

Tenebrae Service
Wednesday of Holy Week 2022
St. Peter's-at-the-Light Episcopal Church, Barnegat Light, NJ

Understanding the Tenebrae

A Service of Shadows

The service of Tenebrae, meaning "darkness" or "shadows," has been practiced by the church since medieval times. Once a service for the monastic community, Tenebrae later became an important part of the worship of the common folk during Holy Week. We join generations of Christians throughout the world in using the liturgy of Tenebrae.

Tenebrae is a prolonged meditation on Christ's suffering. Readings trace the story of Christ's passion, music portrays his pathos, and the power of silence and darkness suggests the drama of this momentous day. As lights are extinguished, we ponder the depth of Christ's suffering and death; we remember the cataclysmic nature of his sacrifice as we hear the overwhelming sound of the "strepitus;" and through the return of the small but persistent flame of the Christ candle at the conclusion of the service, we anticipate the joy of ultimate victory.

Opening

*A single large candle and five smaller candles are lit.
We begin in silence.*

Officiant: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

People: Amen

Officiant: Blessed be the name of the Lord our God,

People: who redeems us from sin and death.

Officiant: For us and for our salvation, Christ, though he was truly God, did not cling to his power and became like one of us, a Son of Man, taking upon himself all human limitations, even death.

People: Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Taize chant: Holy Spirit, Come to Us (3 times)



Ho-ly Spir-it, come to us; kindle in us the fire of your love.
Ve-ni Sancte Spi-ri-tus, tu-i a-mo-ris ignem ac-cen-de.

5



Ho-ly Spir-it, come to us. Ho-ly Spir-it, come to us.
Ve-ni San-cte Spi-ri-tus. Ve-ni San-cte Spi-ri-tus.

Officiant: Holy Spirit of God, we know that Jesus took up all the burdens of our human life. Give us grace in this time to reflect on and to come to know more fully the suffering Jesus chose to endure and to truly see Jesus in his death that, following his example, we might faithfully walk the path set before us.

Taize chant: Holy Spirit Come to Us (once more)



Ho-ly Spir-it, come to us; kindle in us the fire of your love.
Ve-ni Sancte Spi-ri-tus, tu-i a-mo-ris ignem ac-cen-de.

5



Ho-ly Spir-it, come to us. Ho-ly Spir-it, come to us.
Ve-ni San-cte Spi-ri-tus. Ve-ni San-cte Spi-ri-tus.

The First Shadow

The light of faithfulness and loyalty is extinguished by the shadow of betrayal

Reader 1: Joan

(Matthew 26:20-25)

When evening came, Jesus settled down with the Twelve. As they were eating, he said, "I am telling you the truth: one of you will betray me." They were extremely upset, and began to say one by one, "It isn't me, is it, Master?"

"It is the one who has dipped his hand with me in the dish," Jesus replied. "That is the one who will betray me. The son of man is on his way to his death, just as the scriptures said it would happen. But it is misery for the man who hands him over. It would be better for that man if he had never been born.

Moment of silent reflection.

Reader 2: Tom

This was not the pleasant beginning to their Passover meal they had expected. This was to be a celebration of the rescue of Israel from bondage. Yet the first words out of Jesus' mouth are filled with omens of treachery.

"Greatly distressed," as Matthew describes them, just barely covers it. How about "shocked," "incredulous," or "thunderstruck"? Each one protests - not just his innocence, but even that such betrayal could happen. And Judas protests along with them, even though he has already accepted the blood money.

They have no idea that - as they sit down to celebrate God's great deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt - God is about to deliver them again, but this time not a single nation but all of humanity. This deliverance, like the last one, will be born in tears and struggle and death.

They do not know that Jesus will go to the cross and will respond only with love as we humans throw our very worst at him. They do not understand that this is the way Jesus will fully reveal the loving face of our God. They cannot fathom that through Jesus, God will deliver all of us from our fears and failings and even from the specter of death itself.

As the disciples gather to celebrate, they have no sense that they, like each of us, is capable of betraying, deserting, and denying Jesus. But neither do they understand God's capacity and readiness to bestow mercy, forgiveness, and redemption.

The events we ponder tonight are profoundly moving. Sometimes, though, our familiarity with a powerful story dulls our senses. Let it not be so tonight. On this night, let us tonight give our full attention to those events. In doing so, may each of us know and experience God's profound and unending love – that love which is for each or us and for all of us.

