

THE INVISIBLE MUGGED TRAVELLER

Encountering God as Hero or Casualty

Robert W. McChesney

SOME CALLED IT the ‘Way of Blood’, others the ‘Bloody Path’.¹ The steep downhill road from Jerusalem to Jericho in first-century Palestine was notoriously dangerous for lone travellers. Loosely organized bands of ruthless highwaymen preyed upon the vulnerable with little fear of sanction. It provided an ideal foundation upon which Jesus could build a violent story about a mugged Jewish traveller (Luke 10:30–35). ‘A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho’, Jesus began, ‘and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead’ (Luke 10:30). *Lestes*, the Greek word for robber, ‘connotes violent criminal’.²

Listeners would have nervously recalled their own anxiety when journeying along the precipitous switchbacks, descending more than three thousand feet over seventeen miles of isolated Judean desert that resembled a hilly moonscape. Each successive bend afforded an opportunity for ambush. Jesus’ parable about a victim of violent crime drew upon such frightful village lore to highlight the precariousness of life, and in so doing offer a scathing period critique of religious elites.

Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. (Luke 10:31–32)

This article is adapted from chapter 7 of Robert W. McChesney, *The Soul also Keeps the Score: A Trauma-Informed Companion to the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius* (Collegeville: Liturgical, forthcoming May 2025). It is used by kind permission of Liturgical Press.

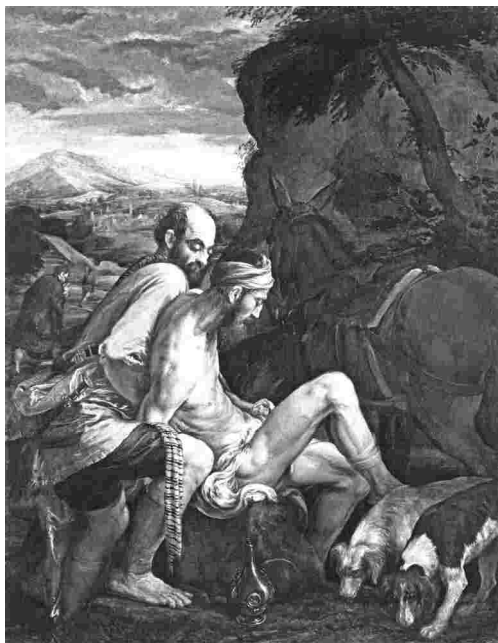
¹ See St Jerome, *Epistolae*, 108.12.

² *The Jewish Annotated New Testament: New Revised Standard Version*, edited by Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler (New York: Oxford U, 2011), 123.

The ‘Good Samaritan’ Parable Reconsidered

Because the story is so familiar, it is difficult to hear the parable of the Good Samaritan afresh. In reconsidering it, I am drawing on modern scriptural and theological scholarship to bring the victimised traveller into the foreground of the story.

The interpretative key is that Luke joined an actual tale from Jesus’ lips (10:30–35) to a framing narrative of his own composition (10:25–29 and 36–37), using a stylistic technique of the period that is common to all four evangelists. That is, he took an authentic Jesus-story about a victim of violent crime, which had circulated orally, and incorporated it into his own written narrative centred on two questions asked by a lawyer: first, ‘Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ (10:25); second, ‘And who is my neighbour?’ (10:29). Both were issues of pressing pastoral concern to Luke’s community, and help explain his editorial perspective and final composition. Together, Jesus’ prior tale—and Luke’s bookending of it—form the inspired, canonical text known



The Good Samaritan, by Jacopo Bassano, c. 1562

to posterity as the parable of the Good Samaritan. But, according to scripture scholar Bernard Brandon Scott, it is crucial to understand that the Jesus-story ‘originally circulated separately from the question about neighborliness’.³

Luke’s creative artistry, for all its sublimity, has come at a considerable cost. An unanticipated outcome has been the submersion of the point of view of the battered traveller himself, bereft in the roadside ditch. The existential pathos, understood in the biblical sense as the cry of the poor, has grown fainter.

³ Bernard Brandon Scott, *Hear Then the Parable: A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989), 191.

The evangelist's tale obscures the precious assertion that human spiritual vulnerability can invite and mediate divine encounter and redemption.

