



Tenebrae
Wednesday in Holy Week
March 31, 2021

The name **Tenebrae** (the Latin word for “darkness” or “shadows”) has for centuries been applied to the ancient monastic night and early morning services (Matins and Lauds) of the last three days of Holy Week, which in medieval times came to be celebrated on the preceding evenings.

Apart from the Lamentations (in which each verse is introduced by a letter of the Hebrew alphabet), the most conspicuous feature of the service is the gradual extinguishing of candles and other lights in the church until only a single candle, considered a symbol of our Lord, remains. Toward the end of the service this candle is hidden, typifying the apparent victory of the forces of evil.

At the very end, a loud noise is made, symbolizing the earthquake at the time of the resurrection (Matthew 28:2), the hidden candle is restored to its place, and by its light all depart in silence.

The ministers enter the church in silence and proceed to their places. The Office then begins immediately with the Antiphon on the first Psalm.

ANTIPHON

Let them draw back and be disgraced who take pleasure in my misfortune.

A brief silence is observed. The Psalm is read antiphonally by whole verse.

PSALM 70 *Deus, in adiutorium*

- ¹ Be pleased, O God, to deliver me; *
O LORD, make haste to help me.
- ² Let those who seek my life be ashamed
and altogether dismayed; *
let those who take pleasure in my misfortune
draw back and be disgraced.
- ³ Let those who say to me "Aha!" and gloat over me turn back, *
because they are ashamed.
- ⁴ Let all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; *
let those who love your salvation say for ever,
"Great is the LORD!"
- ⁵ But as for me, I am poor and needy; *
come to me speedily, O God.
- ⁶ You are my helper and my deliverer; *
O LORD, do not tarry.

V. Let them draw back and be disgraced;
R. *who take pleasure in my misfortune.*

LESSON ONE

Lamentations 1:1-5

Aleph. How solitary lies the city, once so full of people: How like a widow has she become, she that was great among the nations! She that was queen among the cities has now become a vassal.

Beth. She weeps bitterly in the night, tears run down her cheeks; among all her lovers she has none to comfort her; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her; they have become her enemies.

Gimel. Judah has gone into the misery of exile and of hard servitude; she dwells now among the nations, but finds no resting place; all her pursuers overtook her in the midst of her anguish.

Daleth. The roads to Zion mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts; all her gates are desolate, her priests groan and sigh; her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness.

He. Her adversaries have become her masters, her enemies prosper; because the Lord has punished her for the multitude of her rebellions; her children are gone, driven away as captives by the enemy.

RESPONSORY *In monte Oliveti*

On the mount of Olives Jesus prayed to the Father: Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

V. Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation.

R. *The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

ANTIPHON

They divide my garments among them; they cast lots for my clothing.

A brief silence is observed. The Psalm is read antiphonally by whole verse.

PSALM 22 *Deus, Deus meus*

¹ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? *

and are so far from my cry
and from the words of my distress?

² O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer; *

by night as well, but I find no rest.

³ Yet you are the Holy One, *

enthroned upon the praises of Israel.

⁴ Our forefathers put their trust in you; *

they trusted, and you delivered them.

⁵ They cried out to you and were delivered; *

they trusted in you and were not put to shame.

⁶ But as for me, I am a worm and no man, *

scorned by all and despised by the people.

⁷ All who see me laugh me to scorn; *

they curl their lips and wag their heads, saying,

⁸ "He trusted in the LORD; let him deliver him; *

let him rescue him, if he delights in him."

⁹ Yet you are he who took me out of the womb, *

and kept me safe upon my mother's breast.

¹⁰ I have been entrusted to you ever since I was born; *
you were my God when I was still in my mother's womb.

¹¹ Be not far from me, for trouble is near, *
and there is none to help.

V. They divide my garments among them;
R. *they cast lots for my clothing.*

LESSON TWO

Lamentations 1:6-9

Waw. And from Daughter Zion all her majesty has departed; her princes have become like stags that can find no pasture, and that run without strength before the hunter.

Zayin. Jerusalem remembers in the days of her affliction and bitterness all the precious things that were hers from the days of old; when her people fell into the hand of the foe, and there was none to help her; the adversary saw her, and mocked at her downfall.

Heth. Jerusalem has sinned greatly, therefore she has become a thing uncleaned, and who honored her despise her, for they have seen her nakedness; and now she sighs and turns her face away.