The above was adapted from "...in the Meantime," <http://www.davidlose.net/2014/03/matthew-26-20-25/>

A moment of silent reflection

Let us pray together:

Loving God, help us to focus our eyes and our hearts on your Son as he makes his way to the cross, that we might understand your love and never fear again. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen!

The candle of faithfulness and loyalty is extinguished

The Second Shadow

The light of peace is extinguished by the shadow of agony of spirit

Reader 3: Debbie

(Matthew 26:36-50)

Jesus went with them to the place called Gethsemane. "You sit here," he said to the disciples, "while I go over there and pray."

Jesus took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with him and began to be very distressed. "My soul is overwhelmed with grief," he said, "even to death. Stay here and keep watch with me." Then, going a little further on, he fell on his face and prayed. "My father," he said, "if it is possible – please, let this cup go away from me! But not what I want, but what you want."

He came back to the disciples and found them asleep. "So," he said to Peter, "couldn't you keep watch with me for a single hour? Watch and pray so that you do not fail in the time of testing. The spirit is eager, but the body is weak."

Taize chant: Stay With Me (3 times)

Stay with me, re - main here with me, watch and
 No - ho pū, no - ho mai me ia'u, ki - a'i a

pray watch and pray.
 pu - le, kiai a pule.

Again, for the second time, he went off and said, “My father, if it is not possible for this to pass unless I drink it, let your will be done.” And again he came and found them asleep. Their eyes were heavy. Once more he left them and went away to pray. He prayed for the third time, using the same words once again. Then he came back to the disciples.

“You can sleep now,” he said, “and have a good rest! Look, the time has come, and the son of man is given over into the hands of wicked people. Get up and let us be going. Look! Here comes the one who is going to betray me!”

While Jesus was still speaking, Judas – one of the Twelve – arrived. He had come with a large crowd carrying swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. The one who was intending to betray him gave them a sign: “The one I kiss – that is him! Grab hold of him!” So Judas came up at once to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Teacher!” and kissed him.

“My friend,” said Jesus, “what have you come to do?” Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him.

Taize Chant: Stay with Me (3 more times)

A moment of silent reflection

Let us pray together:

Peace-giving God, help us to focus our eyes and our hearts on your Son as he makes his way toward the cross, that we might understand your love and never fear again. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen!

The candle of peace is extinguished

The Third Shadow

The light of steadfast commitment is extinguished by the denial of fellowship

Reader 4: Susan

(Matthew 26:69-75)

Meanwhile, Peter sat outside in the courtyard. One of the servant girls came up to him and said, "You were with Jesus the Galilean too, weren't you?"

Peter denied it in front of everyone. "I don't know what you are talking about," he said.

Then Peter went out to the gateway. Another girl saw him, and said to the people who were there, "This fellow was with Jesus the Nazarene!"

Once again Peter denied it, this time swearing, "I do not know the man!"

After a while, the people standing around came up and said to Peter, "You really are one of them! Look - the way you talk makes it obvious!"

Then Peter began to curse and swear. "I do not know the man!" And then, at once, the cock crowed. And Peter remembered.

Taize Chant: Within Our Darkest Night (3 times)

The musical score is written for voice and guitar. It consists of two systems of music. The first system has two staves: a treble clef staff for the voice and a bass clef staff for the guitar. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The first system contains the first two lines of the chant. The second system also has two staves and contains the next two lines. Chord symbols are placed above the treble staff: B and Em for the first system, and D, G, C, and G for the second system. The lyrics are written below the treble staff.

With - in our dark - est night, you kin - dle the
Dans nos ob - scu - ri - tés, al - lu - me le

2
fire that nev - er dies a - way, nev - er dies a -
feu qui ne s'é - teint ja - mais, ne s'é - teint ja -

4

D G Em C Am

way. With - in our dark - est night, you kin - dle the
 mais. Dans nos ob - scu - ri - tés, al - lu - me le

6

B Em Am B Em Am B

fire that nev - er dies a - way, nev - er dies a - way.
 feu qui ne s'é - teint ja - mais, ne s'é - teint ja - mais.

Reader 5: Barbara

Judas, Peter,
 because we are all
 betrayers, taking
 silver and eating
 body and blood and asking
 (guilty) is it I and hearing
 him say yes
 it would be simple for us all
 to rush out
 and hang ourselves
 but if we find grace
 to cry and wait
 after the voice of morning
 has crowed in our ears
 clearly enough
 to break our hearts
 he will be there
 to ask us each again
 do you love me?