The Australian scripture scholar Brendan Byrne echoes Scott on the pivotal point of compositional history: 'As originally told by Jesus (abstracted, that is, from the setting Luke has provided), the original parable draws the hearer into the perspective of the wounded, half-dead traveler'.⁴ Many first-century travellers would have identified readily with the crime victim assaulted along the Bloody Path, whose 'restoration is the narrative's goal'.⁵ What would the real-time reactions of the beaten and stripped traveller in the ditch have been as he watched religious leaders and scholars pass him by? Did he experience the metallic taste of paralyzing fear for his life, the breathlessness or racing heart of a panic attack, the degradation of shame—or the determination never to frequent the Temple again?

The point of the Jesus-story, according to Luke Timothy Johnson, is not a contrast between Jews and Samaritans but rather 'a contrast between those who were established ... and those who were not'.⁶ At stake, spiritually, is the clarity of a person's existential awareness of his or her vulnerability or even impotence, and how that very powerlessness can be a midwife to divine encounter. It is akin to completing the first step towards recovery in any Twelve Step addiction programme: *we admitted that we were powerless*.

Reversal of Fortune

Jesus' tale of the bloody traveller in the ditch strikingly exemplifies the important Lukan theme of *reversal of fortune* in favour of outsiders and the poor, which is directly expressed in Mary's Magnificat: 'He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly' (Luke 1:52). 'Human security and complacency are challenged' by a 'great reversal' of religious expectations and social values.⁷ Those rejected by conventional society and religion—personally, in the case of the mugged traveller—are all the more cherished by God.

⁴ Brendan Byrne, *The Hospitality of God; A Reading of Luke's Gospel* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2015), 100.

⁵ Scott, *Hear Then the Parable*, 193–194.

⁶ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1991), 173.

⁷ Johnson, *Gospel of Luke*, 22.

Those ordinarily deemed unworthy, lowly, marginal, or even outcast, are accepted by God Among them are the crippled, the lame, the blind and deaf, the sexually mutilated, lepers, and all those ritually excluded from full participation in the life of the people.⁸

Jesus issues a prophetic challenge to established religious interests, personified in the priest and Levite, who 'see' the bloodied traveller at roadside, but with such mistaken, self-serving understanding of the Torah that they are blind to the authentic mercy and compassion required by God.⁹ They look but do not perceive (Mark 4:12), perhaps for reasons of narcissistic and exaggerated ritual purity. Jesus aims to challenge their misreading of the Torah through his presentation of a tragic human scene.

To encounter one's neighbour in a full Lukan sense, one must cultivate a spiritual capacity to notice what happens from the perspective of the mugged traveller, attentive to the voice of excluded others on the underside of history. This resonates for many marginalised casualties of violence today, some of whom find themselves estranged from institutions such as family or Church.¹⁰

Champion or Casualty?

The plot thickens, however, when we recognise that Luke's framing of the parable has resulted in a one-sided emphasis on the person of the Samaritan champion coming to the rescue. The hearer is challenged to identify with the Samaritan rather than the traveller. (Everyone loves hero-to-the-rescue stories.)

This is evident in contemporary catechetics and homiletics, as Sunday churchgoers can attest. Luke's compelling figure of the Good Samaritan has even entered the lexicon and iconography of Western culture. His composition draws the reader into the perspective of the neighbourly Samaritan who passes by, sees but also *notices*, with heartfelt mercy, the untreated wounds of the traveller in the ditch, and stops to

⁸ Johnson, *Gospel of Luke*, 22.

⁹ 'Your neighbour as yourself' (Luke 10:27) is a precise citation from Leviticus 19:18: 'You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the Lord'.

¹⁰ A decorated and devout Marine first lieutenant, just returned from the battle of Fallujah in Iraq, once recounted to me his search for a welcoming Christian church in south-eastern Pennsylvania. On one Sunday in 2021 he and his middle-aged wife were stopped by greeters at the entrance to a non-denominational church. They summoned the pastor, who briefly sized the couple up and told the veteran he was not welcome because of his tattooed forearms and neck. 'We don't want any gang members here', he said icily.

assist him. The concluding injunction, 'go and do likewise' (Luke 10:37), is memorable, ethically compelling and arguably a foundation of Western values.

