

Tenebrae

Concerning the Service

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 chant of 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. We invite you, if you are able, to light 10 candles in your home. After each song or Psalm, a candle is extinguished until only one candle remains. After the end of the reading of Psalm 51, this candle is hidden, typifying the apparent victory of the forces of evil. At the very end, you are invited to make a loud noise, 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. By drawing upon material from each of the former three offices of Tenebrae, this service provides an extended meditation upon, and a prelude to, the events in our Lord’s life between the Last Supper and the Resurrection.

First Nocturn

Antiphon I

Zeal for your house has eaten me up;
the scorn of those who scorn you has fallen upon me.

Oh Lord Hear My Prayer *Taizé Community*

Em G/D Am/C D Em C B⁷

O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer: when I call, an - swer me. O

5 Em G/D Am/C D Em B⁷ Em *Last Time*

Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer. Come and lis-ten to me. O

The first candle is extinguished

Antiphon 2

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

Psalm 70

Be pleased, O God, to deliver me; *

O LORD, make haste to help me.

Let those who seek my life be ashamed and altogether dismayed; *

let those who take pleasure in my misfortune draw back and be disgraced.

Let those who say to me "Aha!" and gloat over me turn back, *

because they are ashamed.

Let all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; *

let those who love your salvation say for ever, "Great is the LORD!"

But as for me, I am poor and needy; *

come to me speedily, O God.

You are my helper and my deliverer; *

O LORD, do not tarry.

The second candle is extinguished

Antiphon 3

Arise, O God, maintain my cause.

Wait for the Lord *Taizé Community*

Em C Am6 B

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Em D G Am7 B Em

Wait for the Lord; be strong, take heart!

The third candle is extinguished

V. Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the wicked:

R. From the clutches of the evildoer and the oppressor.

Lesson 1

A Reading from the Lamentations of Jeremiah the Prophet.

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 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.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord your God!

Responsory I *In monte Oliveti*

V. On the mount of Olives Jesus prayed to the Father:

R. 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.

Lesson 2

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 unclean; all 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 of her doom; therefore her fall is terrible, she has no comforter. "O Lord, behold my affliction, for the enemy has triumphed."
Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord your God!

Responsory 2 *Tristis est anima mea*

V. My soul is very sorrowful, even to the point of death;

R. 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

Lesson 3

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 groan 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.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord your God!

Responsory 3 *Ecce vidimus eum*

V. Lo, we have seen him without beauty or majesty,

R. with no looks to attract our eyes. He bore our sins and grieved for us, he was wounded for our transgressions, and by his scourging we are healed.

V. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows:

R. And by his scourging we are healed.

Stay With Me *Taizé Community*

Dm Gm6 Dm Gm6 Dm C

Stay with me, re - main here with me; watch and

F C Dm Asus A *Repeat as desired*

pray, watch and pray.

The fourth candle is extinguished

Lauds

Antiphon 10

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

Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child *African American Spiritual*

Em

1 Some - times I feel like a moth - er - less child.
2 Some - times I feel like I'm al - most gone.

Am Em

Some - times I feel like a moth - er - less child.
Some - times I feel like I'm al - most gone.

Some - times I feel like a moth - er - less child, a
Some - times I feel like I'm al - most gone, a

Am7 Em B Em

long ways from home, a long ways from home.
long ways from home, a long ways from home.

The fifth candle is extinguished

Antiphon 11

He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and he opened not his mouth.

Psalm 90:1-12

Lord, you have been our refuge *

from one generation to another.

Before the mountains were brought forth, or the land and the earth were born, *

from age to age you are God.

You turn us back to the dust and say, *

"Go back, O child of earth."

For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past *

and like a watch in the night.

You sweep us away like a dream; *

we fade away suddenly like the grass.

In the morning it is green and flourishes; *

in the evening it is dried up and withered.

For we consume away in your displeasure; *

we are afraid because of your wrathful indignation.

Our iniquities you have set before you, *

and our secret sins in the light of your countenance.

When you are angry, all our days are gone; *

we bring our years to an end like a sigh.

The span of our life is seventy years,

perhaps in strength even eighty; *

yet the sum of them is but labor and sorrow,

for they pass away quickly and we are gone.

Who regards the power of your wrath? *

who rightly fears your indignation?

So teach us to number our days *

that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.

The sixth candle is extinguished

Antiphon 12

They shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only child;
for the Lord, who is without sin, is slain.

The Lord Will Listen *The Iona Community*

gently F Dm Bb C

The Lord will lis - ten, the Lord will lis - ten, the

F/A Dm F C F

Lord will lis - ten to the bro - ken - heart - ed. _____

The seventh candle is extinguished

Antiphon 13

From the gates of hell, O Lord, deliver my soul. \

Jesus Remember Me *Taizé Community*

Eb $Fm7$ Bb Eb

Je - sus, re - mem - ber me when you come in - to your king - dom.

Cm $Fm7$ Bb Eb

Je - sus, re - mem - ber me when you come in - to your king - dom.

The eighth candle is extinguished

Antiphon 14

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

Within Our Darkest Night Taizé Community

p
With-in our dark-est night, you kin-dle the fire that nev-er dies a -

mf *p*
way, nev-er dies a - way. With-in our dark-est night, you kin-dle the

pp *fine*
fire that nev-er dies a - way, nev-er dies a - way. With-in our dark-est

The ninth candle is extinguished

Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; *

in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

Wash me through and through from my wickedness *

and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions, *

and my sin is ever before me.

Against you only have I sinned *

and done what is evil in your sight.
And so you are justified when you speak *
and upright in your judgment.
Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, *
a sinner from my mother's womb.
For behold, you look for truth deep within me, *
and will make me understand wisdom secretly
Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; *
wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.
Make me hear of joy and gladness, *
that the body you have broken may rejoice.
Hide your face from my sins *
and blot out all my iniquities.
Create in me a clean heart, O God, *
and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from your presence *
and take not your holy Spirit from me.
Give me the joy of your saving help again *
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.
I shall teach your ways to the wicked, *
and sinners shall return to you.
Deliver me from death, O God, *
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness, O God of my salvation.
Open my lips, O Lord, *
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
Had you desired it, I would have offered sacrifice, *
but you take no delight in burnt-offerings.
The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; *
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.
Be favorable and gracious to Zion, *
and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
Then you will be pleased with the appointed sacrifices, with burnt-offerings and oblations; *

then shall they offer young bullocks upon your altar.

Officiant: 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.

The tenth candle is hidden at this time. Nothing further is said; but a noise is made, and the remaining candle is brought back from its hiding place and put back in its place.

By its light the ministers and people depart in silence.