

TENEBRAE

A Service of Darkness

by Hal H. Hopson



The Service of Tenebrae has a rich tradition in the church, dating back to the eighth century. *Tenebrae* is a word derived from Latin meaning “darkness.” Through word and music, this service dramatizes the suffering, death, and burial of Jesus Christ.

As the service moves from light into darkness, the diminishing light symbolizes the fading devotion of the apostles as well as the gradual dying of our Lord.

At the end of the service, the sanctuary will be in darkness. The congregation is asked to leave silently, contemplating Christ’s suffering and death, in preparation for the joy we will celebrate with Christ’s resurrection on Easter Day.

TENEBRAE

A Service of Darkness

PRELUDE *(or the Congregation gathers in silence)*

GREETING *(Congregation standing)*

Blessed be the name of the Lord our God,
Who redeems us from sin and death.

For us and for our salvation, Christ became obedient unto death,
even death on the cross.

Blessed be the name of the Lord.

O SACRED HEAD, NOW WOUNDED

CONGREGATION SINGS BOTH STANZAS



1. O sa - cred head, now wound - ed, with grief and shame weighed down, now
2. What lan - guage shall I bor - row to thank thee, dear - est friend, for



scorn - ful - ly sur - round - ed with thorns, thine on - ly crown; O
this thy dy - ing sor - row, thy pit - y with - out end? O



sa - cred head, what glo - ry, what bliss till now was thine; yet,
make me thine for - ev - er; and should I faint - ing be. Lord,



though de - spised and gor - y, I joy to call thee mine.
let me nev - er, nev - er out - live my love to thee.

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A BIDDING PRAYER

Dear people of God, in this Holy Week let us hear once more of our Lord's passion and death. With heart and mind let us go to Gethsemane, and to the halls of judgment and, yes, even to the hill of Calvary.

Let us hear in Holy Scripture the story of God's loving purpose in Christ's suffering and his ultimate sacrifice for all humankind.

But first, let us pray for the needs of the whole world; for peace and justice on earth; for the unity and mission of the Church for which he died.

Let us remember, in Christ's name, the poor and helpless, the cold, the hungry, and the oppressed, (*here may be inserted intercessions pertinent to the community*), all who are sick and who mourn, the lonely and unloved, the aged and little children, as well as those who do not know and love the Lord Jesus Christ.

We remember all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore, and in a greater light, that multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the crucified and risen Lord.

Let us pray that we may be taught humility as we remember Christ's humiliation, that we may be taught obedience as we remember Christ's obedience unto death, and that we might be taught to love one another as we remember Christ's love for all people.

Finally, let us pray for all those things for which our Lord would have us ask as we pray the prayer of his heart:

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name;

thy kingdom come,

thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses, (*and forgive us our debts,*)

as we forgive those who trespass against us; (*as we forgive our debtors;*)

and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,

forever. Amen.

(Congregation sits)

THE SOLEMN REPROACHES OF THE CROSS *(optional)*

O my people, O my church,
what have I done to you,
or in what have I offended you
that you should testify against me?
I led you forth from the land of Egypt
and delivered you by the waters of baptism,
but you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

I led you through the desert forty years,
and fed you with manna;
I brought you through tribulation and pestilence,
and gave you my body, the bread of heaven,
but you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

What more could I have done for you
that I have not done?
I planted you, my chosen and fairest vineyard,
I made you the branches of my vine;
but when I was thirsty, you gave me vinegar to drink
and pierced with a spear the side of your Savior,
and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

I went before you in a pillar of cloud,
and you have led me to the judgment hall of Pilate.
I scourged your enemies and brought you to a land of freedom,
but you have scourged, mocked, and beaten me.
I gave you the water of salvation from the rock,
but you have given me gall and left me to thirst,
and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

I gave you a royal scepter,
and bestowed the keys to the kingdom,
but you have given me a crown of thorns.
I raised you on high with great power,
but you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

My peace I gave, which the world cannot give,
and washed your feet as a sign of my love,
but you draw the sword to strike in my name
and seek high places in my kingdom.
I offered you my body and blood,
but you scatter and deny and abandon me,
and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