Later Christian interpreters, of course, would go even further, viewing the Samaritan as a saviour representing Christ. To 'do likewise' develops into a christology and spirituality of identification and encounter with God in the Samaritan. Early interpreters such as Irenaeus, Origen, Ambrose and Augustine set the pattern with allegorical interpretation of the Samaritan as Christ, healing the wounds caused by sin.¹¹ This reading has largely prevailed down the centuries.

However, two different perspectives are front and centre in the Jesus-story by contrast with the wider Lukan composition. According to Scott, 'The all-important question in this parable is that of point of view: from where do I hear the parable?'¹² It is Jesus' intention to draw the listener into identification with the character and point of view of the bloodied traveller. This is also the perspective of theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez and his school of liberation theology, for whom the fundamental hermeneutical question is: who is the most important person in Luke's parable?¹³ For Gutiérrez, the Church becomes 'Samaritan' by virtue of its identification with and service of Christ suffering and forgotten as roadside casualty.

Who is the most important person in Luke's parable?

The compelling force of Luke's masterful version has overshadowed Jesus' account. Treasure though it is, Luke's memorable telling shrouds the invitation to notice the point of view of the nearly dead man in the ditch. In the primal Jesus-story the hearer plays *casualty*; in Luke's composition the hearer plays *champion and hero*. The evangelist's edit has underplayed the criminal violence of the story, virtually cancelling it in the Christian spiritual, pastoral, interpretive, catechetical and homiletic traditions. A variety of interpretative issues are at stake, but the central spiritual question is clear enough: which perspective do the parable's hearers adopt in order to encounter God most profoundly—champion or casualty?

¹¹ *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament III, Luke*, edited by Arthur A. Just Jr (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003), 177–181.

¹² Scott, *Hear Then the Parable*, 190.

¹³ See Gustavo Gutiérrez, 'A Hermeneutic of Hope', *Center for Latin American Studies, Vanderbilt University: Occasional Paper 13* (September 2012), 9; 'Church Must Be Samaritan, Reaching Out to Others', *National Catholic Reporter* (28 February 2014), at <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/gutierrez-vatican-church-must-be-samaritan-reaching-out-others>.

Charity or Solidarity?

Contemporary exegetes have pondered the conundrum at some length. Some argue that, like many parables, the Good Samaritan is a marvellous riddle best approached like a Zen koan. There is wisdom and spiritual profit in this. Nevertheless, greater theological clarity is available. When the point of view of the Jesus-story is recaptured, thereby restoring casualties of violence to the narrative foreground, Luke's theme of reversal of fortune shimmers more brightly. Here, 'the wall between *us* and *them* no longer exists'.¹⁴ Here, would-be Samaritans-to-the-rescue discover a more profound way into Divinity in meaningful interpersonal *encounter* with survivor-neighbours.

It is the difference between charity and solidarity, the latter overcoming the dehumanising risk of viewing people on the societal or ecclesial margins as *objects* of religious duty. These might include, for example, the economically poor, racial minorities, those who are elderly, infirm, or mentally incapacitated, survivors of ecclesial sexual abuse, or those who identify as LGBTQ+. 'Solidarity differs from charity because



The Good Samaritan, by Joseph Highmore, 1744

it replaces unilateral doing for with the mutuality of being with'.¹⁵ Samaritan neighbourliness is reframed as the human solidarity of sisters and brothers, an egalitarian recognition of voluntary reciprocity and encounter among and between children of God, each equal in dignity.

The parable's riddle suggests that, 'my *place* in the world changes. To "go and do likewise" is to be a neighbor who courageously

¹⁴ Bernard Brandon Scott, *Reimagine the World: An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus* (Santa Rosa: Polebridge, 2001), 64, emphasis in original.

¹⁵ Marcus Mescher, *The Ethics of Encounter: Christian Neighbor Love as a Practice of Solidarity* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2020), 59.

and compassionately goes into the ditch in order to draw near to neighbors in need.’¹⁶ To reclaim that gentleman’s dignity after all these centuries, perhaps the parable should more aptly be called ‘The Battered Traveller’. Pope Francis has exhorted the people of God to seek more profound encounter with Christ in those who suffer, to look directly into their eyes, and ‘to put them at the centre of the Church’s pilgrim way’.¹⁷ Christians can thereby ‘recognize Christ himself in each of our abandoned or excluded brothers and sisters’.¹⁸ In this fashion, ‘The Battered Traveller’ becomes an ideal scriptural resource for Ignatian contemplation of Jesus’ passion narrative, as presented in the Third Week of the Spiritual Exercises. The stripped, beaten, invisible, mugged victim personifies and reveals the crucified Christ on Calvary.

