

Job 23:1-9, 16-17ⁱⁱ

Then Job answered:

“Today also my complaint is bitter;
his hand is heavy despite my groaning.
Oh, that I knew where I might find him,
that I might come even to his dwelling!
I would lay my case before him,
and fill my mouth with arguments.
I would learn what he would answer me,
and understand what he would say to me.
Would he contend with me in the greatness of his power?
No; but he would give heed to me.
There an upright person could reason with him,
and I should be acquitted forever by my judge.
“If I go forward, he is not there;
or backward, I cannot perceive him;
on the left he hides, and I cannot behold him;
I turn to the right, but I cannot see him.
God has made my heart faint;
the Almighty has terrified me;
If only I could vanish in darkness,
and thick darkness would cover my face!

ⁱⁱ About the [Track 1] First Reading: Job 23:1-9, 16-17

The author of Job tackles the problem of how a just God can permit human suffering. Though the author acknowledges the existence of a persecuting spiritual enemy (1:6-2:7), his conclusion shuns the explanation of suffering in order to achieve a greater goal: the revelation of the mystery of faith in the midst of suffering.

Today’s reading comes from Job’s reply to the friends whose attempts to comfort him are

summarized by their refusal to recognize his innocence and their advice that he recognize and admit his guilt even if it is not apparent.

Sensing the futility of the friends' accusations and explanations because they are based on the commonly accepted view of God's justice, Job wants to bring his dispute with God, his real adversary, to a judgment. Though he knows that he would be outmatched in a direct struggle, he firmly believes that even God would come to see the justice of his cause and consequently the wrongfulness of his suffering.