

# 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 Thursday**  
**Office of Readings**

**Hymn**

The Word of God proceeding forth  
Yet leaving not his Father's side  
And going to his work on earth  
Had reached at length life's eventide.

Soon by his own false friend betrayed,  
Giv'n to his foes, to death went he;  
His own true self, in form of bread,  
He gave his friends, their life to be.

A double gift his love did plan,  
His flesh to feed, his blood to cheer,  
That flesh and blood, the whole of man,  
Might find its own fulfillment here.

The manger, Christ their equal made;  
That upper room, their soul's repast;  
The cross, their ransom dearly paid;  
And heaven, their high reward at last. Amen.  
L.M.



**Ant. 1** I am worn out with crying,  
with longing for my God.

Psalm 69  
I

Save me, O God  
for the waters have risen to my neck.

I have sunk into the mud of the deep  
and there is no foothold.

I have entered the waters of the deep  
and the waves overwhelm me.

I am wearied with all my crying,  
my throat is parched.

My eyes are wasted away  
from looking for my God.

More numerous that the hairs on my head  
are those who hate me without cause.

Those who attack me with lies  
are too much for my strength.

How can I restore  
what I have never stolen?

O God, you know my sinful folly;  
my sins you can see.

Let not those who hope in you be put to  
shame  
through me, Lord of hosts.

Let not those who seek you be dismayed  
through me, God of Israel.

It is for you that I suffer taunts,  
that shame covers my face,

that I have become a stranger to my brothers,  
an alien to my own mother's sons.

I burn with zeal for your house  
and taunts against you fall on me.

When I afflict my soul with fasting  
they make it a taunt against me.

When I put on sackcloth in mourning  
then they make me a byword,

the gossip of men at the gates,  
the subject of drunkards' songs.

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

**Ant. 2** I needed food and they gave me gall;  
I was parched with thirst and they gave  
me vinegar.

Psalm 69  
II

This is my prayer to you,  
my prayer for your favor.

In your great love, answer me, O God,  
with your help that never fails:

rescue me from sinking in the mud;  
save me from my foes.

Save me from the waters of the deep  
lest the waves overwhelm me.

Do not let the deep engulf me  
nor death close its mouth on me.

Lord, answer, for your love is kind;  
in your compassion, turn towards me.

Do not hide your face from your servant;  
answer quickly for I am in distress.

Come close to my soul and redeem me;  
ransom me pressed by my foes.

You know how they taunt and deride me;  
my oppressors are all before you.

Taunts have broken my heart;  
I have reached the end of my strength.

I looked in vain for compassion,  
for consolors, not one could I find.

For food the gave me poison;  
in my thirst, they gave me vinegar to/drink.

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

Ant. 3 Seek the Lord,  
and you will live.

Psalm 69  
III

As for me in my poverty and pain  
let your help, O God, lift me up.

I will praise God's name with a song;  
I will glorify him with thanksgiving.

A gift pleasing God more than oxen,  
more than beasts prepared for sacrifice.

The poor when they see it will be glad  
and God-seeking hearts will revive;

for the Lord listens to the needy  
and does not spurn his servants in their chains.

Let the heavens and the earth give him praise,  
the sea and all its living creatures.

For God will bring help to Zion and rebuild the cities/  
of Judah  
and men shall dwell there in possession.

The sons of his servants shall inherit it;  
those who love his name shall dwell there.

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

V. When I am lifted up from the earth.

R. I will draw all people to myself.

### Lesson I Lamentations 1:1-3

Here begins the lamentation of the Prophet Jeremiah.

*Aleph.* How lonely sits the city  
that was full of people!  
How like a widow has she become,  
she that was great among the nations!  
She that was a princess among the cities  
has become a vassal.

*Beth.* She weeps bitterly in the night,  
tears on 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.

*Ghimel.* Judah has gone into exile because of affliction  
and hard servitude;  
she dwells now among the nations,  
but finds no resting place;  
her pursuers have overtaken her  
in the midst of her distress.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord your God.

### Responsory



On the Mount of Olives he prayed to the Father,  
"Father, all things are possible for you, remove this cup  
from me.

The Spirit is willing but the flesh is weak;  
your will be done.

Nevertheless not my will but yours be done.  
Your will be done.

## Lesson II Lamentations 1:4-6

*Daleth.* The roads to Zion mourn,  
for none come to the appointed feasts;  
all her gates are desolate,  
her priests groan;  
her maidens have been dragged away,  
and she herself suffers bitterly.

*Heh.* Her foes have become the head,  
her enemies prosper,  
because the Lord has made her suffer  
for the multitude of her transgressions;  
her children have gone away,  
captives before the foe.

*Vau.* From the daughter of Zion has departed  
all her majesty.  
Her princes have become like harts  
that find no pasture;  
they fled without strength  
before the pursuer.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord your God.

