

P Christ died for our sins once for all, a good man on behalf of sinners,

C in order to lead us to God.

(Stand)

The Lord's Prayer is whispered softly by all.

(Be seated)

Readings From The Letter To The Hebrews

Hebrews 4:12-15

P He endured the suffering that should have been ours, the pain that we should have borne.

C He was put to death for the sins of our people.

Hebrews 4:16—5:5

P Because of our sins he was wounded, beaten because of the evil we did.

C We are healed by the punishment he suffered, made whole by the blows he received.

Hebrews 5:7-9

P Is it nothing to you, all who pass by?

C Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow.

Conclusion

P God did not keep back his own Son, but offered him up for us all.

Psalms 51 is offered, spoken softly:

P Be merciful to me, O God, because of your constant love. Because of your great mercy, wipe away my sins!

C Wash away all my evil and make me clean from my sin!

P I recognize my faults; I am always conscious of my sins.

C I have sinned against you—only against you—and done what you consider evil. So you are right in judging me; you are justified in condemning me.

P I have been evil from the day I was born; from the time I was conceived, I have been sinful.

C Sincerity and truth are what you require; fill my mind with your wisdom.

P Remove my sin, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

C Let me hear the sounds of joy and gladness; and though you have crushed me and broken me, I will be happy once again.

P Close your eyes to my sins and wipe out all my evil.

C Create a clean heart in me, O God, and put a new and loyal spirit in me.

P Do not banish me from your presence; do not take your Holy Spirit from me.

C Give me again the joy that comes from your salvation, and make me willing to obey you.

P Then I will teach sinners your commands, and they will turn back to you.

C Spare my life, O God, and save me, and I will gladly proclaim your righteousness.

P Help me to speak, Lord, and I will praise you.

C You do not want sacrifices, or I would offer them; you are not pleased with burnt offerings.

P My sacrifice is a humble spirit, O God; you will not reject a humble and repentant heart.

C O God, be kind to Zion and help her; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

P Then you will be pleased with proper sacrifices and with our burnt offerings; and bulls will be sacrificed on your altar.

He was humble and walked the path of obedience all the way to death—his death on the cross.

(*The Christ Candle is removed.*)

P Almighty God, we ask you to look with mercy on your family for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed and to be given over to the hands of sinners and to suffer death on the cross; (*these words are whispered*) who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

C Amen.

(*The strepitus is heard, a noise signifying the closing of the tomb and the earthquake. Then the Christ Candle is brought back into the chancel in anticipation of our Lord's resurrection. All leave in silence.*)

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T E N E B R A E



The Office of Tenebrae (meaning *darkness* or *shadow*), a Holy Week devotion dating back to the 7th or 8th century A.D., is characterized by Scripture readings and the successive extinguishing of candles as the service progresses.

Following the opening prayer, the service is divided into three Nocturns, each with *Three Psalms* and each preceded and concluded by an appropriate antiphon. After the Psalm reading, *The Lord's Prayer* is whispered by the congregation. Then follows the reading of *Three Lessons*, each with versicles and congregational responses.

After the Third Nocturn, the service concludes with Psalm 51 and the removal of the Christ Candle for a time, symbolizing our Lord's death and burial. The *strepitus* is heard, a harsh noise indicating the closing of the tomb. The Christ Candle is then returned to its place in anticipation of our Lord's resurrection.

At the conclusion of the service, please leave silently, maintaining the spirit of solemn worship.

Tenebrae

P Almighty God, we ask you to look with mercy upon your family for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed and to be given over to the hands of sinners and to suffer death on the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

C Amen.

First Nocturn

P The kings revolt; their rulers plot together against the Lord and against the king he chose.

Psalm 2 is offered, concluding:
“Happy are all who go to him for protection.”

C The kings revolt; their rulers plot together against the Lord and against the king he chose.

P Proud men are coming to attack me; cruel men are trying to kill me.

Psalm 54 is offered, concluding:
“You have rescued me from all troubles,
and I have seen my enemies defeated.”

C Proud men are coming to attack me; cruel men are trying to kill me.

P I am always aware of the Lord’s presence; he is near, and nothing can shake me.

Psalm 16 is offered, concluding:
“Your presence fills me with joy
and brings me pleasure forever.”

C I am always aware of the Lord’s presence; he is near, and nothing can shake me.

P Christ himself carried our sins in his body to the cross,
C so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.
It is by his wounds that we have been healed.

(Stand)

The Lord’s Prayer is whispered softly by all.

(Be seated)

Readings From The Book Of Lamentations

Lamentations 2:8-11

P Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord your God!

C Even my best friend, the one I trusted most, the one who shared my food, has turned against me.

Lamentations 2:13-14

P Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord, your God!

C The sorrow in my heart is so great that it almost crushes me. Stay here and keep watch.

Lamentations 3:1-9

P Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord, your God!

C Behold, the hour has come for the Son of Man to be handed over to the power of sinful men.

Second Nocturn

P I am closed in and cannot escape; my eyes are weak from suffering.

Psalm 88 is offered, concluding:
“... and darkness is my only companion.”

C I am closed in and cannot escape; my eyes are weak from suffering.

P Hear me, Lord, when I call to you! Be merciful and answer me!

Psalm 27 is offered, concluding:
“Have faith, do not despair. Trust in the Lord.”

C Hear me, Lord, when I call to you! Be merciful and answer me!

P When I lie down, I go to sleep in peace; you alone, O Lord, keep me perfectly safe.

Psalm 4 is offered, concluding:
“When I lie down, I go to sleep in peace;
you alone, O Lord, keep me perfectly safe.”

C When I lie down, I go to sleep in peace; you alone, O Lord, keep me perfectly safe.

P Christ himself suffered for you and left you an example, so that you would follow in his steps.

C He committed no sin, and no one ever heard a lie come from his lips. When he was insulted, he did not answer back with an insult; when he suffered, he did not threaten.

(Stand)

The Lord’s Prayer is whispered softly by all.

Readings From The Gospel Of St. John

John 19:17-22

P He was treated harshly, but he endured it humbly; he never said a word.

C Like a lamb about to be slaughtered, like a sheep about to be sheared, he never said a word.

John 19:23-27

P We despised and rejected him; he endured suffering and pain.

C No one would even look at him—we ignored him as if he were nothing.

John 19:28-30

P All of us were like sheep that were lost, each of us going his own way.

C But the Lord made the punishment fall on him, the punishment all of us deserved.

(Be seated)

Third Nocturn

P My enemy has put me in a dark prison; I am in deep despair.

Psalm 143 is offered, concluding:
“In your goodness save me from my troubles.”

C My enemy has put me in a dark prison; I am in deep despair.

P Save me from my enemies, my God; protect me from those who attack me!

Psalm 59 is offered, concluding:
“My refuge is God, the God who loves me.”

C Save me from my enemies, my God; protect me from those who attack me!

P Show us your constant love, O Lord, and give us your saving help.

Psalm 85 is offered, concluding:
“Righteousness will go before the Lord,
and prepare a path for him.”

C Show us your constant love, O Lord, and give us your saving help.