



April 10, 2020 | A Service of Darkness ¹

Tenebrae Service

Greeting:

Blessed be the name of the Lord our God,
Who redeems us from sin and death.

For us and for our salvation, Christ became obedient unto death, even death on the cross.

Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Song: Blessed Be Our God Forever and Ever

Blessed be our God
Forever and ever
Blessed be our God
Forever and ever. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Song: O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

O sacred Head, now wounded
With grief and shame weighed down

Now scornfully surrounded
With thorns, Thine only crown

O sacred Head, what glory,
what bliss till now was thine!
Yet, though despised and gory,
I joy to call thee mine

What Thou, my Lord, hast suffered
Was all for sinners' gain
Mine, mine was the transgression
But Thine the deadly pain.

Lo, here I fall, my Savior!
'Tis I deserve Thy place
Look on me with Thy favor,

Vouchsafe to me Thy grace
What language shall I borrow
To thank Thee, dearest Friend
For this, Thy dying sorrow,
Thy pity without end?

O make me Thine forever
And should I fainting be
Lord, let me never, never
Outlive my love for Thee

The First Reading

(The religious leaders conspire against Jesus)

It was two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The religious leaders who collaborated with the Roman occupation were conspiring against Jesus. They had gathered in the palace of Caiaphas the high priest. This man received the high priesthood at the hand of Valerius Gratus, the former Roman governor, and now retained the office under Pontius Pilate. They all were planning to quietly arrest and destroy Jesus so as to avoid a revolt among the Jews.

Second Reading

(Judas plots with the authorities to deliver Jesus)

Then one of the twelve named Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, went to the chief priests and asked, "What will you give me if I deliver Jesus to you for the governor?" When they heard the offer, they were glad and promised Judas thirty pieces of silver. From that hour he sought an opportunity to betray Jesus.

Third Reading

(Jesus tells his disciples where to celebrate the Paschal meal)

At the beginning of the feast, when the Passover lamb was sacrificed, the disciples of Jesus approached him and asked, "Where do you wish us to prepare the Paschal meal?" Jesus took two of his disciples and instructed them, "Go into the city, and you will see there a man carrying a water jar. He will show you a suitable place." The two did as Jesus commanded. They entered the city where they found the man with the water jar, who brought them to a large upper room.

¹ Adapted from: Hopson, Hal H. Tenebrae: A Service of Darkness. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 1998

Fourth Reading

(Jesus announces that one of his disciples will betray him)

When evening had come, Jesus arrived with the twelve. While they were eating, he said, "I tell you truly that one of you is going to betray me." The disciples were stunned with grief and began to protest one after the other, "Surely not I!" Jesus replied, "The betrayer is one of you dipping his hand in the dish with me. The Son of man is fulfilling Scripture, but woe to that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed." Then Judas slipped out into the night.

Fifth Reading

(Jesus recites the Words of Institution)

As they were eating, Jesus took bread. After reciting the blessing, he broke it and gave it to his disciples as he said, "Take, eat; this is my body." Then taking the cup and blessing it, he gave it to his disciples as he said, "This is my blood of the covenant which is being shed for many. I tell you in truth that I shall not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it fresh in the kingdom of God." Having sung a hymn, they left the city for the Mount of Olives.

Song: Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed

Alas, and did my Savior bleed?
And did my Sovereign die?
Would He devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?

Was it for sins that I had done
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity, grace unknown!
And love beyond degree!

Well might the sun in darkness hide
And shut His glories in
When Christ, the mighty Maker, died
For man, the creature's, sin

Thus might I hide my blushing face
While His dear cross appears
Dissolve my heart in thankfulness
And melt my eyes to tears

But drops of grief can ne'er repay
The debt of love I owe;
Here Lord, I give myself away:
'Tis all that I can do.

Sixth Reading

(Jesus tells his disciples that they will all desert him)

As they walked, Jesus said to his disciples, "You will all desert me this very night. So it is written in the prophet Zechariah, 'Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.'" Then Peter protested, "Though all desert, I will remain by you." Jesus replied, "I tell you truly that in this very night, before the cock crows twice you shall deny me three times." Still Peter maintained, "Even though I must die with you, I will never deny you," and so declared all the disciples.