Every Survivor

Anyone startled by this reversal of perspective would do well to recall that both the original Jesus-story and Luke’s wider Good Samaritan parable are meant to provoke just such a strong reaction, beginning with the account of a brutal crime perpetrated along the forlorn Bloody Path. ‘The violence done to the travelling Judean is overt: he is stripped, beaten, left half dead. This is not a sentimental tale.’¹⁹

Nevertheless, over the centuries the parable has in fact been domesticated. Few homilists, religious educators, spiritual guides or pastoral counsellors display much interest in the raw story of violent crime at the heart of Jesus’ tale. In so doing they appear aloof from the twenty-first-century context of their congregations. The trauma psychiatrist Bessel van der Kolk points out that the majority of people in the United States, or their loved ones, will experience a violent crime at some point during their lifetimes, and that three million children are reported annually as victims of child abuse or neglect.²⁰ Crime rates vary in different parts of the world, some higher and some lower, but every datum in every statistic represents one human being,

¹⁶ Mescher, *Ethics of Encounter*, 61 (emphasis in the original).

¹⁷ Pope Francis, *Fratelli tutti*, n. 85.

¹⁸ Pope Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 198.

¹⁹ Johnson, *Gospel of Luke*, 175.

²⁰ Bessel van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (New York: Viking, 2014), 20.

perhaps someone who has felt too ashamed to report the crime or tell his or her story.

The close contemporary reading of a cherished sacred text offers a striking example from New Testament studies of the challenge faced by casualties of violence today. As the mother of a murdered transgender man observes, 'When you're misgendered, it becomes a daily trauma of not being seen'.²¹ Those who draw close enough to the bloodied ditch might hear a lament which echoes that of the central character in Ralph Ellison's novel *Invisible Man*:

I am an invisible man. No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allen Poe: Nor am I one of your Hollywood movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids, and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, simply because people refuse to see me.²²

One scriptural commentator recently noted that the stricken traveller 'is simply a generic human being of the male sex The description of the victim is significant: naked and mute, the person is stripped of identity'.²³ Without distinguishing marks, passers-by lacked any clues to identify the battered traveller with a particular village, clan or even social class. Had he died, it might have been difficult to restore the anonymous corpse to the family for dignified, appropriate burial: ignominy upon invisibility upon injury.

Venerable Bede, an eighth-century doctor of the Church, viewed the parable's victim as *Adam*, a term used throughout the Hebrew scriptures as an allegorical representation of mankind to designate an individual human person or humanity in general.²⁴ In other words, the focal point of the Jesus-story is an *everyman* figure, a battered crime victim who more properly can be designated *EverySurvivor*. The very absence of distinctive features, voice, clothing or personality, leaves *EverySurvivor* to find his or her identity precisely *as* battered and

²¹ Kathy Lynch, referring to her transgender son, Aaron. At the age of 26, he was shot and killed by police during a psychotic episode, 'the culmination of his years of mental health struggles' according to his mother. Tom Jackman, 'After Years of Turmoil, A Fatal Night: Fairfax Officers Were Called to Help a Transgender Man in Crisis. One Killed Him', *Washington Post* (14 June 2024), 1.

²² Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (New York: Random House, 1995 [1952]), 3. The novel won the 1953 National Book Award for fiction.

²³ M. Dennis Hamm, 'Luke', *Paulist Biblical Commentary* (Mahwah: Paulist, 2018), 1066.

²⁴ See James F. Keenan, *The Works of Mercy: The Heart of Catholicism* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017), 4.

invisible. The Christian heritage suggests that those with eyes to see can encounter a hidden God in *EverySurvivor*—the God who is presented in the passion narrative.

