

# **Tenebrae**

## **March 27, 2024, 6 p.m.**

### **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, 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.

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.

*The ministers enter the church in silence and proceed to their places. The Office then begins immediately with the Antiphon on the first Psalm. It is customary to sit for the Psalmody.*

### **FIRST NOCTURN**

#### **Antiphon 1**

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

*Psalm 69:1-23*

#### **Antiphon 2**

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

*Psalm 70*

### **Antiphon 3**

Arise, O God, maintain my cause.

*Psalm 74*

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

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

*All stand for silent prayer. The appointed Reader then goes to the lectern, and everyone else sits down.*

### **Lesson 1**

#### **A Reading from the Lamentations of Jeremiah the Prophet. [1:1-14]**

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.

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.

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.

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.

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!

### **Lesson 2**

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.

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.

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.

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!

### **Lesson 3**

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.

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!"

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.

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.

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*

Lo, we have seen him without beauty or majesty\*  
*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.

## **SECOND NOCTURN**

### **Antiphon 4**

The kings of the earth rise up in revolt, and the princes plot together, against the Lord and against his Anointed.

*Psalm 2*

### **Antiphon 5**

They divide my garments among them; they cast lots for my clothing.

*Psalm 22:1-21*

### **Antiphon 6**

False witnesses have risen up against me, and also those who speak malice.

*Psalm 27*

V. They divide my garments among them:

R. *They cast lots for my clothing.*

*All stand for silent prayer. The appointed Reader then goes to the lectern, and everyone else sits down.*

### **Lesson 4**

A Reading from the Treatise of Saint Augustine the Bishop, on the Psalms. [*Vulgate Psalm 54. Prayer Book Psalm 55:1,2,10c*]

Hear my prayer, O God; do not hide yourself from my petition. Listen to me and answer me. I mourn in my trial and am troubled.”

These are the words of one disquieted, in trouble and anxiety. He prays under much suffering, desiring to be delivered from evil. Let us now see under what evil he lies; and when he begins to speak, let us place ourselves beside him, that, by sharing his tribulation, we may also join in his prayer.

“I mourn in my trial,” he says, “and am troubled.”

When does he mourn? When is he troubled? He says, “In my trial.” He has in mind the wicked who cause him suffering, and he calls this suffering his “trial.” Do not think that the evil are in the world for no purpose, and that God makes no good use of them. Every wicked person lives either that he may be corrected, or that through him the righteous may be tried and tested.

### **Lesson 5**

Would that those who now test us were converted and tried with us; yet though they continue to try us, let us not hate them, for we do not know whether any of them will persist to the end in their evil ways. And most of the time, when you think you are hating your enemy, you are hating your brother without knowing it.

Only the devil and his angels are shown to us in the Holy Scriptures as doomed to eternal fire. It is only their amendment that is hopeless, and against them we wage a hidden battle. For this battle the Apostle arms us, saying, "We are not contending against flesh and blood," that is, not against human beings whom we see, "but against the principalities, against the powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world." So that you may not think that demons are the rulers of heaven and earth, he says, "of the darkness of this world."

He says, "of the world," meaning the lovers of the world— of the "world," meaning the ungodly and wicked— the "world" of which the Gospel says, "And the world knew him not."

## **Lesson 6**

"For I have seen unrighteousness and strife in the city."

See the glory of the cross itself. On the brow of kings that cross is now placed, the cross which enemies once mocked. Its power is shown in the result. He has conquered the world, not by steel, but by wood. The wood of the cross seemed a fitting object of scorn to his enemies, and standing before that wood they wagged their heads, saying, "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." He stretched out his hands to an unbelieving and rebellious people. If one is just who lives by faith, one who does not have faith is unrighteous. Therefore when he says "unrighteousness," understand that it is unbelief. The Lord then saw unrighteousness and strife in the city, and stretched out his hands to an unbelieving and rebellious people. And yet, looking upon them, he said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

## **Responsory 6** *Ecce quomodo moritur*

See how the righteous one perishes, *and no one takes it to heart\**

*The righteous are taken away, and no one understands. From the face of evil the righteous one is taken away, and his memory shall be in peace.*

V. Like a sheep before its shearers is mute, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away.

## **THIRD NOCTURN**

### **Antiphon 7**

God is my helper; it is the Lord who sustains my life.