I sent the Spirit of truth to guide you,
and you close your hearts to the Counselor.
I pray that all may be one in the Father and me,
but you continue to quarrel and divide.
I call you to go and bring forth fruit,
but you cast lots for my clothing,
and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

I came to you as the least of your brothers and sisters;
I was hungry and you gave me no food,
I was thirsty and you gave me no drink,
I was a stranger and you did not welcome me,
naked and you did not clothe me,
sick and in prison and you did not visit me,
and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

**Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One,
have mercy upon us. Amen.**

ALL WHO PASS THIS WAY

CONGREGATION SINGS STANZAS 2 & 3 (*Stanza 1: Choir only*)



1. All who pass this way, look and see;
 2. All who pass this way, look and see;
 3. All who pass this way, look and see;



All who pass this way, look and see;
 All who pass this way, look and see;
 All who pass this way, look and see;



See the Lord of Life, see him now;
 See the Lord of Life, see him now;
 See the Lord of Life, see him now;



See his sor - row; Kum ba yah.
 See his suf - f'ring; Kum ba yah.
 See him dy - ing; Kum ba yah.

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD

FIRST READING *(The religious leaders conspire against Jesus)*

It was two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The religious leaders who collaborated with the Roman occupation were conspiring against Jesus. They had gathered in the palace of Caiaphas the high priest. This man had received the high priesthood at the hand of Valerius Gratus, the former Roman governor, and now retained the office under Pontius Pilate. They all were planning to quietly arrest and destroy Jesus so as to avoid a revolt among the Jews.

SECOND READING *(Judas plots with the authorities to deliver Jesus)*

Then one of the twelve named Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, went to the chief priests and asked, "What will you give me if I deliver Jesus to you for the governor?" When they heard the offer, they were glad and promised Judas thirty pieces of silver. From that hour he sought an opportunity to betray Jesus.

THIRD READING *(Jesus tells his disciples where to celebrate the Paschal meal)*

At the beginning of the feast, when the Passover lamb was sacrificed, the disciples of Jesus approached him and asked, "Where do you wish us to prepare the Paschal meal?" Jesus took two of his disciples and instructed them, "Go into the city, and you will see there a man carrying a water jar. He will show you a suitable place." The two did as Jesus commanded. They entered the city where they found the man with the water jar, who brought them to a large upper room.

FOURTH READING *(Jesus announces that one of his disciples will betray him)*

When evening had come, Jesus arrived with the twelve. While they were eating, he said, "I tell you truly that one of you is going to betray me." The disciples were stunned with grief and began to protest one after the other, "Surely not I!" Jesus replied, "The betrayer is one of you dipping his hand in the dish with me. The Son of man is fulfilling Scripture, but woe to that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed." Then Judas slipped out into the night.

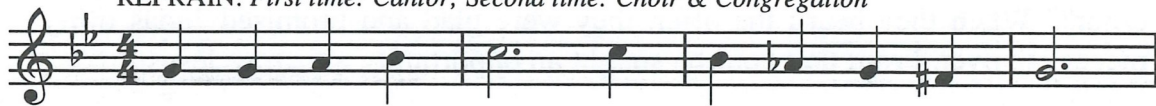
FIFTH READING (*Jesus recites the Words of Institution*)

As they were eating, Jesus took bread. After reciting the blessing, he broke it and gave it to his disciples as he said, "Take, eat; this is my body." Then taking the cup with the traditional blessing, he gave it to his disciples as he said, "This is my blood of the covenant which is being shed for many. I tell you in truth that I shall not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it fresh in the kingdom of God." Having sung a hymn, they left the city for the Mount of Olives.

THE CUP OF LOVE*

(Psalm 116)

REFRAIN: *First time: Cantor; Second time: Choir & Congregation*



Lord, we of - fer thanks; we call up - on your name.

The musical notation is a single staff in 4/4 time, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with a final double bar line. The lyrics are written below the staff, aligned with the notes.

VERSES 1-4: (*Cantor or Choir in unison*)

1. O Lord, how can we offer thanks to you?
Your goodness is all around us.
We will lift up high the cup of love
and call upon your name.

