



Holy Darkness – A Tenebrae for Wednesday of Holy Week

***Tenebrae** (Latin for 'shadows' or 'darkness') is a Christian religious service held since the 4th century. The distinctive ceremony of Tenebrae is the gradual extinguishing of candles while a series of readings and psalms are chanted or recited.*

Trisagion

Holy God

Holy and Mighty

Holy Immortal One

Have mercy. Have mercy on us

Fenando Ortega / CCLI (with streaming)

Opening poem

Refrain (sung as each candle is extinguished):

Holy darkness, blessed night

Heaven's answers hidden from our sight

As we await you O God of silence

We embrace your holy night.

Dan Schutte / OCP / OneLicense (with streaming)

Prayer

From Psalm 69 Salvum me fac

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.

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.

Matthew 26:20-25

When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve; and while they were eating, he said, 'Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.' And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, 'Surely not I, Lord?' He answered, 'The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.' Judas, who betrayed him, said, 'Surely not I, Rabbi?' He replied, 'You have said so.'

We extinguish the shadow of betrayal

The refrain "Holy Darkness" is sung as each candle is extinguished.

from Psalm 70 Deus, in adjutorium

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.

Luke 22:40-44

When he reached the place, he said to them, 'Pray that you may not come into the time of trial.' Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, 'Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done.' [Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground.

We extinguish the shadow of agony

From Psalm 74 Ut quid, Deus?

O God, why have you utterly cast us off? *
why is your wrath so hot against the sheep of your pasture?

Remember your congregation that you purchased long ago, *
the tribe you redeemed to be your inheritance, and Mount Zion where
you dwell.

There are no signs for us to see; there is no prophet left; *
there is not one among us who knows how long.

How long, O God, will the adversary scoff? *
will the enemy blaspheme your Name for ever?

Matthew 26:40-45

Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, 'So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Again he went away for the second time and prayed, 'My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.' Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, 'Are you

still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

We extinguish the shadow of loneliness

From Psalm 27 Dominus illuminatio

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? *
Though an army should encamp against me, yet my heart shall not be afraid;

And though war should rise up against me, *
yet will I put my trust in him.

For in the day of trouble he shall keep me safe in his shelter; *
he shall hide me in the secrecy of his dwelling and set me high upon a rock.

Even now he lifts up my head *
above my enemies round about me.

You have been my helper; cast me not away; *
do not forsake me, O God of my salvation.

Matthew 26:47-50, 55-56

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.' At once he came up to Jesus and said, 'Greetings, Rabbi!' and kissed him. Jesus said to him, 'Friend, do what you are here to do.' Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, 'Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled.' Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

We extinguish the shadow of desertion

Psalm 71 In te, Domine, speravi

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge; *
let me never be ashamed.

In your righteousness, deliver me and set me free; *
incline your ear to me and save me.

Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe; *
you are my crag and my stronghold.

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

For you are my hope, O Lord God, *
my confidence since I was young.

I have been sustained by you ever since I was born; *
from my mother's womb you have been my strength;

my praise shall be always of you.*
I have become a portent to many; but you are my refuge and my
strength.

Let my mouth be full of your praise *
and your glory all the day long.

Do not cast me off in my old age; *
forsake me not when my strength fails.

For my enemies are talking against me, *
and those who lie in wait for my life take counsel together.

They say, "Go after and seize the one whom God has forsaken; *
because there is no one who will save."

O God, be not far from me; *
come quickly to help me

Matthew 26: 59-67

Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death, but they found none, The high priest stood up and said, 'Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?' But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, 'I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.' Jesus said to him, 'You have said so. But I tell you,

*From now on you will see the Son of Man
seated at the right hand of Power
and coming on the clouds of heaven.'*

Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, 'He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?' They answered, 'He deserves death.' Then they spat in his face and struck him; and some slapped him,

We extinguish the shadow of accusation

From Psalm 51 Miserere mei, Deus

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.

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.

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.

Deliver me from death, O God, *
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness, O God of my salvation.

Mark 15:12-20

Pilate spoke to them again, ‘Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?’ They shouted back, ‘Crucify him!’ Pilate asked them, ‘Why, what evil has he done?’ But they shouted all the more, ‘Crucify him!’ So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified. Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor’s headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

We extinguish the shadow of mockery

From Psalm 22 Deus, Deus meus

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? *
and are so far from my cry and from the words of my distress?

O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer; *
by night as well, but I find no rest.

Yet you are the Holy One, *
enthroned upon the praises of Israel.

Be not far from me, for trouble is near, *
and there is none to help.

I am poured out like water; all my bones are out of joint; *
my heart within my breast is melting wax.

My mouth is dried out like a pot-sherd; my tongue sticks to the roof of
my mouth; *
and you have laid me in the dust of the grave.

Packs of dogs close me in, and gangs of evildoers circle around me; *
they pierce my hands and my feet; I can count all my bones.

They stare and gloat over me; *
they divide my garments among them; they cast lots for my clothing.

Be not far away, O LORD; *
you are my strength; hasten to help me.

Luke 23:33-46

When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.' And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, 'He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!' One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, 'Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!' But the other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' He replied, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.' It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the

sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.' Having said this, he breathed his last

It is finished...We extinguish the shadow of death

Bell rings 33 times...

We Depart in Silence