Luke's parable here displays a further facet of artistic and mystical genius. His shocking theme of reversal of fortune underlines Jesus' unpalatable challenge to his followers to see themselves, not first as heroes to the rescue, but as humble and powerless. 'It will not be so among you, but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant' (Matthew 20:26). To do so may require 'perspective-taking'. Psychologists associate this trait with empathy, requiring the ability to consider a situation from a viewpoint other than one's customary frame of reference.²⁵

Seekers and persons of faith, therefore, are invited to imagine themselves at roadside, bloodied or bewildered of conscience, there to encounter the Kingdom of God. For most, this does not come naturally. For survivors of past traumatic injury, it can even be risky; in so doing they may well trigger unwanted memories and associated symptoms. Hence, they must be ready to choose this perspective.²⁶ But they can take heart from the original Jesus-story, which clearly promises that recognition of one's existential vulnerability can elicit a heartfelt experience of the goodness and mercy of God.

Today, the roadsides remain strewn with those frantically awaiting first-responder solidarity and assistance. *EverySurvivors* know the numbing grief of invisibility, stigma or isolation—within their families, their marriages and communities, among their (former) friends, or even in the most well-intentioned of popular and religious discourse. For example, those who have experienced suicidal ideation, or perhaps even attempted suicide, lament that they have never heard a homily or any public catechetical guidance about what is, in fact, a very common affliction. If they feel left out of the Church's proclamation of the gospel, that is because they are. But recognition is 'the threshold of ethics ... the

²⁵ The capacity to modify perspective is considered by developmental psychology to be a key to cognitive development. Social psychological research has demonstrated the benefits of viewing a situation or concept from a different frame of reference—including increased altruism, decreased stereotyping, and an ability to establish stronger social bonds with others.

²⁶ It may be prudent for this special-needs population, therefore, to consult with a spiritual guide or sponsor before praying in such fashion. And spiritual and pastoral caregivers who wish to serve the survivors of violence better, as well as ecclesial leaders and influencers, may have homework to do regarding the sometimes subtle symptoms and triggers of spiritual injury trauma.

beginning of the moral life', according to the Boston College theologian James F. Keenan.²⁷ The following illustration puts a familiar name and face on the phenomenon of invisibility and demonstrates the distressing risks of exclusion of the casualty's point of view as well as the healing benefits of inclusion at the table.

The Cannonball Moment

To celebrate the 500th anniversary of Íñigo de Loyola's battlefield wound at Pamplona in May 1521, the worldwide Society of Jesus launched an intensive spiritual renewal campaign as part of a broader 'Ignatian Year' celebration, whose motto was 'To See All Things New in Christ'. Social media, artistic, publishing and spiritual initiatives employed the meme of 'cannonball moments': 'Today, we invite you to contemplate "cannonball moments" in your own lives—when God invites you to something more, even in tough times'.²⁸

There were short YouTube videos, in various languages, featuring individuals from around the world talking about the 'cannonball moment that changed my life'.²⁹ A book from Loyola Press highlighted stories of 'those big moments of conversion that are reflective of Ignatius' own life story' as an invitation to others to consider their own faith journeys.³⁰ Jesuit high-school drama clubs re-enacted the battle of Pamplona, highlighting the moment when Ignatius was injured. Jocular memes popped up on the internet, featuring cartoonish images of Ignatius with slogans such as 'Cannonized before He Was Canonized' or 'I used to be a sinner like you, then I took a cannonball to the knee'.

Unfortunately, the 'cannonball moments' campaign strongly alienated certain military veterans, including the otherwise sympathetic retired US Marine Colonel Robert Seamus Macpherson. A 30-year veteran of two tours in Vietnam as well as service in Beirut, Somalia and Iraq, he had healed from post-traumatic stress disorder with psychiatric help and medications received through the Veterans Administration. But, in the

²⁷ James F. Keenan, 'The Great Religious Failure: Not Recognizing a Person in Need', *America* (17 June 2024).

²⁸ 'Celebrating Cannonball Day', at <https://www.jesuits.org/stories/celebrating-cannonball-day>, accessed 27 November 2024.

²⁹ See for example 'Cannonball: St Ignatius of Loyola—From Proud Courtier to Companion of Jesus', at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSPLXpOwkaI&list=PL_p9nnEsh4B3XTg2LFkRiFLwX2n-v5oHs&index=2, accessed 27 November 2024.

