



good friday

Tenebrae: A meditation for Good Friday

Tenebrae was a medieval Office of Matins sung on the Thursday, Friday and Saturday of Holy Week. Tenebrae is the Latin word for darkness. In this adaptation, as we listen to the story of the last hours of Jesus' life, candles are extinguished to symbolize the enveloping darkness. The music, Taize chants and songs and moments of silence attempt to mark the solemnity of the occasion and in response we find our voice in song and prayer. It is hoped that this service provides an opportunity for Easter reflection.

This service was originally planned for a church setting. The service would start with 13 lit candles, 12 of which would be extinguished at specific times during the service until only one is left: one to symbolise He who is the light of the world. This could be repeated at home using tealight candles. For the music, relevant YouTube links are provided. Different voices would have read the bible readings and psalms. The church service would also have played the music rather than used video. For this version, the links have been chosen to provide a visual focus should you want one.

This symbol shows when it is time for a candle to be extinguished, should you wish to do this.



Play/Sing: Taize Chant – The Lord is my light (my light and salvation)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iKzjRf1PB5k>

The Lord is my light

My light and salvation

In Him I trust

In Him I trust

Lead: God is light, in whom there is no darkness at all.

All: Jesus Christ is the light of the world.

Lead: This is the judgement: the light has come into the world.

All: But the people loved darkness rather than light.

Reading: John 18: 1-11

When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it.

Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, “Who is it you want?”

“Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied.

“I am he,” Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) ⁶ When Jesus said, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground.

Again he asked them, “Who is it you want?”

“Jesus of Nazareth,” they said.

Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go.” This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: “I have not lost one of those you gave me.”

Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant’s name was Malchus.)

Jesus commanded Peter, “Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?”



Psalm 59: 1-4

Deliver me from my enemies, O my God;
protect me from those who rise up against me.
Deliver me from those who work evil;
from the bloodthirsty save me.

Even now they lie in wait for my life;
the mighty stir up strife against me.
For no transgression or sin of mine, O LORD,
for no fault of mine, they run and make ready.

Rouse yourself, come to my help and see!

Play: Be Still (The Fray)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5nUuBjz4Vhc>



Reading: Matthew 27: 3-5

When Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. He said, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." Throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself.

Psalm 109: 1-5

Do not be silent, O God of my praise.
For wicked and deceitful mouths are opened against me,
speaking against me with lying tongues.
They beset me with words of hate,
and attack me without cause.
In return for my love they accuse me,
even while I make prayer for them,
So they reward me evil for good,
and hatred for my love.

Play: Hurt (Johnny Cash)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8AHCfZTRGil>



Reading: John 18: 12-27

So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him. First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. The woman said to Peter, “You are not also one of this man’s disciples, are you?” He said, “I am not.” Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. Jesus answered, “I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said.” When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, “Is that how you answer the high priest?” Jesus answered, “If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?” Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, “You are not also one of his disciples, are you?” He denied it and said, “I am not.” One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, “Did I not see you in the garden with him?” Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.



Psalm 31: 11-13

I am the scorn of all my adversaries,
a horror to my neighbours,
an object of dread to my acquaintances;
those who see me in the street flee from me.

¹² I have passed out of mind like one who is dead;
I have become like a broken vessel.

¹³ For I hear the whispering of many—
terror all around!—
as they scheme together against me,
as they plot to take my life.



Reading: John 18: 28-40

Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" They answered, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you." Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law." The Jews replied, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death." (This was to fulfill what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.)

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." Pilate asked him, "What is truth?"

After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, "I find no case against him. But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" They shouted in reply, "Not this man, but Barabbas!"



Play: Mad World (Gary Jules)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oa-ae6_okmg

Reading: John 19:1-16a

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him." So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God."

Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, "Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin." From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor."

When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!" They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but the emperor." Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.



Psalm 71: 9-12

Do not cast me off in the time of old age;
do not forsake me when my strength is spent.
For my enemies speak concerning me,
and those who watch for my life consult together.
They say, "Pursue and seize that person
whom God has forsaken,
for there is no one to deliver."
O God, do not be far from me;
O my God, make haste to help me!



Play/Sing: How deep the Father's love for use (Stuart Townsend)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzQj7XvKFmA>

Reading: John 19: 16b - 22

So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written."



Psalm 26: 16-21

Turn to me and be gracious to me,
for I am lonely and afflicted.
Relieve the troubles of my heart,
and bring me out of my distress.
Consider my affliction and my trouble,
and forgive all my sins.

Consider how many are my foes,
and with what violent hatred they hate me.
O guard my life, and deliver me;
do not let me be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.
May integrity and uprightness preserve me,
for I wait for you.



Reading: John 19: 23-30

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it." This was to fulfill what the scripture says,

"They divided my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots."

And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." ²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfil the scripture), "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.



Play: Good Friday (Josh Garrels) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvoBY1357ZU> followed by
The Crucifixion (from Jesus Christ Superstar) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FvttUTeKDq4>

Psalm: 22: 11-16

Do not be far from me,
for trouble is near
and there is no one to help.

Many bulls encircle me,
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;
they open wide their mouths at me,
like a ravening and roaring lion.

I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax;
it is melted within my breast;
my mouth is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.

For dogs are all around me;
a company of evildoers encircles me.
My hands and feet have shrivelled;

Play: Were you there? Michael W Smith (*finish after the first verse*)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w3EXZvH_UFg

Reading: John 19: 31-37

Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, “None of his bones shall be broken.” And again another passage of scripture says, “They will look on the one whom they have pierced.”



Psalm 88: 3-6

For my soul is full of troubles,
and my life draws near to Sheol.
I am counted among those who go down to the Pit;
I am like those who have no help,
like those forsaken among the dead,
like the slain that lie in the grave,
like those whom you remember no more,
for they are cut off from your hand.
You have put me in the depths of the Pit,
in the regions dark and deep.

A time for prayer and reflection

Play/Sing: Taize Chant – Within our darkest night

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9KALsMaLM0Q>

Within our darkest night

You kindle the fire that never dies away,

That never dies away

Eternal God, in the cross of Jesus

we see the cost of our sin

And the depth of your love:

In humble hope and fear

May we place at his feet

All that we have and all that we are,

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Reading: John 19: 38-42

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.



Play/Sing: Taize Chant – Stay with me (Bleibet Hier)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSodg61pFp8>

Stay with me

Remain here with me

Watch and pray

Watch and pray

Psalm 16: 7-11

I bless the LORD who gives me counsel;
in the night also my heart instructs me.
I keep the LORD always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices;
my body also rests secure.
For you do not give me up to Sheol,
or let your faithful one see the Pit.

You show me the path of life.
In your presence there is fullness of joy;
in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Play: John 19:41

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7SY1gEgjtC4>

(The service would have finished at this point, with the people leaving in silence and one final candle left burning - The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it)