Seventh Reading

(In Gethsemane the disciples fall asleep)

Jesus halted at an olive grove called Gethsemane. Then going apart with Peter, James, and John, he left them on watch and continued a little farther alone. There he fell on his face in anguished prayer: "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." Soon he returned to the three on watch and found them sleeping. Rousing them, he asked Peter, "Could you not watch with me for just one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; for the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." Again Jesus went apart in troubled prayer: "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." And again he returned to find the disciples sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. A third time Jesus withdrew to pray, and a third time he found the disciples sleeping. Then Jesus said, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Now is the time for the Son of man to be delivered into the hands of sinners. Here comes my betrayer."

Song: Stricken, Smitten and Afflicted

Stricken, smitten, and afflicted,
See Him dying on the tree!
'Tis the Christ by man rejected;
Yes, my soul, 'tis He, 'tis He!
'Tis the long expected prophet,
David's Son, yet David's Lord;
By His Son, God now has spoken:
Tis the true and faithful Word.

Tell me, ye who hear Him groaning,
Was there ever grief like His?
Friends thro' fear His cause disowning,
Foes insulting His distress;
Many hands were raised to wound Him,
None would interpose to save;
But the deepest stroke that pierced Him,
Was the stroke that Justice gave.

Ye who think of sin but lightly
Nor suppose the evil great
Here may view its nature rightly
Here its guilt may estimate
Mark the sacrifice appointed
See who bears the awful load
'Tis the Word, the Lord's Anointed
Son of Man and Son of God

Here we have a firm foundation
Here the refuge of the lost
Christ, the Rock of our salvation
His the name of which we boast
Lamb of God, for sinners wounded
Sacrifice to cancel guilt!
None shall ever be confounded
Who on Him their hope have built

Eighth Reading

(Jesus is betrayed by Judas and seized by the Roman soldiers)

Jesus had not finished speaking before Judas, one of his own disciples, arrived with a group of Roman soldiers and other armed men from the temple. Now the betrayer had arranged with the authorities for a sign and had said, "The man whom I kiss is the one you want." In accord with this arrangement, Judas went directly to Jesus and cried out, "Greetings, Master." Then he gave him the kiss. Jesus responded, "Judas, would you betray the Son of man with a kiss?"

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Immediately the soldiers laid hands on Jesus and held him fast. Then one of the disciples with Jesus drew his sword and cut off an ear from the slave of the high priest; but Jesus said to him, "Sheathe your sword. All who take up the sword will perish by the sword. Do you not know that I can call upon my Father and that he will respond at once with more than twelve legions of angels?" Then turning to the mob, Jesus continued, "Have you come for me as against a rebel bandit with swords and clubs? Why did you not seize me in the temple, where I sat teaching by day? Were you so afraid of the religious authorities that you must come for me by stealth? Nevertheless, your actions are fulfilling the words of the prophets." Then all his disciples forsook him and fled.

Ninth Reading

(Jesus' trial begins in the court of the high priest Caiaphas)

Those who had seized Jesus brought him to Caiaphas, whom the Romans had made a high priest. Peter followed at a distance as far as the courtyard. There he sat with the attendants and warmed himself by the fire. The high priest had gathered his whole council, and they began to arrange the case against Jesus, which they would present to Pontius Pilate, the governor. The charge was that Jesus claimed to be King of the Jews, and they brought in many false witnesses, but to no avail. Finally two came forward and testified, "We heard this man say, 'I will tear down this temple made with hands and within three days build another not made with hands.'" The testimony was evidence that Jesus claimed authority over the temple. Yet their testimony didn't agree. Finally Caiaphas stood up and examined Jesus directly. "Have you no answer to these charges?" demanded the high priest. Jesus remained silent and answered nothing. Then the high priest put the question of kingship in terms of the royal titles "Anointed" and "Son of God." "Are you the Anointed One, the Son of the Blessed?" he probed. Jesus answered, "I am, and you shall see the Son of man seated on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." The high priest turned and said, "What need have we of witnesses? He has condemned himself." They all concurred that Jesus was indeed worthy of death. Then those holding Jesus began to spit on him. They covered his face and were striking him as they taunted him and said, "O Anointed One, prophesy who is striking you."

