

## **Tortured Misfortunates**

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Assembled from canvas, newspaper, flour, spray paint, and various other objects, my final ACYTI project, labeled *Tortured Misfortunates*, is my attempt to convey the unfortunate aspects of torture, and then contrast them with Bonhoeffer's opposition of a victimizing system. This theory relies on the concept that "the disposed need justice" (Bonhoeffer); but, it is primarily centered around Matthew 5:10, and is as follows: "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven".

The black background of the painting symbolizes the quiet, hopeless desperation that victims of torture suffer daily, while the three red sides represent a barrier, implying that the victims are trapped in this cycle. The remaining side, however, is colorless and open, representing possible salvation. On the bottom end of the canvas is the phrase 'matthew five ten', suggesting that redemption is possible through faith. The phrase's location on the bottom of the canvas is significant as well; it is meant as a tangible indicator that what is correct, and what is true, are not always the most obvious solution.

The newspaper hands in the center denote people who have been tortured. The number of paper hands is important as well; there are five hands, a number that represents a search for freedom ("Numbers"). The quotes written on the hands are from Sister Dianna Ortiz, the cofounder and executive director of a group of torture survivors, taken from her experiences as a torture victim. The phrases with punctuation are those that Ortiz herself has said or written, whereas the phrases without punctuation are comments made by her torturers. The lack of punctuation is used to indicate the repetition of memories that occur and reoccur frequently within the minds of torture victims.

As seven is a number generally associated with religion, the seven flower pins in the center of the piece imply a lack of spirituality in the lives of the torture victims which disallows them from moving forward, just as the pins keep the hands fastened together.

Finally, the pieces of mirror represent the people who allow torture to happen. Yahuda Bauer, an Israeli historian said, "Thou shalt not be a victim. Thou shalt not be a perpetrator. Above all, thou shalt not be a bystander". By looking into the shattered mirror, you will see yourself. Which are you?

### **Works Cited**

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