

TENEBRAE



Introduction to Tenebrae

From the Latin word for “darkness,” Tenebrae is the term given to the liturgical office of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday as they were observed prior to the reform of Holy Week by Pope Pius XII in 1955. Dominicans have continued to pray Tenebrae each year as a particular tradition of the Order.

The practice of Tenebrae has roots as early as the 7th century, when those celebrating the Office would do so in almost complete darkness; the only light coming from a large candelabra called a hearse.

In the contemporary rite, the Office contains five psalms and one canticle. After each psalm or canticle, a set of candles is extinguished, representing the fleeing of the Apostles, until there is only one left, the so-called Christ candle.

The psalms are separated by three lessons taken from the Book of Lamentations, a collection of poems which grieve the Babylonian destruction in 587 B.C. of the temple in Jerusalem, and the ruin of the people of Israel. By describing the horrible situation which they now endure, the poems exhort the Israelites to mourn for having turned away from God to worship foreign, pagan gods. The great “Prayer of Jeremiah,” which ends Tenebrae on Saturday, is a plea to God to relent in punishment and rescue the people, despite what they have done.

Today we can make these psalms and lamentations our own. As we pray them, we can seek pardon for our sins, as well as the sins of the whole world. We can reflect on any of the ways in which we as human beings have turned away from being “the image and likeness of God.”

**Holy Friday
Office of Readings**

Hymn

O Sacred Head, surrounded
By crown of piercing thorn!
O bleeding Head, so wounded,
Reviled and put to scorn!
Death's pallid hue comes o'er thee,
The glow of life decays,
Yet angel hosts adore thee,
And tremble as they gaze.

I see thy strength and vigor
All fading in the strife,
And death with cruel rigor
Bereaving thee of life:
O agony and dying!
O love to sinners free!
Jesus, all grace supplying,
O turn thy face on me.

In this thy bitter Passion,
Good Shepherd, think of me,
With thy most sweet compassion,
Unworthy though I be:
Beneath thy Cross abiding
Forever would I rest,
In thy dear love confiding,
And with thy presence blest.
76.76.76.76



Ant. 1 Earthly kings rise up, in revolt;
princes conspire together against the Lord and
his Anointed.

Psalm 2
I

Why this tumult among nations,
among peoples this useless murmuring?

They arise, the kings of the earth,
princes plot against the Lord and his Anointed.

“Come, let us break their fetters,
come, let us cast off their yoke.”

He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord is laughing them to scorn.

Then he will speak in his anger,
his rage will strike them with terror.

“It is I who have set up my king
on Zion, my holy mountain.”

I will announce the decree of the Lord: The Lord said/
to me: “You are my Son.
It is I who have begotten you this day.

Ask and I shall bequeath you the nations,
put the ends of the earth in your possession.

With a rod of iron you will break them,
shatter them like a potter's jar.”

Now, O kings, understand,
Take warning, rulers of the earth;

serve the Lord with awe and trembling;
pay him your homage

lest he be angry and you perish;
for suddenly his anger will blaze.

Blessed are they
who put their trust in God.

[No “Glory to the Father ...”]

Ant. 2 They divided my garments among them;
they cast lots for my clothing.

Psalm 22
II

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
You are far from my plea and the cry of my distress.

O my God, I call by day and you give no reply;
I call by night and I find no peace.

Yet you, O God, are holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.

In you our fathers put their trust;
they trusted and you set them free.

When they cried out to you, they escaped.
In you they trusted and never in vain.

But I am a worm and no man,
scorned by men, despised by the people.

All who see me deride me.
They curl their lips, they toss their heads.

“He trusted in the Lord, let him save him;
let him release him if this is his friend.”

Yes, it was you who took me from the womb,
entrusted me to my mother's breast.

To you I was committed from my birth,
from my mother's womb you have been my God.

Do not leave me alone in my distress;
Come close, there is none else to help.

Many bulls have surrounded me,
fierce bulls of Bashan close me in.

