

THE OFFICE OF TENEBRAE

*Jerusalem,
return
to the
Lord
your
God*



APRIL 1, 2026 AT 7 PM

THE OFFICE OF TENEBRAE

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. Toward the end of the service this candle is hidden, typifying the apparent victory of the forces of evil. At the very end, a loud noise is made, 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.

*“Tenebrae factae sunt, dum crucifixissent Jesum. . .
Darkness covered the whole land when Jesus had been crucified. . .”*

Mark 15:33; Matthew 27:45; Luke 23:44

THE ORDER OF SERVICE

The ministers enter the church in silence. The people remain seated.

THE FIRST NOCTURN

ANTIPHON

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

PSALM 69:1-23

chant: *Plainsong, Tone III.4*

Save me, O God, for the waters have risen up to my neck. *
I am sinking in deep mire, and there is no firm ground for my feet.

I have come into deep waters, *
and the torrent washes over me.

I have grown weary with my crying; my throat is inflamed; *
my eyes have failed from looking for my God.

Those who hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head;
my lying foes who would destroy me are mighty. *
Must I then give back what I never stole?

O God, you know my foolishness, *
and my faults are not hidden from you.

Let not those who hope in you be put to shame through me, LORD God of hosts; *
let not those who seek you be disgraced because of me, O God of Israel.

Surely, for your sake have I suffered reproach, *
and shame has covered my face.

I have become a stranger to my own kindred, *
an alien to my mother's children.

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

I humbled myself with fasting, *
but that was turned to my reproach.

I put on sack-cloth also, *
and became a byword among them.

Those who sit at the gate murmur against me, *
and the drunkards make songs about me.

But as for me, this is my prayer to you, *
at the time you have set, O LORD:

“In your great mercy, O God, *
answer me with your unfailing help.

Save me from the mire; do not let me sink; *
let me be rescued from those who hate me and out of the deep waters.

Let not the torrent of waters wash over me, neither let the deep swallow me up; *
do not let the Pit shut its mouth upon me.

Answer me, O LORD, for your love is kind; *
in your great compassion, turn to me.’
“Hide not your face from your servant; *
be swift and answer me, for I am in distress.
Draw near to me and redeem me; *
because of my enemies deliver me.
You know my reproach, my shame, and my dishonor; *
my adversaries are all in your sight.”
Reproach has broken my heart, and it cannot be healed; *
I looked for sympathy, but there was none, for comforters, but I could find no one.
They gave me gall to eat, *
and when I was thirsty, they gave me vinegar to drink.
Let the table before them be a trap *
and their sacred feasts a snare.

ANTIPHON

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

The first and second candles are extinguished.

Officiant Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the wicked:
People **From the clutches of the evildoer and the oppressor.**

Those who are able kneel for silent prayer. The people are then seated for the lesson and responsory.

LESSON

Lamentations 1:1-5

Plainsong

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 her friends have dealt treacherously with her; they have 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!

Silence follows the lesson.

RESPONSORY - In monte Oliveti

Officiant On the mount of Olives Jesus prayed to the Father:
People **Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.
The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.**

Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation.

People **The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.**

*The third and fourth candles are extinguished. Those who are able kneel for silent prayer.
The people are then seated for the lesson and responsory.*

LESSON

Lamentations 1:6-9

Plainsong

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.* Uncleanness 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!

Silence follows the lesson.

RESPONSORY - *Tristis est anima mea*

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

People **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.**

Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

People **You will flee, and I will go to be offered up for you.**

*The fifth and sixth candles are extinguished. Those who are able kneel for silent prayer.
The people are then seated for the lesson and responsory.*

LESSON

Lamentations 1:10-14

Plainsong

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!

Silence follows the lesson.

Christus factus est pro nobis obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis. Propter quod et Deus exaltavit illus, et dedit illi nomen, quod est super omne nomen.

Christ became obedient for us unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.

Philippians 2:8-9

*The seventh and eighth candles are extinguished. Those who are able kneel for silent prayer.
The people are then seated for the antiphon and Psalm.*

LAUDS

ANTIPHON

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

PSALM 63

chant: *Plainsong, Tone II.1*

O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you; *
my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you,
as in a barren and dry land where there is no water.

