

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 Christians of many generations 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.

FIFTH READING

John 19:16b-22 The Crucifixion of Jesus

FIFTH CANDLE EXTINGUISHED

HYMN LBW 117 *Oh Sacred Head, Now Wounded*

PRAYER: But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities, upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed.

SIXTH READING

John 19:23-30 Casting of Lots

SIXTH CANDLE EXTINGUISHED

HYMN LBW 92 vs 1-3 *Were you There*

PRAYER: All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

SEVENTH READING

John 19:31-42 Burial of Jesus

SEVENTH CANDLE EXTINGUISHED

HYMN LBW 115 vs 1-3 *Jesus I will Ponder Now*

PRAYER: They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

CLOSING OF THE BOOK

REMOVAL OF CHRIST CANDLE

PLACEMENT OF THE CROSS

RETURN OF CHRIST CANDLE

DEPART IN SILENCE

FIRST READING

John 18:1-11 Betrayal of Jesus

FIRST CANDLE EXTINGUISHED

HYMN LBW 109 vs 1-3 *Go To Dark Gethsemane*

PRAYER: Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

SECOND READING

John 18:12-25 Jesus Before the High Priest

SECOND CANDLE EXTINGUISHED

HYMN LBW 123 vs 1-3 *Ah Holy Jesus*

PRAYER: He had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

THIRD READING

John 18:26-40 Jesus Before Pilate

THIRD CANDLE EXTINGUISHED

HYMN LBW 95 vs 1-4 *Glory Be to Jesus*

PRAYER: He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account.

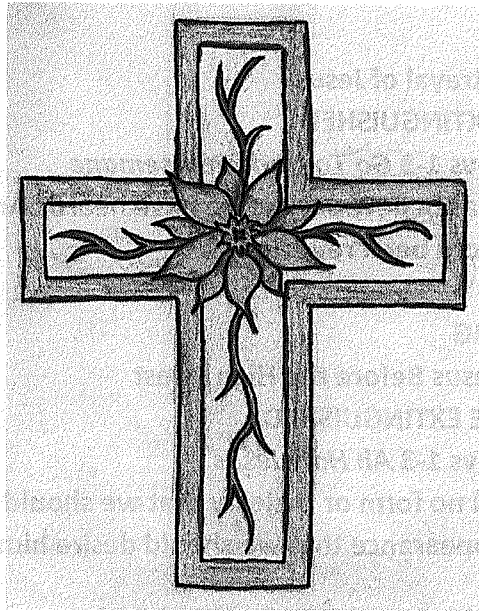
FOURTH READING

John 19:1-16a Jesus Sentenced to Death

FOURTH CANDLE EXTINGUISHED

HYMN LBW 98 *Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed*

PRAYER: Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted.



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