REFRAIN (*Choir & Congregation*)

2. O Lord, we will pay our vows to you;
we will pay them before the people.
The death of all your faithful saints
is precious in your sight.

REFRAIN (*Choir & Congregation*)

3. Your servants, O Lord, we are your servants,
yes, children of a humble house.
You have freed us, Lord, we offer thanks;
we call upon your name.

REFRAIN (*Choir & Congregation*)

4. O Lord, we will pay our vows to you;
we will pay them before the people.
O Jerusalem, within your courts
we offer thanks and praise.

REFRAIN (*Choir & Congregation*)

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SIXTH READING *(Jesus tells his disciples that they will all desert him)*

As they walked, Jesus said to his disciples, "You will all desert me this very night. So it is written in the prophet Zechariah, 'Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.'" Then Peter protested, "Though all desert, I will remain by you." Jesus replied, "I tell you truly that in this very night, before the cock crows twice you shall deny me three times." Still Peter maintained, "Even though I must die with you, I will never deny you," and so declared all the disciples.

SEVENTH READING *(In Gethsemane the disciples fall asleep)*

Jesus halted at an olive grove called Gethsemane. Then going apart with Peter, James, and John, he left them on watch and continued a little farther alone. There he fell on his face in anguished prayer. Soon he returned to the three on watch and found them sleeping. Rousing them, he asked Peter, "Could you not watch with me for just one hour? Watch and pray that you are not put to the test; for the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." Again Jesus went apart in troubled prayer; and again he returned to find the disciples sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. A third time Jesus withdrew to pray, and a third time he found the disciples sleeping. Then Jesus said, "Sleep on and finish your rest. Now is the time for the Son of man to be delivered into the hands of sinners. Here comes my betrayer."



COULD YOU NOT WATCH*

REFRAIN: *First time: Choir; Second time: Choir & Congregation*
(the Congregation may sing in unison or four-part harmony)

Could you not watch? Could you not watch? Could you not watch with me one hour?

Could you not watch? Could you not watch? Could you not watch with me?

VERSES: *Soloist*

1. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.
I soon must drink the bitter cup,
the cup of the world's salvation.
REFRAIN (*Choir & Congregation*)
2. O Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.
The hour is at hand;
with swords they come to take me.
REFRAIN (*Choir & Congregation*)
3. Jerusalem weep not, weep not for yourselves,
but weep for your children,
yes, weep for your children's children.
REFRAIN (*Choir & Congregation*)

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EIGHTH READING (*Jesus is betrayed by Judas and then is seized by the Roman soldiers*)

Jesus had not finished speaking before Judas, one of his own disciples, arrived with a group of Roman soldiers and other armed men from the Temple. Now the betrayer had arranged with the authorities for a sign and had said, "The man whom I kiss is the one you want." In accord with this arrangement, Judas went directly to Jesus and cried out, "Greetings, Master." Then he gave him the kiss. Jesus responded, "Judas, would you betray the Son of man with a kiss?"

Immediately the soldiers laid hands on Jesus and held him fast. Then one of the disciples with Jesus drew his sword and cut off an ear from the slave of the high priest; but Jesus said to him, "Sheathe your sword. All who take up the sword will perish by the sword. Do you not know that I can call upon my Father and that he will respond at once with more than twelve legions of angels?" Then turning to the mob, Jesus continued, "Have you come for me as against a rebel bandit with swords and clubs? Why did you not seize me in the Temple, where I sat teaching by day? Were you so afraid of the religious authorities that you must come for me by stealth? Nevertheless, your actions are fulfilling the words of the prophets." Then all of his disciples forsook him and fled.

NINTH READING (*Jesus' trial begins in the court of the high priest Caiaphas*)

Those who had seized Jesus brought him to Caiaphas, whom the Romans had made a high priest. Peter followed at a distance as far as the courtyard. There he sat with the attendants and warmed himself by the fire. The high priest had gathered his whole council, and they began to arrange the case against Jesus which they would present to Pontius Pilate, the governor. The charge was that Jesus claimed to be King of the Jews, and they brought in many false witnesses, but to no avail. Finally two came forward and testified, "We heard this man say, 'I will tear down this temple made with hands and within three days build another not made with hands.'" The testimony was evidence that Jesus claimed an authority over temple affairs which traditionally belonged only to the rulers of Israel, and in those days Israel was ruled from Rome. Yet even these witnesses were unable to agree on their testimony.