("Judas, Peter" Poem by Luci Shaw)

Taize chant: Within Our Darkest Night (Twice mor)

A moment of silence

Let us pray together:

Gracious God, focus our eyes and our hearts on your Son as he journeys to and endures the cross, in order that we might understand your love and never fear again. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen!

The candle of steadfast commitment is extinguished

The Fourth Shadow

The light of joy is extinguished by false accusations

Reader 6: Susan

(Matthew 27:11-17, 20-29)

So, Jesus stood in front of the governor. "Are you the king of the Jews?" the governor asked him. "If you say so," replied Jesus.

The chief priests and the elders poured out their accusations against him, but he made no answer. Then Pilate said to him, "Don't you hear all this evidence they are bringing against you?" Jesus gave him no answer, not even a word, which astonished the governor.

Now the governor had a custom. At festival time he used to release one prisoner for the crowd, whomever they chose. Just then they had a famous prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. So, when the people were all gathered there, Pilate said to them, "Who do you want me to release for you? Jesus Barabbas or Jesus the so-called Messiah?"

The high priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas, and to have Jesus killed. So, when the governor came back to them again, they said "Barabbas!"

"So, what shall I do with Jesus the so-called Messiah?" asked Pilate. "Let him be crucified!" they all said.

"Why?" asked Pilate. "What has he done wrong?" But they shouted all the louder, "Let him be crucified!"

Pilate saw that the situation was not good. In fact, a riot was brewing. He took some water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am not guilty of this man's blood," he said. "It is your problem."

"Let his blood be on us!" answered the people, "And on our children!"

Then Pilate released Barabbas for them. He had Jesus flogged and handed him over to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into their barracks and gathered the whole regiment together. They took off his clothes and dressed him up in a scarlet military cloak. They wove a crown out of thorns and struck it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. Then they knelt down in front of him. "Greetings, king of the Jews!" they said, making fun of him.

A moment of silent reflection

Taize chant: In God Alone My Soul Can Find Rest and Peace (3 times)

In God a-lone my soul can find rest and peace, in
Mon â - me se re - po - se en paix sur Dieu seul: de

God my peace and joy. On - ly in God my
lui vient mon sa - lut. Oui, sur Dieu seul mon

soul can find its rest, find its rest and peace.
â - me se re - po - se, se re - po - se en paix.

Reader 7: Joan

O Savior of my life,
Will you meet me in my death?
O Deliverer of my hope,
Will you free me in my peril?
O Healer of my soul,
Will you cure all my disease?

When I cry, shedding tears
Do you taste my bitterness?
When I strive, struggling to survive
Do you stand by and offer your hand?

When I give up, with shattered dreams
Do you pick up all the pieces?

O Listener of all my prayers,
In silence and thunder I wait for your answer.
O Comforter of my broken heart,
In lonely night I search for your solace.
O Helper of my weakened strength,
In unbearable burden I seek your relief.

(A Prayer to My Suffering God)

Taize Chant: In God Alone (Twice more)

A moment of silence

Let us pray together:

Listening God, help us to focus our eyes and our hearts on your Son as he journeys to and endures the cross that we might know we need never fear again. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen!

The candle of joy is extinguished

The Fifth Shadow

The light of hope is extinguished by the shadow of rejection and humiliation

Reader 8: Tom

(Matthew 27:31-41)

When they had finished making fun of him, they took off the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes again, and led him off to crucify him.

As they were going out, they found a man from Cyrene, called Simon. They forced him to carry Jesus' cross. When they came to the place called Golgotha, which means Skull Place, they gave him a drink of wine mixed with bitter herbs. When he tasted it, he refused to drink it.

Then they crucified him. They divided up his clothes by casting lots, and they sat down and kept watch over him there. And they placed the written charge above his head: "This is Jesus, the king of the Jews."

Then they crucified two brigands alongside him, one on his right and one on his left. The people going by shouted blasphemies at Jesus. They shook their heads at him.

"So!" they said. "You were going to destroy the Temple and built it in three days, were you? Save yourself, if you are God's son! Come down from the cross!" The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders mocked him the same way.

Taize chant: Jesus, Remember Me (five times)

Jesus, remember me when you come in-to your kingdom.

The first instance of the Taize chant is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody is simple and repetitive, consisting of a series of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are: "Jesus, remember me when you come in-to your kingdom."

Jesus, remember me when you come in-to your kingdom.

The second instance of the Taize chant is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody is simple and repetitive, consisting of a series of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are: "Jesus, remember me when you come in-to your kingdom."