³⁰ Eric A. Clayton, *Cannonball Moments: Telling Your Story, Deepening Your Faith* (Chicago: Loyola, 2022), 3.

end, Macpherson noted, 'it was the Spiritual Exercises which saved my sanity'.³¹

Despite having a profound identification with Íñigo as a military man exposed to live fire, he found himself bewildered and angered by the 'cannonball moments' meme: bewildered because it made invisible the bitter experience of so many

courageous and patriotic veterans, and angered because the motif is potentially triggering for survivors of battlefield violence.

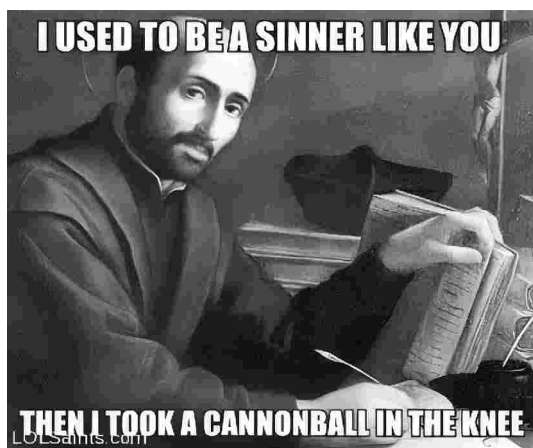


image from LOLSaints.com

The phrase 'cannonball moment' trivializes the pieces of metal shredding your body when all you hear over the sounds of bombs, artillery, and bullets are men screaming in pain. The Jesuits are using the horrors of war to promote their own agenda. Unfortunately for anyone who has been victimized by war and battle, the naïveté of their promotion sets them apart from the people they are trying to reach. Their promotion of this theme demonstrates how far out of touch they are with the veterans. Because if you survive the holocaust of war, there are many people you respected and loved who did not. The meme is trivial and an assault on their memory and sacrifice(s).

Let me give you my take on the cannonball moments motif I keep seeing on Ignatian websites and social media. It makes me ask if people who are this far from reality have lost the core of the meaning of the Spiritual Exercises. I mean, after Jesus' crucifixion, would any of the apostles have referred to their own 'crucifixion moment'? Please!

For some survivors of violence, the cannonball moment meme risks sparking past horrific memories, leading to belligerent, unfocused rage, panic attacks, and other destructive personal and social symptoms. Had he been consulted, Colonel Macpherson would have explained that triggers can be subtle and difficult to predict. According to the trauma counsellor Lisa López Levers, they may include,

³¹ All citations are from private correspondence and conversations with the author, and are quoted with permission.

... the anniversary of the traumatic event, smells, loud noises, excessive stress, extreme guilt, feeling left out, work or school stress, relationship breakup, traffic, financial problems, being overly tired, sexual harassment, hearing others argue, being judged or criticized, spending too much time alone, and intimacy.³²

Certain battlefield veterans such as Macpherson—who has made and reveres the Spiritual Exercises—may experience the chosen meme as trauma-uninformed and exclusionary: veterans are precisely ‘left out’ of consideration. Ecclesial leaders and social-media influencers of the future should be more attentive to the science-based conclusions of diagnostic research by bringing the casualties’ voices and profiles back from the periphery. More intentional trauma-informed care, for example, would challenge the global Ignatian network to accompany the casualties of violence more closely and listen more attentively to their unique voices as a potential source of revelation, in keeping with the Jesus-story.

Pamplona Reconsidered

History can never determine how many husbands, brothers, and fathers were among the dead and wounded at Pamplona’s 1521 artillery duel.³³ Given the new generation of deadly, rapid-firing cannons employed by the French, ‘cannonball moment’ casualties could be gruesome. They fired solid iron balls rather than the stone shot that had formerly been used in Europe. The balls ‘crushed battlements, careened wildly and sprayed shards of stone in all directions’.³⁴

Íñigo, of course, was no ordinary casualty of war. He was the leader who had galvanized the Spanish to fight, and to keep fighting until he went down, when they capitulated to the French. In a gallant display of their own, the French did Íñigo the rare honour of carrying their heroic enemy on a well-appointed conveyance back to the family’s small Loyola Castle in Azpeitia.³⁵ Surely Íñigo suffered greatly, but one can imagine the fanfare *en route*, not to mention family acclaim back home upon his arrival.