*Psalm 54*

## **Antiphon 8**

At Salem is his tabernacle, and his dwelling is in Zion.

*Psalm 76*

## **Antiphon 9**

I have become like one who has no strength, lost among the dead.

*Psalm 88*

V. He has made me dwell in darkness

R. *Like the dead of long ago.*

*All stand for silent prayer. The appointed Reader then goes to the lectern, and everyone else sits down.*

## **Lesson 7**

### **A Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews. [4:15—5:10; 9:11-15a]**

We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sinning. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people.

## **Lesson 8**

And one does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also, Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, “You are my Son, this day have I begotten you;” as he says also in another place, “You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.” In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard for his godly fear. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and, being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

## **Lesson 9**

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that are to come, then, through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), he

entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance.

#### **Responsory 9** *Sepulto Domino*

When the Lord was buried, they sealed the tomb\*  
*rolling a great stone to the door of the tomb; and they stationed soldiers to guard him.*

V. The chief priests gathered before Pilate, and petitioned him.

#### **LAUDS**

#### **Antiphon 10**

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

Psalm 63:1-8

#### **Antiphon 11**

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

*Psalm 90:1-12*

#### **Antiphon 12**

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

*Psalm 143*

### Antiphon 13

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

*The Song of Hezekiah [Isaiah 38:10-20]*

- 1 In my despair I said, "In the noonday of my life I must depart; \*  
**my unspent years are summoned to the portals of death."**
- 2 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.**
- 3 My house is pulled down and I am uncovered, \*  
**as when a shepherd strikes his tent.**
- 4 My life is rolled up like a bolt of cloth, \*  
**the threads cut off from the loom.**
- 5 Between sunrise and sunset my life is brought to an end; \*  
**I cower and hope for the dawn.**
- 6 Like a lion he has crushed all my bones; \*  
**like a swallow or thrush I utter plaintive cries; I mourn like a dove.**
- 7 My weary eyes look up to you; \*  
**Lord, be my refuge in my affliction."**
- 8 But what can I say? for he has spoken; \*  
**it is he who has done this.**
- 9 Slow and halting are my steps all my days, \*  
**because of the bitterness of my spirit.**
- 10 O Lord, I recounted all these things to you and you rescued me; \*  
**when entreated, you restored my life.**
- 11 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.**
- 12 The grave does not thank you nor death give you praise; \*  
**nor do those at the brink of the grave hang on your promises.**
- 13 It is the living, O Lord, the living who give you thanks as I do this day; \*  
**Fathers will pass on to their children the truth of your faithfulness.**



14 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.

#### **Antiphon 14**

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

#### *Psalm 150*

1 Praise God in his holy temple; \*

**praise him in the firmament of his power.**

2 Praise him for his mighty acts; \*

**praise him for his excellent greatness.**

3 Praise him with the blast of the ram's-horn; \*

**praise him with lyre and harp.**

4 Praise him with timbrel and dance; \*

**praise him with strings and pipe.**

5 Praise him with resounding cymbals; \*

**praise him with loud-clanging cymbals.**

6 Let everything that has breath \*

**praise the Lord.**

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

V. My flesh also shall rest in hope:

R. *You will not let your holy One see corruption.*

*All stand. During the singing of the following Canticle, the candles at the Altar, and all other lights in the church (except the one remaining at the top of the triangular candlestick), are extinguished.*

## Antiphon

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

### *Canticle 16: Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel*

*After the Canticle, during the repetition of the Antiphon, the remaining candle is taken from the stand and hidden beneath or behind the Altar, or in some other convenient place. All kneel for the singing of the following anthem*

### *Christus factus est*

Christ for us became obedient unto death, even death on a cross; therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the Name which is above every name.

*A brief silence is observed. The following Psalm is then said quietly.*

### *Psalm 51*

*The Officiant says the Collect*

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 a noise is made, and the remaining candle is brought from its hiding place and replaced on the stand. By its light the ministers and people depart in silence.*