Teth. Uncleaness clung to her skirts, she took no thought to her doom; therefore her fall is terrible, she has no comforter. "O Lord, behold my affliction, for the enemy has triumphed."

RESPONSORY *Tristis est anima mea*

My soul is very sorrowful, even to the point of death; Remain here, and watch with me. Now you shall see the crowd who will surround me; you will flee, and I will go to be offered up for you.

V. Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.
R. *You will flee, and I will go to be offered up for you.*

ANTIPHON

God is my helper; it is the Lord who sustains my life.

A brief silence is observed. The Psalm is read antiphonally by whole verse.

PSALM 54 *Deus, in nomine*

- ¹ Save me, O God, by your Name; *
 in your might, defend my cause.
- ² Hear my prayer, O God; *
 give ear to the words of my mouth.
- ³ For the arrogant have risen up against me,
 and the ruthless have sought my life, *
 those who have no regard for God.
- ⁴ Behold, God is my helper; *
 it is the Lord who sustains my life.
- ⁵ Render evil to those who spy on me; *
 in your faithfulness, destroy them.
- ⁶ I will offer you a freewill sacrifice *
 and praise your Name, O LORD, for it is good.
- ⁷ For you have rescued me from every trouble, *
 and my eye has seen the ruin of my foes.

V. God is my helper;
R. *it is the Lord who sustains my life.*

LESSON THREE

Lamentations 1:10-14

Yodh. The adversary has stretched out his hand to seize all her precious things; she has seen the Gentiles invade her sanctuary, those whom you had forbidden to enter your congregation.

Kaph. All her people cry as they search for bread; they sell their own children for food to revive their strength. “Behold, O Lord, and consider, for I am now beneath contempt.”

Lamedh. Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Behold and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow which was brought upon me, which the Lord inflicted, on the day of his burning anger.

Mem. From on high he sent fire, into my bones it descended; he spread a net for my feet, and turned me back; he has left me desolate and faint all the day long.

Nun. My transgressions were bound into a yoke; by his hand they were fastened together; their yoke is upon my neck, he has caused my strength to fail. The Lord has delivered me into their hands, against whom I am not able to stand up.

RESPONSORY *Velum templi*

The veil of the temple was torn in two, and the earth shook, and the thief from the cross cried out, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

- V. The rocks were split, the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who slept were raised:
R. *And the earth shook, and the thief from the cross cried out, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom.*

ANTIPHON

God did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.

A brief silence is observed. The Psalm is read antiphonally by whole verse.

PSALM 27:1-9 *Dominus illuminatio*

- ¹ The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? *
the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid?
² When evildoers came upon me to eat up my flesh, *
it was they, my foes and my adversaries, who stumbled and fell.
³ Though an army should encamp against me, *
yet my heart shall not be afraid;
⁴ And though war should rise up against me, *
yet will I put my trust in him.
⁵ One thing have I asked of the LORD; one thing I seek; *
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life;
⁶ To behold the fair beauty of the LORD *
and to seek him in his temple.
⁷ For in the day of trouble he shall keep me safe in his shelter; *
he shall hide me in the secrecy of his dwelling and set me high upon a
rock.
⁸ Even now he lifts up my head *
above my enemies round about me.
⁹ Therefore I will offer in his dwelling an oblation with sounds of great gladness*
I will sing and make music to the LORD.

- V. God did not spare his own Son,
R. *but delivered him up for us all.*

In my despair I said, "In the noonday of my life I must depart; my unspent years are summoned to the portals of death." And I said, "No more shall I see the Lord in the land of the living, never more look on my kind among dwellers on earth. My house is pulled down and I am uncovered, as when a shepherd strikes his tent. My life is rolled up like a bolt of cloth, the threads cut off from the loom. Between sunrise and sunset my life is brought to an end; I cower and hope for the dawn. Like a lion he has crushed all my bones; like a swallow or thrush I utter plaintive cries; I mourn like a dove.

My weary eyes look up to you; Lord, be my refuge in my affliction." But what can I say? for he has spoken; it is he who has done this. Slow and halting are my steps all my days, because of the bitterness of my spirit. O Lord, I recounted all these things to you and you rescued me; when entreated, you restored my life. I know now that my bitterness was for my good, for you held me back from the pit of destruction, you cast all my sins behind you. The grave does not thank you nor death give you praise; nor do those at the brink of the grave hang on your promises. It is the living, O Lord, the living who give you thanks as I do this day; You, Lord, are my Savior; I will praise you with stringed instruments all the days of my life, in the house of the Lord.