Tenth Reading

(Peter denies having any knowledge of Jesus)

Now Peter was warming himself in the courtyard when a small slave girl entered. She confronted Peter and said, "You also were with this Jesus the Nazarene." Peter quickly gave a denial. "I do not know what you are talking about," he replied and went outside into the gateway. Meanwhile, the cock crowed. The slave girl followed Peter out and said to the bystanders, "This man is one of them." Again Peter denied knowing Jesus. After a little while the bystanders said directly to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you speak with a Galilean accent." Then Peter began to swear with an oath, "I do not know this person of whom you are speaking"; but the cock interrupted him as it crowed for the second time. Immediately Peter remembered how Jesus said to him, "Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times." He went out and wept bitterly.

Song: Man of Sorrows! What a Name

"Man of Sorrows," what a name
For the Son of God who came
Ruined sinners to reclaim!
Hallelujah! what a Savior!

Lifted up was He to die,
"It is finished!" was His cry;
Now in heaven exalted high;
Hallelujah! what a Savior!

Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood;
Sealed my pardon with His blood;
Hallelujah! what a Savior!

When He comes, our glorious King,
All his ransomed home to bring,
Then anew this song we'll sing
Hallelujah! what a Savior!

Guilty, vile, and helpless, we,
Spotless Lamb of God was He;
Full atonement—can it be?
Hallelujah! what a Savior!

Eleventh Reading

(Jesus is put in custody of Pontius Pilate)

When morning arrived, all of the chief priests, along with the other Roman collaborators, bound Jesus and delivered him over to Pontius Pilate, the imperial Roman governor. When Judas saw what was happening, he knew that Jesus was doomed, and he was grieved. He returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and confessed, "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they responded. "That is your affair." Judas threw down the thirty pieces of silver in the temple. Then he went out and hanged himself. Picking up the silver pieces, the chief priests said, "It is unlawful to put this silver into the treasury, for it is blood money." Whereupon they used the money to buy the Potter's Field for the burial of strangers. Therefore, that field is known to this day as the Field of Blood.

Twelfth Reading

(Jesus is put on the stand before Pontius Pilate)

Jesus stood before the Roman governor as the accusers made their charge. Pilate said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? You own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from this world." Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice." Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"

Song: It's Not Enough

Though all the wealth of men was mine to squander

And towers of ivory rose beneath my feet
Were palaces of pleasure mine to wander
The sum of it would leave me incomplete

Though every soul would hold my name in honor

And truest love was always by my side
My praises sung by grateful sons and daughters

My soul would never still be satisfied

It's not enough, it's not enough

I could walk the world forever

Till my shoes were filled with blood

It's not enough, it's not enough

Though I could live for all to lift them higher
Or spend the centuries seeking light within

Though I indulged my every dark desire

Exhausting every avenue of sin

It's not enough, it's not enough

I could walk the world forever

Till my shoes were filled with blood

It's not enough, it's not enough

I could right all wrongs, or ravage

Everything beneath the sun

It's not enough, it's not enough

To make me whole

It's not enough, it never was

Awake my soul

It's not enough, it never was

It's not enough, it's not enough

I could walk the world forever

Till my shoes were filled with blood

It's not enough, it's not enough

I could right all wrongs, or ravage

Everything beneath the sun

It's not enough, it's not enough

Though all would bow to me

Till I could drink my fill of fear and love

It's not enough, it's not enough

Thirteenth Reading

(The crowd shouts, "Crucify him! Crucify him!")

After Pilate said this, he went outside to the Jews and told them, "I find not guilt in him. But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover. So do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" But they cried out, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" (Now Barabbas was a noted rebel who had committed murder during the insurrection.) So, Pilate responded, "What shall I do then with Jesus the Anointed One?" The crowd shouted, "Crucify him!" Pilate continued, "Are you certain of his guilt?" The crowd took up the chant, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Again Pilate spoke, "Shall I crucify your king?" "We have no king but Caesar," cried the demonstrators. Then Pilate washed his hands before the crowd to declare his innocence. And, the crowd retorted, "His blood be on us and on our children!" So, Pilate released Barabbas and handed Jesus over to his soldiers for scourging and crucifixion.