Against me they open wide their jaws,
like lions, rending and roaring.

Like water I am poured out,
disjointed are all my bones.

My heart has become like wax,
it is melted within my breast.

Parched as burnt clay is my throat,
my tongue cleaves to my jaws.

Many dogs have surrounded me,
a band of the wicked beset me.

Their tear holes in my hands and my feet and/
lay me in the dust of death.
I can count every one of my bones.

These people stare at me and gloat; they divide my/
clothing among them.
They cast lots for my robe.

O Lord, do not leave me alone,
my strength, make haste to help me!

Rescue my soul from the sword,
my life from the grip of these dogs.

Save my life from the jaws of these lions,
my poor soul from the horns of these oxen.

I will tell of your name to my kinsfolk
and praise you where they are assembled.

[No “Glory to the Father ...”]

Ant. 3 They sought to take
my life by violence.

Psalm 38
III

O Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger;
do not punish me, Lord, in your rage.

Your arrows have sunk deep in me;
your hand has come down upon me.

Through your anger all my body is sick:
through my sin, there is no health in my limbs.

My guilt towers higher than my head;
it is a weight too heavy to bear.

My wounds are foul and festering,
the result of my own folly.

I am bowed and brought to my knees.
I go mourning all the day long.

All my frame burns with fever;
all my body is sick.

Spent and utterly crushed,
I cry aloud in anguish of heart.

O Lord, you know all my longing:
my groans are not hidden from you.

My heart throbs, my strength is spent;
the very light has gone from my eyes.

My friends avoid me like a leper;
those closest to me stand afar off.

Those who plot against my life lay snares;/
those who seek my ruin speak of harm,
planning treachery all the day long.

But I am like the deaf who cannot hear,
like the dumb unable to speak.

I am like a man who hears nothing
in whose mouth is no defense.

I count on you, O Lord:
it is you, Lord God, who will answer.

I pray: "Do not let them mock me,
those who triumph if my foot should slip."

For I am on the point of falling
and my pain is always before me.

I confess that I am guilty
and my sin fills me with dismay.

My wanton enemies are numberless
and my lying foes are many.

They repay me evil for good
and attack me for seeking what is right.

O Lord, do not forsake me!
My God, do not stay afar off!

Make haste and come to my help,
O Lord, my God, my savior!

[No "Glory to the Father ..."]

V. They brought false evidence against me.
R. They were breathing out fury.

Lesson I *Lamentations 2:1-3*

From the lamentation of the prophet Jeremiah.
Aleph. How the Lord in his anger
has set the daughter of Zion under a cloud!
He has cast down from heaven to earth
The splendor of Israel;
he has not remembered his footstool
in the day of his anger.

Beth. The Lord has destroyed without mercy
all the habitations of Jacob;
in his wrath he has broken down
the strongholds of the daughter of Judah.
He has brought down to the ground in dishonor
the kingdom and its rulers.

Ghimel. He has cut down in fierce anger
all the might of Israel;
he has withdrawn from them his right hand
in the face of the enemy;
he has burned like a flaming fire in Jacob,
consuming all around.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord your God.

Responsory



All my friends have abandoned me, and those who lay/
in wait triumphed over me;
he whom I love has betrayed me.

Glaring at me, they have wounded me with cruel/
blows.
They gave me vinegar to drink.

For food they gave me poison.
In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

Lesson II *Lamentations 2:4-6*

Daleth. He has bent his bow like an enemy,
with his right hand set like a foe;
and he has slain all the pride of our eyes
in the tent of the daughter of Zion;
he has poured out his fury like fire.

Heh. The Lord has become like an enemy,
he has destroyed Israel;
he has destroyed all its palaces,
laid in ruins its strongholds;
and he has multiplied in the daughter of Judah
mourning and lamentation.

Vau. He has broken down his booth like that of a
garden,
laid in ruins the place of his appointed feasts;
the Lord has brought to an end in Zion
appointed feasts and Sabbath,
and in his fierce indignation has spurned
king and priest.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord your God.