RESPONSORY *Ecce quomodo moritur*

See how the righteous one perishes, and no one takes it to heart. The righteous are taken away, and no one understands. From the face of evil the righteous one is taken away, and his memory shall be in peace.

- V. Like a sheep before its shearers is mute, so he opened not his mouth.
R. *By oppression and judgment he was taken away: And his memory shall be in peace.*

ANTIPHON

O Death, I will be your death; O Grave, I will be your destruction.

A brief silence is observed. The Psalm is read antiphonally by whole verse.

Psalm 150 *Laudate Dominum*

¹ Hallelujah!

Praise God in his holy temple; *
praise him in the firmament of his power.

- ² Praise him for his mighty acts; *
praise him for his excellent greatness.
- ³ Praise him with the blast of the ram's-horn; *
praise him with lyre and harp.
- ⁴ Praise him with timbrel and dance; *
praise him with strings and pipe.
- ⁵ Praise him with resounding cymbals; *
praise him with loud-clanging cymbals.
- ⁶ Let everything that has breath *
praise the LORD. Hallelujah!

V. O Death, I will be your death;
R. *O Grave, I will be your destruction.*

ANTIPHON

Now the women sitting at the tomb made lamentation, weeping for the Lord.

All stand. During the reading of the following canticle, the candles at the Altar, and all other lights in the church (except the one remaining at the top of the hearse), are extinguished.

CANTICLE 16

Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel

Luke 1:68-79

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; *
he has come to his people and set them free.
He has raised up for us a mighty savior, *
born of the house of his servant David.
Through his holy prophets he promised of old,
that he would save us from our enemies, *
from the hands of all who hate us.
He promised to show mercy to our fathers *
and to remember his holy covenant.
This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham, *
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
Free to worship him without fear, *
holy and righteous in his sight
all the days of our life.
You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, *
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
To give his people knowledge of salvation *
by the forgiveness of their sins.
In the tender compassion of our God *
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, *
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

*After the Canticle, during the repetition of the antiphon, the remaining candle
is taken from the stand and hidden.*

V. Now the women sitting at the tomb made lamentation,
R. weeping for the Lord.

All kneel.

ANTIPHON *Christus factus est*

Christ for us became obedient unto death, even death on a cross; therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the Name which is above every name.

A brief silence is observed. The Psalm is read antiphonally by whole verse.

PSALM 51:1-18 *Miserere mei, Deus*

- ¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; *
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.
- ² Wash me through and through from my wickedness *
and cleanse me from my sin.
- ³ For I know my transgressions, *
and my sin is ever before me.
- ⁴ Against you only have I sinned *
and done what is evil in your sight.
- ⁵ And so you are justified when you speak *
and upright in your judgment.
- ⁶ Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, *
a sinner from my mother's womb.
- ⁷ For behold, you look for truth deep within me, *
and will make me understand wisdom secretly.
- ⁸ Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; *
wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.
- ⁹ Make me hear of joy and gladness, *
that the body you have broken may rejoice.
- ¹⁰ Hide your face from my sins *
and blot out all my iniquities.
- ¹¹ Create in me a clean heart, O God, *
and renew a right spirit within me.

- ¹² Cast me not away from your presence *
and take not your holy Spirit from me.
- ¹³ Give me the joy of your saving help again *
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.
- ¹⁴ I shall teach your ways to the wicked, *
and sinners shall return to you.
- ¹⁵ Deliver me from death, O God, *
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness,
O God of my salvation.
- ¹⁶ Open my lips, O Lord, *
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
- ¹⁷ Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice, *
but you take no delight in burnt-offerings.
- ¹⁸ The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; *
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

CONCLUDING COLLECT

Almighty God, we pray you graciously to behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross.

Nothing further is said; but a noise is made, and the remaining candle is brought from its hiding place and replaced on the stand. By its light the ministers depart in silence.

THOSE SERVING

Officiant
Assisting
Acolyte
St. Isidore Guild

The Rev. Anne Turner
The Rev. Jason Roberson
Stephanie Reed
Eleanor Reed & Ben Kong