Crucify him! Crucify him!

Fourteenth Reading

(The Roman soldiers mock Jesus, proclaiming, "Hail, King of the Jews")

The soldiers led Jesus away within the governor's palace. There they assembled the whole battalion.

They clothed Jesus in royal purple. They set a crown of thorns upon his head and shoved a reed between his fingers for a scepter. They began to mock him by kneeling before him and proclaiming, "Hail, King of the Jews." They also spat upon him and smote him on the head with a stick. Then, after mocking him, they took away the purple robe, returned his own clothes, and brought him out to crucify him.

Song: My Worth Is Not in What I Own

Not in the strength of flesh and bone
But in the costly wounds of love
At the cross

My worth is not in skill or name
In win or lose, in pride or shame
But in the blood of Christ that flowed
At the cross

I rejoice in my Redeemer
Greatest Treasure,
Wellspring of my soul
I will trust in Him, no other.
My soul is satisfied in Him alone.

As summer flowers we fade and die
Fame, youth and beauty hurry by
But life eternal calls to us
At the cross

I will not boast in wealth or might
Or human wisdom's fleeting light
But I will boast in knowing Christ
At the cross

I rejoice in my Redeemer
Greatest Treasure,
Wellspring of my soul
I will trust in Him, no other.
My soul is satisfied in Him alone.

Two wonders here that I confess
My worth and my unworthiness
My value fixed - my ransom paid
At the cross

I rejoice in my Redeemer
Greatest Treasure,
Wellspring of my soul
I will trust in Him, no other.
My soul is satisfied in Him alone.

Fifteenth Reading (*Jesus is crucified*)

On the road they met Simon of Cyrene coming in from the countryside. They compelled him to carry the cross. They brought Jesus to a place called Golgotha (which means “skull”). There they crucified him.... *And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”* They offered him wine mingled with myrrh, but he refused it. His garments they divided among themselves, casting lots for them. Over his head they inscribed the charge against him, The King of the Jews. *Jesus saw his mother, Mary, standing beside the disciple he loved, John, and said to her, “Woman, behold your son!” And to John he said, “Behold, your mother!”* Those who passed by were shaking their heads in scorn and saying, “So you would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days! Save yourself. Come down from the cross.” Likewise the priestly collaborators mocked him as they said to one another, “He saved others; himself he cannot save. Let the Anointed One, the King of Israel, come down from the cross that we may see and believe.” Even the two insurrectionists crucified on either side of him reviled him. Yet one, having a change of heart, pled, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” *And Jesus responded, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”*

Sixteenth Reading (*Jesus finishes his work*)

From the sixth hour to the ninth hour darkness came over all the land. *And, at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Then, to fulfill all Scripture, Jesus said, “I thirst.” After they held to him a sponge of sour wine, Jesus said, “It is finished.” Then, calling out in a loud voice, he said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!”* And having said this, he breathed his last. One of the soldiers, to make sure he was dead, pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.

Seventeenth Reading (*Testimonies to Jesus’ Person*)

Suddenly the curtain of the Temple was torn in two from top to the bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. Even the tombs of the dead were opened, and many bodies of the saints were revived and appeared in the holy city. And when the centurion and those with him saw these miraculous signs, they were filled with awe and said, “Truly this was the Son of God.”

Eighteenth Reading (*Burial of Jesus*)

Afterward, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pontius Pilate for permission to bury Jesus. Then he and Nicodemus anointed Jesus’ body for burial and placed him in a new tomb in a garden in the place where Jesus was crucified.

Song: When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Lord of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
Save in the death of Christ, my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them through his blood.

See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down.
Did e’er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small.
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Dismissal:

May Jesus Christ, who for our sake became obedient unto death, yes, even death on a cross, keep you and strengthen you this night, and forevermore. **Amen.**

(All leave in silence)