A moment of silent reflection

Let us pray together:

Powerful God, help us to focus our eyes and our hearts on the form of your Son on the cross, that we might know we need never fear again. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen!

The candle of hope is extinguished

The Sixth Shadow

The physical presence of Jesus is extinguished by his death

Reader 9: Barbara

(Matthew 27:45-52a)

From noon until mid-afternoon there was darkness over the whole land. About in the middle of the afternoon, Jesus shouted out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!" – which means, "My God, My God, why did you abandon me?"

Some of the people who were standing there heard it and said, "This fellow is calling Elijah!" One of them ran at once and got a sponge. He filled it with vinegar, put it on a reed, and gave him a drink. The others said, "Wait a bit. Let us see if Elijah is going to come and rescue him!"

But Jesus shouted out loudly one more time, and then breathed his last breath.

At that instant, the Temple curtain was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks were split, and the tombs burst open.

Strepitus!

The Christ Candle is extinguished.

We will remain in darkness and in silent reflection for a few moments

Let us pray together:

God of life, teach us that this is the moment of both darkness and light. This is the moment in which Mary, the disciples, and all those who hoped in Jesus felt the greatest loss, even despair. Yet this is also the moment in which Jesus was freed from the restraints of his human body. Free us and all those who at this moment know darkness, that we might believe that the light of Jesus will overcome the darkest of nights. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen!

The Seventh Shadow
The burial of Jesus seems final

Reader 10: Debbie


(Matthew 27:57-61)

When evening came, a rich man from Arimathea arrived. He was called Joseph, and he too was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and requested the body of Jesus. Pilate gave the order that it should be given to him.


Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. He laid it in his own new tomb, which he had carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a large stone across the doorway of the tomb and went away.

Mary Magdalene was there, and so was the other Mary. They were sitting in front of the tomb.


Reflective Hymn: *Were You There When They Crucified My Lord (stanzas 1 - 3 only)*



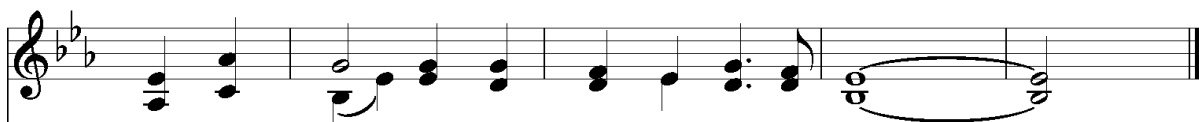
1. Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord? _____ Were you
 2. Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree? _____ Were you
 3. Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb? _____ Were you
 4. Were you there when He rose up from the grave? _____ Were you



1. there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord?
 2. there when they nailed Him to the tree?
 3. there when they laid Him in the tomb?
 4. there when He rose up from the grave?



Some-times it caus-es me to trem-ble, trem-ble, trem - ble. _____



1. Were you there when they cru - ci - fied my Lord? _____
 2. Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree? _____
 3. Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb? _____
 4. Were you there when He rose up from the grave? _____

After a few moments of silent reflection, the Christ Candle Is Restored

Taize Chant: Within Our Darkest Night (once)

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of four systems of music, each with a vocal line and a bass line. The lyrics are in English and French. The first system starts with a B chord and an Em chord. The second system has D, G, C, and G chords. The third system has D, G, Em, C, and Am chords. The fourth system has B, Em, Am, B, Em, Am, and B chords. The piece ends with a double bar line.

With - in our dark - est night, you kin - dle the
Dans nos ob - scu - ri - tés, al - lu - me le

2
fire that nev - er dies a - way, nev - er dies a -
feu qui ne s'é - teint ja - mais, ne s'é - teint ja -

4
way. With - in our dark - est night, you kin - dle the
mais. Dans nos ob - scu - ri - tés, al - lu - me le

6
fire that nev - er dies a - way, nev - er dies a - way.
feu qui ne s'é - teint ja - mais, ne s'é - teint ja - mais.

Dismissal

Officiant: May Jesus Christ, who for our sakes became obedient unto death, even death on a cross, keep us and strengthen us tonight and always. May you come to know Christ Jesus, crucified and risen. May you know the power flowing from his death and resurrection, that you may live in hope and in love and in peace tonight and always.

People: **Amen.**

We hope this service has afforded you some moments of prayerful reflection on the Lord.

Thank you for your presence tonight.

You may leave in silence whenever you are ready