### Responsory



My soul is sad even unto death.  
Wait here and watch with me,

Now you will see the crowd that will surround me;  
you shall flee and I will go to be sacrificed for you.

Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man/ will  
be betrayed into the hands of sinners.  
You shall flee and I will go to be sacrificed for you.

## Lesson III Lamentations 1:7-9

*Zain.* Jerusalem remembers  
in the days of her affliction and bitterness  
all the precious things  
that were hers from days of old.  
When her people fell into the hands of the foe,  
and there was none to help her,  
the foe gloated over her,  
mocking at her downfall.

*Heth.* Jerusalem sinned grievously,  
therefore she became filthy;  
all who honored her despise her,  
for they have seen her nakedness;  
yea, she herself groans  
and turns her face away.

*Teth.* Her uncleanness was in 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



Behold, we have seen him and he had neither form/  
nor comeliness; his beauty has gone from him.  
It is our sins that he bears for us that he suffers.

Indeed, he was wounded for our transgressions;  
through his stripes we are healed.

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;  
through his stripes we are healed.

Behold, we have seen him and he had neither form/  
nor comeliness; his beauty has gone from him.  
It is our sins that he bears for us thathe suffers.

Indeed, he was wounded for our transgressions;  
through his stripes we are healed.

## Morning Prayer

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



**Ant. 1** Look, O Lord, and see my suffering.  
Come quickly to my aid.

Psalm 80

O shepherd of Israel, hear us,  
you who lead Joseph's flock,

shine forth from your cherubim throne  
upon Ephraim, Benjamin, Manasseh.

O Lord, rouse up your might,  
O Lord, come to our help.

God of hosts bring us back;  
let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

Lord God of hosts, how long  
will you frown on your people's plea?

You have fed them with tears for their/  
bread,  
an abundance of tears for their drink.

You have made us the taunt of our neighbors,  
our enemies laugh us to scorn.

God of hosts bring us back;  
let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

You brought a vine out of Egypt;  
to plant it you drove out the nations.

Before it you cleared the ground;  
it took root and spread through the land.

The mountains were covered with its shadow,  
the cedars of God with its boughs.

It stretched out its branches to the sea,  
to the Great River it stretched out its shoots.

Then why have you broken down its walls?  
It is plucked by all who pass by.

It is ravaged by the boar of the forest,  
devoured by the beasts of the field.

God of hosts, turn again, we implore,  
look down from heaven and see.

Visit this vine and protect it,  
the vine your right hand has planted.

Men have burnt it with fire and destroyed it.  
May they perish at the frown of your face.

May your hand be on the man you have chosen,  
the man you have given your strength.

And we shall never forsake you again;  
give us life that we may call upon your name.

God of hosts bring us back;  
let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

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



**Ant. 2** God is my savior;  
I trust in him and shall not fear.

Exodus 15:1-4a, 8-13, 17-18

I will sing to the Lord, for he is gloriously triumphant;  
horse and chariot he has cast into the sea.

My strength and my courage is the Lord,  
and he has been my savior.

He is my God, I praise him;  
the God of my father, I extol him.

The Lord is a warrior, Lord is his name!  
Pharaoh's chariots and army he hurled into  
the sea.

At a breath of your anger the waters piled up, the/  
flowing waters stood like a mound,  
the flood waters congealed in the midst of the sea.

The enemy boasted, “ I will pursue and/  
overtake them; I will divide the spoils and/  
have my fill of them;  
I will draw my sword; my hand shall despoil /  
them!”

When your wind blew, the sea covered them;  
like lead they sank in the mighty waters.

Who is like to you among the gods, O Lord?  
Who is like to you, magnificent in holiness?

O terrible in renown, worker of wonders,  
When you stretched out your right hand, the earth /  
swallowed them!

In your mercy you led the people you/  
redeemed;  
in your strength you guided them to your/  
holy dwelling.

And you brought them in and planted them/  
on the mountain of your inheritance –  
the place where you made your seat, O Lord,

the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands/  
established.  
The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.

[No, “Glory to the Father ...”]



Ant. 3 The Lord had fed us with finest wheat;  
he has filled us with honey from the rock.  
(C & D)

#### Psalm 81

Ring your joy to God our strength,  
shout in triumph to the God of Jacob. (C & D)

Raise a song and sound the timbrel,  
the sweet-sounding harp and the lute;  
blow the trumpet at the new moon,  
when the moon is full, on our feast.

For this is Israel's law,  
a command of the God of Jacob.  
He imposed it as a rule on Joseph,  
when he went out against the land of Egypt.

A voice I did not know said to me:  
“I freed your shoulder from the burden;  
your hands were freed from the load.  
You called in distress and I saved you.