³² Lisa López Levers, *Trauma Counseling: Theories and Interventions for Managing Trauma, Stress, Crisis, and Disaster*, 2nd edn (New York: Springer, 2023), 410.

³³ See Jacob F. Field, ‘Battle of Pamplona’, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, available at <https://www.britannica.com/event/Battle-of-Pamplona>.

³⁴ Phil Klay, ‘Can the Trauma of War Lead to Growth, Despite the Scars?’, *New York Times* (6 July 2020).

³⁵ Ignatius of Loyola, *A Pilgrim’s Testament: The Memoirs of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, edited by Barton T. Geger (Chestnut Hill: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2020), 111 note 5.

Hagiographic lore surrounding Íñigo's so-called 'cannonball moment' has become part of the popular twenty-first-century Ignatian landscape. Yet the hero's questionable judgment proved fatal for other combatants, and surely occasioned severe distress for their families back home. Today, most soldiers would rush to assist a fallen buddy, but Íñigo is silent about fellow casualties, many of whom would have survived had he acted differently.

Don Íñigo's undoubted heroism at Pamplona can now be respectfully reframed through a wider twenty-first-century lens of research into military moral-injury trauma and fresh theological and scriptural insights. 'The study of trauma and the rise of trauma studies have had a necessary impact on Christian theology.'³⁶ Recall those severely wounded Spanish casualties on the Pamplona battlefield or inside the fortress, bloodied and immobilised—who had voted unanimously to surrender to the French. Some, tragically, would die. Is it too late to honour their memory by letting today's casualties of violence, people such as Colonel Macpherson, have a seat at the table? The Ignatian heritage and Christian spirituality, more broadly, have long displayed a remarkable capacity for reinvention and reformulation. Now, amidst an epoch of surpassing violence, those unvarnished voices may attract devotees whom heroes cannot.

Witnessing—not even participating in—the bloodletting and occasional horror of battlefield combat, the killing of innocent civilians or the loss of a comrade's life, can result in spiritual, even religious, injury, as Colonel Macpherson can attest. The symptoms are well documented in the research-based literature on military moral-injury trauma, including,

... having anger at God; stopping attendance at religious services; experiencing emptiness or meaninglessness; feeling God has failed ... and being angry or cynical towards clergy. Counseling professionals who are trauma-informed understand that these are 'normal' responses to 'abnormal' events.³⁷

Colonel Macpherson's testimony greatly enriches the Christian approach to such injury precisely by including the voice and perspective

³⁶ Shelly Rambo, 'How Christian Theology and Practice Are Being Shaped by Trauma Studies', *The Christian Century* (1 November 2019).

³⁷ Levers, *Trauma Counseling*, 410.

of *EverySurvivor* of violence, as represented by the original Jesus-story of the Battered Traveller and Jesus' passion itself. If Macpherson is angry and denounces, he does so like novelist Ellison's central character: 'I denounce because though implicated and partially responsible, I have been hurt to the point of abysmal pain, hurt to the point of invisibility'.³⁸

Moral myopia, tragically, permits the traumatic after-effects of violence to perdure—endlessly and intergenerationally. The concept of the 'cannonball moment' shows what happens when persons, organizations or Churches fail, often innocently enough, to recognise the full implications of a matter—or even a meme. The divine lens of Jesus' story about the Battered Traveller offers us a trauma-informed shift in point of view for noticing and supporting soul-wounded survivors of violence. Drawing on the work of Gustavo Gutiérrez, Marcus Mescher writes, 'As with the Samaritan, it is a movement out of one's way and into the ditch to draw near to another in need' For conversion, in this view, 'demands an intentional change of place'.³⁹ Greg Boyle, founding director of Homeboy Industries in Los Angeles, puts it simply: 'All Jesus asks is, "*where are you standing?*"'⁴⁰

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³⁸ Ellison, *Invisible Man*, 579–580.

³⁹ Mescher, *Ethics of Encounter*, 60.

⁴⁰ Greg Boyle, *Tattoos on the Heart* (New York: Free Press/Simon and Schuster, 2011). Homeboy Industries is a project that creates jobs for former gang members.