Therefore I have gazed upon you in your holy place, *
that I might behold your power and your glory.

For your loving-kindness is better than life itself; *
my lips shall give you praise.

So will I bless you as long as I live *
and lift up my hands in your Name.

My soul is content, as with marrow and fatness, *
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips,

When I remember you upon my bed, *
and meditate on you in the night watches.

For you have been my helper, *
and under the shadow of your wings I will rejoice.

My soul clings to you; *
your right hand holds me fast.

May those who seek my life to destroy it *
go down into the depths of the earth;

Let them fall upon the edge of the sword, *
and let them be food for jackals.

But the king will rejoice in God;
all those who swear by him will be glad; *
for the mouth of those who speak lies shall be stopped.

ANTIPHON

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

*The ninth and tenth candles are extinguished. Those who are able kneel for silent prayer.
The people are then seated for the antiphon and Psalm.*

ANTIPHON

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

PSALM 143

chant: *Plainsong, Tone VI*

LORD, hear my prayer, and in your faithfulness heed my supplications; *
answer me in your righteousness.

Enter not into judgment with your servant, *
for in your sight shall no one living be justified.

For my enemy has sought my life;
he has crushed me to the ground; *
he has made me live in dark places like those who are long dead.

My spirit faints within me; *
my heart within me is desolate.

I remember the time past; I muse upon all your deeds; *
I consider the works of your hands.

I spread out my hands to you; *
my soul gasps to you like a thirsty land.

O LORD, make haste to answer me;
my spirit fails me; *
do not hide your face from me or I shall be like those who go down to the Pit.

Let me hear of your loving-kindness in the morning, for I put my trust in you; *
show me the road that I must walk, for I lift up my soul to you.

Deliver me from my enemies, O LORD, *
for I flee to you for refuge.

Teach me to do what pleases you, for you are my God; *
let your good Spirit lead me on level ground.

Revive me, O LORD, for your Name's sake; *
for your righteousness' sake, bring me out of trouble.

Of your goodness, destroy my enemies and bring all my foes to naught, *
for truly I am your servant.

ANTIPHON

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

*The eleventh and twelfth candles are extinguished. Those who are able kneel for silent prayer.
The people are then seated for the antiphon and Psalm.*

ANTIPHON

From the gates of hell, O LORD, deliver my soul.

CANTICLE

THE SONG OF HEZEKIAH (ISAIAH 38:10-20)

chant: *Plainsong, Tone I.2*

In my despair I said, "In the noonday of my life I must depart; *
my unspent years are summoned to the portals of death."

And I said, "No more shall I see the Lord in the land of the living, *
never more look on my kind among dwellers on earth.

My house is pulled down and I am uncovered, *
as when a shepherd strikes his tent.

My life is rolled up like a bolt of cloth, *
the threads cut off from the loom.

Between sunrise and sunset my life is brought to an end; *
I cower and hope for the dawn.

Like a lion he has crushed all my bones; *
like a swallow or thrush I utter plaintive cries;
I mourn like a dove.

My weary eyes look up to you; *
LORD, be my refuge in my affliction."

But what can I say? for he has spoken; *
it is he who has done this.

Slow and halting are my steps all my days, *
because of the bitterness of my spirit.

O LORD, I recounted all these things to you and you rescued me; *
when entreated, you restored my life.

I know now that my bitterness was for my good, *
for you held me back from the pit of destruction,
you cast all my sins behind you.

The grave does not thank you nor death give you praise; *
nor do those at the brink of the grave hang on your promises.

It is the living, O LORD, the living who give you thanks as I do this day; *
and parents speak of your faithfulness to their children.

You, LORD, are my Savior; *
I will praise you with stringed instruments all the days of my life,
in the house of the LORD.

ANTIPHON

From the gates of hell, O LORD, deliver my soul.

*The thirteenth and fourteenth candles are extinguished. Those who are able kneel for silent prayer.
The people are then seated for the antiphon and Psalm.*

ANTIPHON

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

PSALM 150

chant: *Plainsong, Tonus Peregrinus*

Praise God in his holy temple; *
praise him in the firmament of his power.

