

CAMINO COMPANIONS

SESSION 3

17 & 18 December 2023

SUFFERING & HOPE



CAMINO COMPANIONS PRAYER

God of our pilgrimage, you sustain us along our path, wherever it may lead and however long the road. Inspired by St James, and all who have gone before us and will come after us, help us to follow you as our Creator and the source of life itself. Unite us as we seek justice, peace, and truth. In your world and in your church, guide us in our travels together so that we may be transformed and shaped by your divine love, today and forever. Amen.



Ruth 1:14-22

Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.
15 So she said, 'See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.' ¹⁶But Ruth said, 'Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God.
¹⁷ Where you die, I will die— there will I be buried. May the LORD do thus and so to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!'



Ruth 1:14-22

¹⁸When Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.

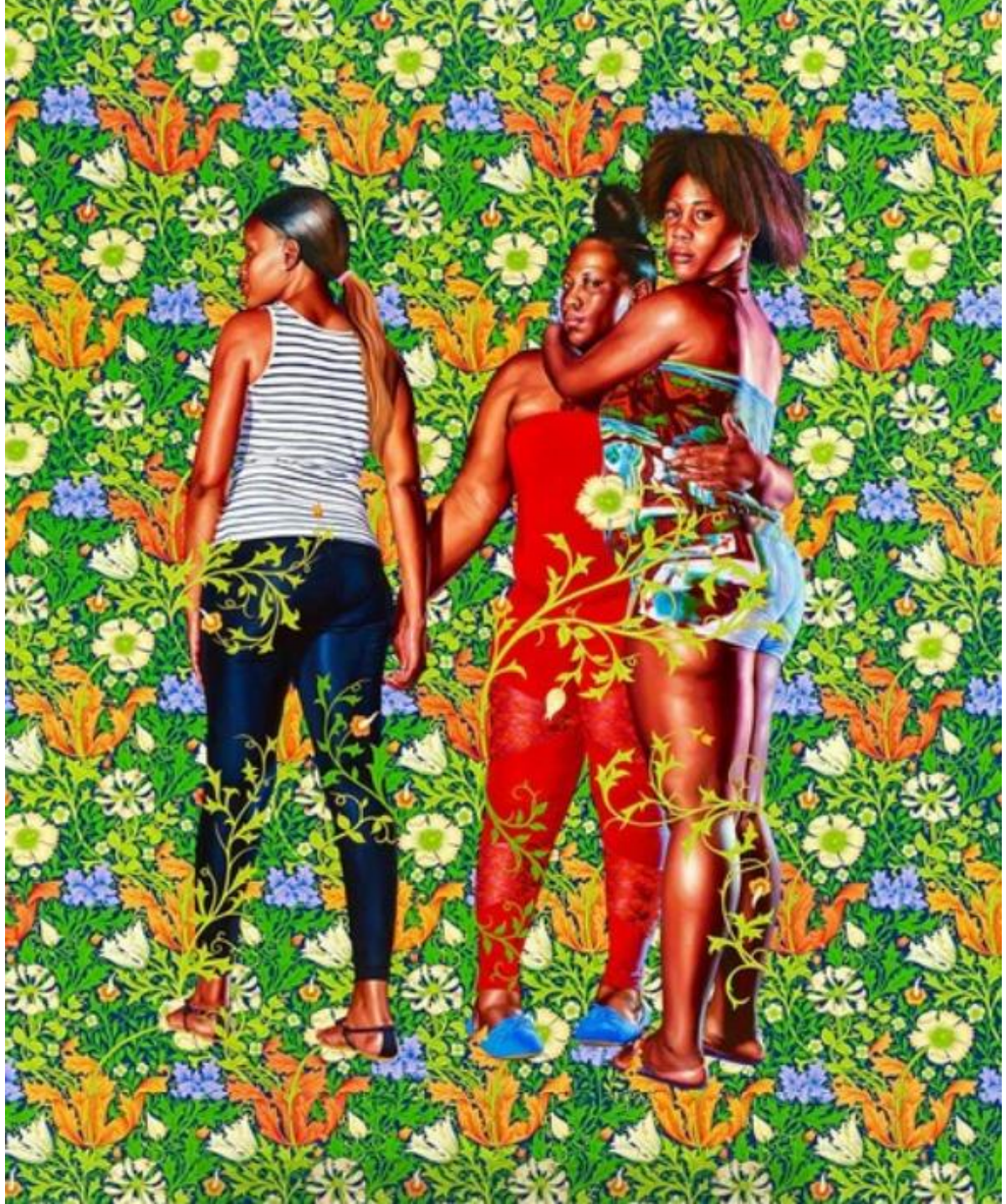
¹⁹ So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them; and the women said, 'Is this Naomi?' ²⁰She said to them,

'Call me no longer Naomi,
call me Mara,
for the Almighty has dealt bitterly with me.

²¹ I went away full,
but the LORD has brought me back empty;
why call me Naomi
when the LORD has dealt harshly with me,
and the Almighty* has brought calamity upon me?'

²² So Naomi returned together with Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, who came back with her from the country of Moab. They came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.







In pairs, discuss Kehinde Wiley's painting, *Naomi and Her Daughters*. What do you think of it? How does it make you feel? How does it connect with the passage from Ruth and this session's themes?

How does this story of Ruth and Naomi in the Hebrew Bible connect with the themes of suffering and hope?



Ruth is part of Jesus' ancestry. What might that mean for us as Christians this Advent, as we wait for Christ's birth?

How and why might this passage connect and resonate with:

- ***You***
- ***St James's***
- ***the world***



"I have been in Sorrow's kitchen and licked out all the pots." —**Zora Neale Hurston**

"It was very important for me not to pretend to have surmounted the pain and terror of that time of my life, very important not to pretend that it left no mark on me. It marked me forever. In some measure I encountered the abyss of my own soul, the labyrinth of my destiny: these could never be escaped..." —**James Baldwin**





What difference might it make to know that Winifred Knights' painting of the flood in Genesis was her protest against the trauma of the First World War? What might that tell us about suffering and hope?

One of Christianity's deepest and most painful realities is that suffering and pain exist in the world God loves and cherishes.

Read Walter Brueggemann's poem and reflect on this together in groups of three.



**A breath prayer by Cole
Arthur Riley:**

***INHALE: I won't rush my
sorrow.***

***EXHALE: Grief is an
honouring.***



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