

Tenebrae at Home

Tenebrae is a traditional service during Holy Week – The name Tenebrae is the Latin word for "darkness" or "shadows." One of the most conspicuous features of the service is the gradual extinguishing of candles until only a single candle, considered a symbol of Christ remains. This light is also removed towards the end of our service but is restored to its place as we listen to the Benedictus. By this single light we all depart this service in silence. Most of the readings from the Hebrew scriptures and lament the pain of a people longing for hope within a fragile world. They are labelled as shadows – shadows which we might all experience at different points in our lives.

If you have 8 Candles you may like to light them in front of you and extinguish during your prayers. But if you would rather not, you may like to sit in a darker room, and listen and prayer by the light of a single candle.

Prepare yourself, ensure you are comfortable, and ready to pray.

In the name of the + Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen
Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your Holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

And this is the judgment, that the light has come into this world, and we loved darkness rather than light.

God is light, in whom there is no darkness at all.

For God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

Every one that does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light. But all who do what is true come to the light.

Come, let us worship in spirit and truth.

If possible read each reading aloud and slowly.

Allow some time for quiet at the end before moving to the music.

The Shadow of Betrayal - Lamentations 1

How lonely sits the city that once was full of people!

How like a widow she has become, she that was great among the nations!

She that was a princess among the provinces has become a vassal.

She weeps bitterly in the night, with tears on her cheeks; among all her lovers she has no one to comfort her; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they have become her enemies.

Judah has gone into exile with suffering and hard servitude; she lives now among the nations, and finds no resting place; her pursuers have all overtaken her in the midst of her distress.

The roads to Zion mourn, for no one comes to the festivals; all her gates are desolate, her priests groan; her young girls grieve, and her lot is bitter. Enemies have stretched out their hands over all her precious things; she has even seen the nations invade her sanctuary, those whom you forbade to enter your congregation.

My transgressions were bound into a yoke; by his hand they were fastened together; they weigh on my neck, sapping my strength; the Lord handed me over to those whom I cannot withstand.

See, O Lord, how distressed I am; my stomach churns, my heart is wrung within me, because I have been very rebellious. In the street the sword bereaves; in the house it is like death.

Let all their evil doing come before you; and deal with them as you have dealt with me because of all my transgressions; for my groans are many and my heart is faint.

The first candle is then extinguished

Time of silence then as you prayer listen to the Taize Chant – Bless the Lord my Soul

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t4Svh-9ohg4&t=9s>

The Shadow of the Agony of Spirit and Arrest - Psalm 10

Why, O Lord, do you stand far off?

Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?

In arrogance the wicked persecute the poor-- let them be caught in the schemes they have devised.

For the wicked boast of the desires of their heart, those greedy for gain curse and renounce the Lord.

In the pride of their countenance the wicked say, "God will not seek it out"; all their thoughts are, "There is no God."

Their ways prosper at all times; your judgments are on high, out of their sight; as for their foes, they scoff at them.

They think in their heart, "We shall not be moved; throughout all generations we shall not meet adversity."

Their mouths are filled with cursing and deceit and oppression; under their tongues are mischief and iniquity.

They sit in ambush in the villages; in hiding places they murder the innocent. Their eyes stealthily watch for the helpless; they lurk in secret like a lion in its covert; they lurk that they may seize the poor; they seize the poor and drag them off in their net.

They stoop, they crouch, and the helpless fall by their might.

They think in their heart, "God has forgotten, he has hidden his face, he will never see it."

The second candle is extinguished and then we wait in Silence. Allow yourself to pray into the silence.

The Shadow of Denial - Matthew 26:69-75

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said, 'You also were with Jesus the Galilean.' But he denied it before all of them, saying, 'I do not know what you are talking about.' When he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, 'This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.' Again he denied it with an oath, 'I do not know the man.' After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, 'Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you.' Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, 'I do not know the man!' At that moment the cock crowed. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: 'Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.' And he went out and wept bitterly.

The third candle is extinguished

Time of silence then as you prayer listen to the Taize Chant – Wait for the Lord

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7GexIvX8HU>

The Shadow of accusation - Matthew 27:11-14, 20-29

Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' Jesus said, 'You say so.' But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. Then Pilate said to him, 'Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?' But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed. Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release for you?' And they said, 'Barabbas.' Pilate said to them, 'Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?' All of them said, 'Let him be crucified!' Then he asked, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Let him be crucified!'