Finally Caiaphas stood up and examined Jesus directly. "Have you no answer to these charges?" demanded the high priest. Jesus remained silent and answered nothing. Then the high priest put the question of kingship in terms of the royal titles "Anointed" and "Son of God." "Are you the Anointed One, the Son of the Blessed?" he probed. Jesus answered, "I am, and you shall see the Son of man seated on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." The high priest turned and said, "What need have we of witnesses? He has condemned himself." They all concurred that Jesus was indeed worthy of death.

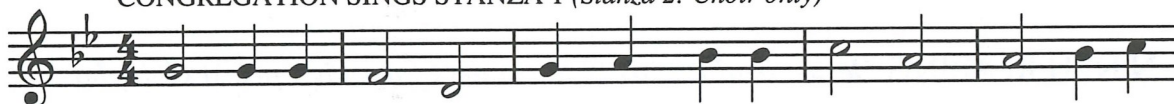
Then those holding Jesus began to spit on him. They covered his face and were striking him as they taunted him and said, "O Anointed One, prophesy who it is who is striking you."

TENTH READING *(Peter denies having any knowledge of Jesus)*

Now Peter was warming himself in the courtyard when a small slave girl entered. She confronted Peter and said, "You also were with this Jesus the Nazarene." Peter quickly gave a denial. "I do not know what you are talking about," he replied and went outside into the gateway. Meanwhile, the cock crowed. The slave girl followed Peter out and said to the bystanders, "This man is one of them." Again Peter denied knowing Jesus. After a little while the bystanders said directly to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you speak with a Galilean accent." Then Peter began to swear with an oath, "I do not know this person of whom you are speaking"; but the cock interrupted him as it crowed for the second time. Immediately Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, "Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times." He went out and wept bitterly.

AH, HOLY JESUS

CONGREGATION SINGS STANZA 1 *(Stanza 2: Choir only)*



1. Ah, ho - ly Je - sus, how have you of - fend - ed, that mor - tal
(hast thou)
2. Who was the guilt - y? Who brought this up - on you? It is my
(thee)



judg - ment has on you de - scend - ed? By foes de - rid - ed,
(thee)
treason, Lord, that has un - done you! 'Twas I, Lord Je - sus,
(thee)



by your own re - ject - ed, O most af - flict - ed!
(thine)
I it was de - nied you; I cru - ci - fied you.
(thee) (thee)

ELEVENTH READING *(Jesus is put in custody of Pontius Pilate)*

When morning arrived, all of the chief priests, along with the other Roman collaborators, bound Jesus and delivered him over to Pontius Pilate, the imperial Roman governor. When Judas saw what was happening, he knew that Jesus was doomed, and he repented. He returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and confessed, "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they responded. "That is your affair." Judas threw down the thirty pieces of silver in the Temple. Then he went out and hanged himself. Picking up the silver pieces, the chief priests said, "It is unlawful to put this silver into the treasury, for it is blood money." Whereupon they used the money to buy the Potter's Field for the burial of strangers. Therefore, that field is known to this day as the Field of Blood.

TWELFTH READING *(Jesus is put on the stand before Pontius Pilate)*

Jesus stood before the Roman governor as the accusers made their charge. "We found this man perverting our nation," they said. "He was forbidding us to pay taxes to the Emperor and proclaiming himself Anointed King." The governor asked, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "You have said so." The chief priests were accusing him of many things. Therefore, Pilate again spoke to Jesus. "Have you no answer to give?" he asked. "Look at how many accusations they are making!" Jesus astonished Pilate by remaining silent.