I answered, concealed in the storm cloud;  
at the waters of Meribah I tested you.  
Listen, my people, to my warning.  
O Israel, if only you would heed!

Let there be no foreign god among you,  
no worship of an alien god.  
I am the Lord your God, who brought you/  
from the land of Egypt.  
Open wide your mouth and I will fill it.

But my people did not heed my voice  
and Israel would not obey,  
so I left them in their stubbornness of heart  
to follow their own designs.

O that my people would heed me,  
that Israel would walk in my ways!  
At once I would subdue their foes,  
turn my hand against their enemies.

The Lord's enemies would cringe at their feet  
and their subjection would last for ever.  
But Israel I would feed with finest wheat  
and fill them with honey from the rock.”

[No “Glory to the Father ...”]

There is no reading. All stand for the Benedictus.

### Benedictus



Ant. The betrayer  
had given them a sign, saying,  
the one I shall kiss is the man.  
Seize him!

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.

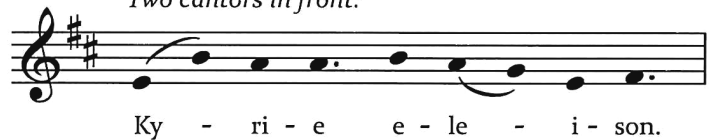
You, my child, shall be called the prophet/  
of the Most High,  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way  
to give his people knowledge of salvation  
by the forgiveness of their sins.

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 ..."]

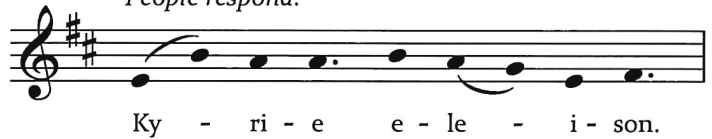
After the Benedictus ...

Two cantors in front:



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

People respond:



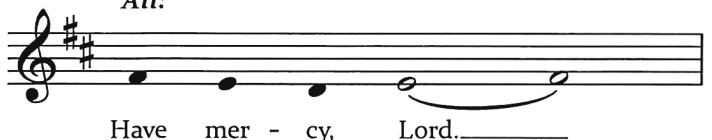
Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son.

Front:



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

All:



Have mer - cy, Lord.\_\_\_\_\_

People:



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

Front:



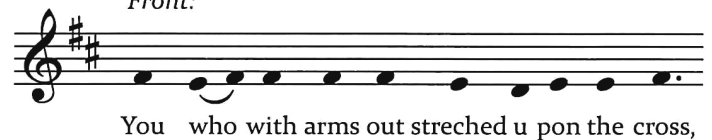
You who came to su - fer for\_\_ us.\_\_\_

People:



Chri - ste e - le - i - son.

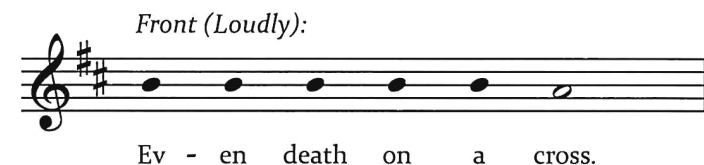
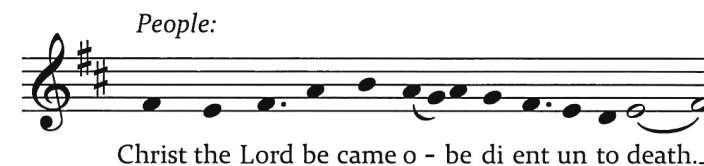
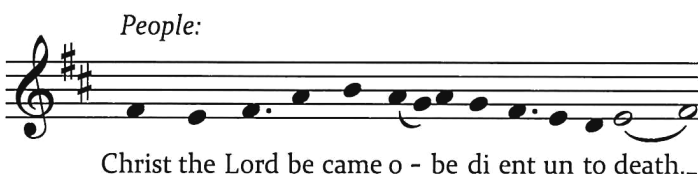
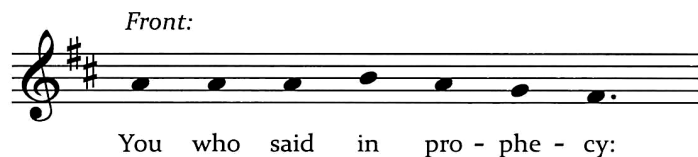
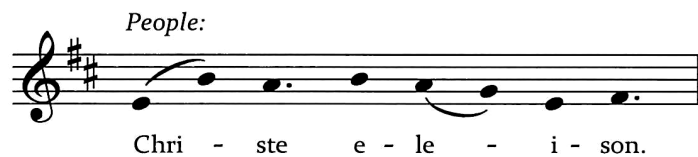
Front:



You who with arms out streched u pon the cross,



have\_\_ drawn all\_\_things to your - self.\_\_\_



*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.*

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