Praise him for his mighty acts; *
praise him for his excellent greatness.

Praise him with the blast of the ram's-horn; *
praise him with lyre and harp.

Praise him with timbrel and dance; *
praise him with strings and pipe.

Praise him with resounding cymbals; *
praise him with loud-clanging cymbals.

Let everything that has breath *
praise the Lord.

ANTIPHON

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

*The altar candles are extinguished. Those who are able kneel for silent prayer.
The people are then seated for the responsory.*

RESPONSORY

Officiant My flesh also shall rest in hope:
People **You will not let your holy One see corruption.**

The people stand. During the singing of the canticle, all other lights in the church except the Paschal candle are extinguished. The Paschal candle is not extinguished but hidden.

ANTIPHON

Now the women sitting at the tomb made lamentation, weeping for the LORD.

CANTICLE

BENEDICTUS DOMINUS DEUS

chant: *Plainsong, Tone VIII.1.2*

Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel;
he has come to his people and set them free.

He has raised up for us a mighty savior,
born of the house of his servant David.

Through his holy prophets he promised of old,
that he would save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all who hate us.

He promised to show mercy to our fathers
and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath he 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.
You, my 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 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.

ANTIPHON

Now the women sitting at the tomb made lamentation, weeping for the LORD.

The people are seated for the anthem.

ANTHEM

TIMOR ET TREMOR

*Orlando di Lasso
(1532-1594)*

Timor et tremor venerunt super me, et caligo cecidit super me. Miserere mei, Domine, miserere, quoniam in te confidit anima mea. Exaudi Deus deprecationem meam, quia refugium meum es tu et adjutor fortis; Domine, invocavi te, non confundar.

Fear and trembling have come over me, and darkness has descended upon me. Have mercy on me, O Lord, have mercy, for my soul has trusted in you. Hear, O God, my supplication, for you are my refuge and strength; O Lord, I have called upon you, let me never be confounded.

Those who are able kneel for silent prayer during the singing of the anthem.

*Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam
misericordiam tuam:
Et secundum multitudinem miserationum
tuarum, dele iniquitatem meam.
Amplius lava me ab iniquitate mea:
et a peccato meo munda me.
Quoniam iniquitatem meam ego cognosco:
et peccatum meum contra me est semper.
Tibi soli peccavi,
et malum coram te feci:
ut justificeris in sermonibus tuis,
et vincas, cum judicaris.
Ecce enim in iniquitatibus conceptus sum:
et in peccatis concepit me mater mea.
Ecce enim veritatem dilexisti:
incerta et occulta sapientiae tuae manifestasti mihi.
Asperges me hyssopo et mundabor:
lavabis me et super nivem dealbabor.
Auditui meo dabis gaudium et laetitiam:
et exsultabunt ossa humiliata.
Averte faciem tuam a peccatis meis:
et omnes iniquitates meas dele.
Cor mundum crea in me deus:
et spiritum rectum innova in visceribus meis.
Tunc acceptabis sacrificium
justitiae, oblationes et holocausta.
Tunc imponent super altare tuum vitulos.*

Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy
great goodness:
according to the multitude of thy mercies
do away mine offences.
Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness:
and cleanse me from my sin.
For I acknowledge my faults:
and my sin is ever before me.
Against thee only have I sinned,
and done this evil in thy sight:
that thou mightest be justified in thy saying,
and clear when thou art judged.
Behold, I was shapen in wickedness:
and in sin hath my mother conceived me.
But lo, thou requirest truth in the inward parts:
and shalt make me to understand wisdom secretly.
Thou shalt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean:
thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Thou shalt make me hear of joy and gladness:
that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.
Turn thy face from my sins:
and put out all my misdeeds.
Make me a clean heart, O God:
and renew a right spirit within me.
Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifice of
righteousness, with the burnt-offerings and oblations:
then shall they offer young bullocks upon thine altar.

Psalm 51

Silence is kept.

COLLECT

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.

Nothing further is said; but the sound of an earthquake is made, and the remaining candle is brought from its hiding place and returned to the chancel.

The people depart in silence once the Nave lights have been restored.



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