THIRTEENTH READING *(The crowd shouts, "Crucify him! Crucify him!")*

At the feast of the Passover, the governor used to release a prisoner, and some were urging Pilate to do so at this time. Now there was a notable rebel in prison with those who had committed murder during the insurrection. His name was Barabbas. Therefore, the chief priests arranged a demonstration to demand Barabbas. Pilate asked them, "Whom do you want me to release for you, Barabbas, or Jesus the Anointed One?" The demonstrators shouted, "Barabbas!" Pilate responded, "What shall I do then with Jesus the Anointed One?" The crowd shouted, "Crucify him!" Pilate continued, "Are you certain of his guilt?" The crowd took up the chant, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Again Pilate spoke, "Shall I crucify your king?" "We have no king but Caesar," cried the demonstrators. Then Pilate agreed to release Barabbas, but Jesus the Anointed One he handed over to his soldiers for scourging and crucifixion.

CRUCIFY HIM! *(Choir)*

FOURTEENTH READING (*The Roman soldiers mock Jesus, proclaiming, "Hail, King of the Jews"*)

The soldiers led Jesus away within the governor's palace. There they assembled the whole battalion. They clothed Jesus in royal purple. They set a crown of thorns upon his head and shoved a reed between his fingers for a scepter. They began to mock him by kneeling before him and proclaiming, "Hail, King of the Jews." They also spat upon him and smote him on the head with a stick. Then, after mocking him, they took away the purple robe, returned his own clothes, and brought him out to crucify him.

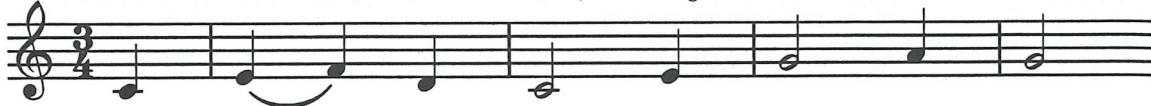
FIFTEENTH READING (*Jesus is crucified*)

On the road they met Simon of Cyrene coming in from the countryside. They compelled him to carry the cross. They brought Jesus to a place called Golgotha (which means "skull"). There they crucified him...They offered him wine mingled with myrrh, but he refused it. His garments they divided among themselves, casting lots for them. Over his head they inscribed the charge against him, The King of the Jews. Also there were two insurrectionists crucified with him, one to his right and one to his left. Those who passed by were shaking their heads in scorn and saying, "So you would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days! Save yourself. Come down from the cross." Likewise the priestly collaborators mocked him as they said to one another, "He saved others; himself he cannot save. Let the Anointed One, the King of Israel, come down from the cross that we may see and believe." Even the two crucified with him reviled him.



WHEN I SURVEY THE WONDROUS CROSS

CONGREGATION SINGS STANZAS 2 & 4 (*Choir sings Stanzas 1 & 3*)



1. When I sur - vey the won - drous cross
2. For - bid it, Lord, that I should boast,
3. (*See below*)
*4. Were the whole realm of na - ture mine,



on which the Prince of Glo - ry died,
save in the death of Christ, my God;
that were a pres - ent far too small;



my rich - est gain I count but loss,
all the vain things that charm me most,
love so a - maz - ing, so di - vine,



and pour con - tempt on all my pride.
I sac - ri - fice them to his blood.
de - mands my soul, my life, my all.

STANZA 3: *Choir only (Sung to the tune HAMBURG)*

3. *See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
sorrow and love flow mingled down.
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?*

**Congregation stands for Stanza 4.*

(*Congregation sits*)

SIXTEENTH READING *(Jesus breathes his last breath)*

Now from midday there was darkness over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At that hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema shevaqtani!" words that mean, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Some of the bystanders said, "Look, he is calling for Elijah." One of them put a sponge full of vinegar on a stick and laid it to his lips. Others said, "Wait! Let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." Then Jesus having uttered a loud cry, breathed his last breath.

AH, HOLY JESUS *(Instrumental)*

SEVENTEENTH READING *(The curtain of the temple is torn, the earth shakes)*

Suddenly the curtain of the Temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. Even the tombs of the dead were opened.

Now, when the centurion on watch and the others who were with him saw all that was taking place, they were filled with awe and said, "Truly, this man was the Son of God!"

WERE YOU THERE *(Choir)*



THE DISMISSAL *(Congregation standing)*

May Jesus Christ, who for our sake became obedient unto death, yes, even death on a cross, keep you and strengthen you this night, and forevermore.

Amen.

(All leave in silence)



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