midst of such horror.

The decolonial theology of the resurrection outlined so far thus seeks to promote hope in the possibility of a future for humanity as a whole. It certainly implies actively waiting for the Kingdom of God. This wait, however, must be experienced from our wounded, violated, and vulnerable subjectivity, which is nevertheless, at the same time, hopefully awaiting the gift that comes from that Otherness that created us and that humankind's spiritual traditions invoke using divine names.

For all the aforementioned reasons, hope in the resurrection of the dead becomes humanity's oxymoron *par excellence*, referring to its pathway to uprising contained within each person or community that rebels against death. We are here referring to the whole history of humankind, which claims that "the crucified have awakened."

Thus, with Jesus, we can state that all the crucified victims in history carry in their wounds the possibility of redemption as long as we, their survivors, do not forget them in our search for justice, truth, and reconciliation. Translated into our current times of *precarious living* and planetary collapse—

sharply expressed by Judith Butler's writings on women's drama—implies that those who were bodily and territorially crucified, both in the past and the present, continue to live in the memory of their survivors, but also in the reweaving of the social fabric of a community, a reweaving that we can carry out today, as Jon Sobrino states.

Ultimately, in the midst of these "life before death" experiences that take place throughout the history of domination and death, to believe in the resurrection of the dead implies confessing, in word and deed, that the annihilated victims live in the memory of the God of Life. Divine Wisdom will continue inspiring the righteous of all times to engage in *uprisings* against injustice and violence so that they can resurrect with dignity and hope and thus fertilize the seeds of redemption that annihilated victims have sown in history.

In the end, believing in the resurrection implies an uprising of new life, which today's surviving individuals and communities practice with dignity, resilience, and hope.

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