So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, 'I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.' Then the people as a whole answered, 'His blood be on us and on our children!' So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!'

The fourth candle is extinguished

Time of silence then as you prayer listen to *Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit* from *Braham Requiem*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RhdXHlQCoas>

*You now have sorrow;
but I shall see you again
and your heart shall rejoice
and your joy no one shall take from you.*

*Behold me:
I have had for a little time toil and torment,
and now have found great consolation.*

*I will console you,
as one is consoled by his mother*

5 The Shadow of Crucifixion - Lamentations 3

I am one who has seen affliction under the rod of God's wrath; he has driven and brought me into darkness without any light; against me alone he turns his hand, again and again, all day long.

He has made my flesh and my skin waste away, and broken my bones; he has besieged and enveloped me with bitterness and tribulation; he has made me sit in darkness like the dead of long ago.

He has walled me about so that I cannot escape; he has put heavy chains on me; though I call and cry for help, he shuts out my prayer; he has blocked my ways with hewn stones, he has made my paths crooked.

He has filled me with bitterness, he has sated me with wormwood. He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes; my soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is; so I say, "Gone is my glory, and all that I had hoped for from the Lord."

The thought of my affliction and my homelessness is wormwood and gall! My soul continually thinks of it and is bowed down within me.

My eyes flow with rivers of tears because of the destruction of my people. My eyes will flow without ceasing, without respite, until the Lord from heaven looks down and sees.

The fifth candle is extinguished and then we wait in Silence. Allow yourself to pray into the silence.

6 The Shadow of death - Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;

he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,

I fear no evil;
for you are with me;

your rod and your staff –
they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
my whole life long.

The sixth candle is extinguished and we are invited to join in singing. You can listen or sing along https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_fvFfPqjO4

**When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.**

**Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.**

**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?**

**Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, So divine,
Demands my soul, My Life, My all.**

7 The Shadow of Burial - The Sacrifice by George Herbert

But, O my God, my God! why leav'st thou me,
The sonne, in whom thou dost delight to be?
My God, my God ----- (Pause)

Never was grief like mine.

Shame tears my soul, my bodie many a wound;
Sharp nails pierce this, but sharper that confound;
Reproches, which are free, while I am bound.

Was ever grief like mine?

Now heal thy self, Physician; now come down.
Alas! I did so, when I left my crown
And fathers smile for you, to feel his frown:

Was ever grief like mine?

In healing not my self, there doth consist
All that salvation, which ye now resist;
Your safetie in my sicknesse doth subsist:

Was ever grief like mine?

Betwixt two theeves I spend my utmost breath,
As he that for some robberie suffereth.
Alas! what have I stollen from you? Death.

Was ever grief like mine?

A king my title is, prefixt on high;
Yet by my subjects am condemn'd to die
A servile death in servile companie:

Was ever grief like mine?

They give me vineger mingled with gall,
But more with malice: yet, when they did call,
With Manna, Angels food, I fed them all:

Was ever grief like mine?

They part my garments, and by lot dispose
My coat, the type of love, which once cur'd those
Who sought for help, never malicious foes:

Was ever grief like mine?

Nay, after death their spite shall further go;
For they will pierce my side, I full well know;
That as sinne came, so Sacraments might flow:
Was ever grief like mine?

But now I die; now all is finished.
My woe, mans weal: and now I bow my head.
Onely let others say, when I am dead,
Never was grief like mine.

The seventh candle is extinguished and then we wait in Silence. Allow yourself to pray into the silence.

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John. (John 19:32-34,40-42)

Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out.

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

The final candle is moved from sight, but not extinguished.

You are invited to join in the final song...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LmAOCqHqvS0Q>

**Stay Here, and keep watch with me
Watch and Pray..... Watch and Pray.**

The final candle is returned at the end as a reminded that Christ's light never leaves us.

A light shines in the darkness, which will guide our feet into the way of peace

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We say the Benedictus together:

**(+) Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel
who has come to his people and set them free.
He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour,
born of the house of his servant David.
Through his holy prophets God promised of old
to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all that hate us,
To show mercy to our ancestors,
and to remember his holy covenant.
This was the oath God 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.
And you, 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 all 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.**

Let us pray;

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; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, now and for evermore. Amen.