Responsory

The veil of the temple was torn and all the earth/
trembled.
The thief cried out from the cross: Remember me, /
Lord, when you come in your kingly power.

Truly, I say to you, this day you will be with me in/
paradise.
Remember me, Lord, when you come in your kingly/
power.

Lesson III Lamentations 2:7-9

Zain. The Lord has scorned his altar,
disowned his sanctuary;
he has delivered into the hand of the enemy
the walls of her palaces;
a clamor was raised in the house of the Lord
as on the day of an appointed feast.

Heth. The Lord determined to lay in ruins
the wall of the daughter of Zion;
he marked it off by the line;
he restrained not his hand from destroying;
he caused rampart and wall to lament,
they languish together.

Teth. Her gates have sunk into the ground;
he has ruined and broken her bars;
her king and princes are among the nations;
the law is no more,
and her prophets obtain
no vision from the Lord.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord your God.

Responsory



I planted you, O my choice vine.
How have you turned bitter, that you should crucify/
me and release Barabbas?

Yet I planted you, O my choice vine, wholly of pure/
seed.
How have you turned bitter, that you should crucify/
me and release Barabbas?

I planted you, O my choice vine.
How have you turned bitter, that you should crucify/
me and release Barabbas?

Morning Prayer

*Morning Prayer begins immediately after the last
responsory with the first psalm.*



Ant. 1 God did not spare his own son,
but gave him up to suffer for our sake. (C & D)

Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, God in your kindness.
In your compassion blot out my offense.
O wash me more and more from my guilt
and cleanse me from my sin.

My offenses truly I know them;
my sin is always before me.
Against you, you alone, have I sinned;
what is evil in your sight I have done.

That you may be justified when you give sentence
and be without reproach when you judge,
O see, in guilt I was born,
a sinner was I conceived.

Indeed you love truth in the heart;
then in the secret of my heart teach me wisdom.
O purify me, then I shall be clean;
O wash me, I shall be whiter than snow.

Make me hear rejoicing and gladness,
that the bones you have crushed may revive.
From my sins turn away your face
and blot out all my guilt.

A pure heart create for me, O God,
put a steadfast spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence,
nor deprive me of your holy spirit.

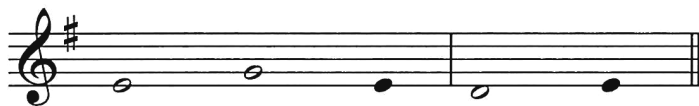
Give me again the joy of your help;
with a spirit of fervor sustain me,
that I may teach transgressors your ways
and sinners may return to you.

O rescue me, God, my helper,
and my tongue shall ring out your goodness.
O Lord, open my lips
and my mouth shall declare your praise.

For in sacrifice you take no delight,
burnt offerings from me you would refuse,
my sacrifice, a contrite spirit.
A humbled, contrite heart you will not spurn.

In your goodness, show favor to Zion:
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
Then you will be pleased with lawful sacrifice,
holocausts offered on your altar.

[No "Glory to the Father ..."]



Ant. 2 Jesus Christ loved us, and poured out his own /
blood for us
to wash away our sins.

Habakkuk 3:2-4, 13a, 15-19

O Lord, I have heard your renown,
and feared, O Lord, your work.

In the course of the years revive it, in the/
course of the years make it known.
in your wrath remember compassion!

God comes from Teman,
the Holy One from Mount Paran.

Covered are the heavens with his glory,
and with his praise the earth is filled.

His splendor spreads like the light;
rays shine forth from beside him, where his power is/
concealed.

You come forth to save your people,
to save your anointed one.

You tread the sea with your steeds
amid the churning of the deep waters.

I hear, and my body trembles;
at the sound, my lips quiver.

Decay invades my bones,
my legs tremble beneath me.

I await the day of distress
that will come upon the people who attack us.

For though the fig tree blossoms not
nor fruit be on the vines,

though the yield of the olive fail
and the terraces produce no nourishment,

though the flocks disappear from the fold
and there be no herd in the stalls,

yet I will rejoice in the Lord
and exult in my saving God.

God, my Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet swift/
as those of hinds
and enables me to go upon the heights.

[No "Glory to the Father ..."]



Ant. 3 We worship your cross, O Lord, and we praise/
and glorify your holy resurrection,
for the wood of the cross has brought joy to the
world.

Psalms 147:12-20

O praise the Lord, Jerusalem!
Zion praise your God!

He has strengthened the bars of your gates
he has blessed the children within you.

He established peace on your borders,
he feeds you with finest wheat.

He sends out his word to the earth
and swiftly runs his command.

He showers down snow white as wool,
he scatters hoar-frost like ashes.

He hurls down hailstones like crumbs.
The waters are frozen at his touch;

he sends forth his word and it melts them:
at the breath of his mouth the waters flow.

He makes his word known to Jacob,
to Israel his laws and decrees.

He has not dealt thus with other nations;
he has not taught them his decrees.

[No "Glory to the Father ..."]

There is no reading. All stand for the Benedictus.

Benedictus



Ant. Over his head they hung their accusation:
Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.

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.

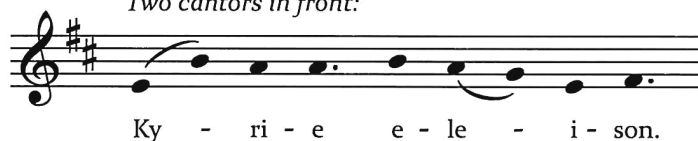
In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

to shine on those who dwell in darkness and/
the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

[No "Glory to the Father ..."]

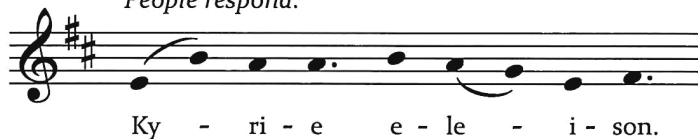
After the Benedictus,

Two cantors in front:



Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son.

People respond:



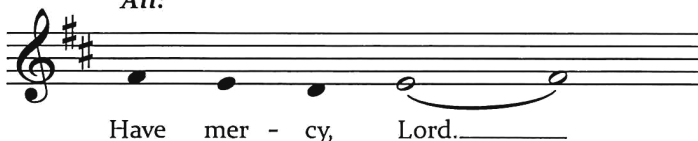
Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son.

Front:



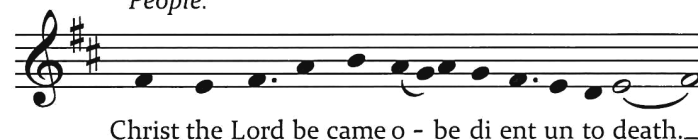
Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son.

All:



Have mer - cy, Lord._____

People:



Christ the Lord be came o - be di ent un to death.____

Front:

The meek lamb to whom the wolf gave

treacherous kisses.

People:

Christe eleison.

Front:

Life dies upon the tree: Hell and death,
mourning are robbed of their prey.

People:

Christe eleison.

Front:

You who willed to be fettered,
and have set us free from the bonds of death

People:

Christe eleison.

All:

Have mercy, Lord.

People:

Christ the Lord be come o-be di ent un to death..

Front:

Kyrie eleison.

People:

Kyrie eleison.

Front:

Kyrie eleison.

All:

Have mercy, Lord.

People:

Christ the Lord be come o-be di ent un to death..

Front (Loudly):

Even death on a cross.

At this point, all immediately kneel and pray silently for a short while. The Our Father is then recited out loud.

Prayer

Look kindly, we beg you, Lord, upon this your household, for which our Lord Jesus Christ did not hesitate to deliver himself into the hands of sinners and to endure the torment of the Cross.

All depart in silence.