

Live-stream Tenebrae Liturgy for Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday in Holy Week

Monday night

Nine candles are displayed. Nine candles are lit

Introduction

Tonight we gather in a dimly lit room to witness a gathering darkness. We have dimmed the lights and lit candles. You might like to dim the lights where you are too. Perhaps you have enough candles in your bubble to light some candles too. We come tonight, and for the next two days to hear the story of Jesus' last hours; to hear what witnesses of the events have to tell us; to be drawn into the story ourselves, and to bear witness to Christ who is still a light in the midst of darkness.

The service of Tenebrae is known by many as "the service of shadows". It is a very ancient liturgy. Originally it was celebrated after midnight, in the early hours of the last three days of Holy Week.

From the middle ages it became an early evening service, and many churches now celebrate it on other evenings in Holy Week – as we are doing over these next three nights.

The distinctive ceremony of Tenebrae has always been the gradual extinguishing of candles while a series of readings and psalms is chanted or recited.

Tonight we have readings from the 26th and 27th Chapters of Matthew's Gospel and our psalms are simple Taizé-style chants - which we hope you will join in singing.

Tenebrae is the Latin word for *darkness* or *shadows*.

We are living in a shadowy time, as around the world communities are in quarantine, physically distanced from one another in order to limit the spread of a frightening pandemic.

The events of Holy Week are shadowy too.

In the passion story as it unfolds, we see the darkness of humanity which is all too present still in the world, a humanity which is more concerned with stock-piling and self-justification than compassion and grace, a humanity driven by fear, negativity, defensiveness and suspicion. In the story we share tonight, the life of mercy, forgiveness, and risky self-giving love that Jesus offers is seen as a problem to be overcome, stamped out, extinguished.

Tonight as we listen to the story, we are invited in

to BE part of the story;

to experience the darkness of the disciples' fears;

to imagine what motivated the shadowy actions

of Judas, the High Priests, and members of the crowd;

to bear with Jesus the dark violence of the soldiers

and the black betrayal of his friends.

We enter into the darkness with Jesus,
asking for courage to stay with him to the end.

Prayer:

Holy God, you promise to walk with us
through the valley of the shadow of death,
and you promise never to leave us.

Give us courage to enter into your story tonight.

Help us to stay with Jesus, and not to leave him.

Help us to face the darkness and the shadowy motives in our own lives.

And as we weep in sorrow for our own sins

and the sins of the world that killed your Son,

help us to reach out our hands

and receive the love that he still has for us and your world -

- the love that he was willing to die to show to us. Amen.

♪ We sing: Stay with me

**Stay with me, remain here with me, watching and praying
Watching and praying...**

Reading: Gethsemane – Matthew 26: 30-46



The first candle is extinguished

Prayer:

Dear God

we pray here with Jesus, caught in the whirl of emotions -
fear, love, longing, disappointment, trust.

May we be as faithful as Jesus,

when we face trials and are tempted to give up.

Help us to stay with Jesus.

Amen.

♪ We sing: Jesus, your light

Jesus, your light is shining within us

Let not our doubts or our darkness dim the flame

Jesus, your light is shining within us

Let my heart always welcome your love....

Reading: The Arrest – Matthew 26: 47-56

 *The second candle is extinguished*

Prayer:

Dear God

we understand the disciples need to lash out and protect you.


we marvel at the ability Jesus has to stay calm
and to care for even those who are opposing him.

**As we stay with Jesus through this dark hour,
give us courage to love as he loves. Amen.**

♪ We sing: By Night we hasten in darkness

**By night we hasten in darkness to seek for the living water
Only our thirst lights us onwards
Only our thirst lights us onwards...**

Reading: Before the Council – Matthew 26: 57-68

 *Third candle is extinguished*

Prayer:

Holy God, this constant opposition and questioning makes us tired,
and we want it all to stop.

But it doesn't.

Jesus continues to stay true – to himself and to you.

Give us patience and self-control to speak clearly and calmly and with love.

Give us patience to stay with Jesus.

Amen.

♪ We sing: Stay with me

**Stay with me, remain here with me, watching and praying
Watching and praying...**

*We will continue this pilgrimage through the shadowy story of Jesus' passion
on Tuesday evening...*

...in the meantime, stay present to the Holy One, watching and praying...

Tuesday Night

Nine candles are displayed. Six candles are lit.

Introduction

Tonight we gather in a dimly lit room to continue witnessing the gathering darkness.....

We gathered last night, and we come tonight and tomorrow, to hear the story of Jesus' last hours; to hear what witnesses of the events have to tell us; to be drawn into the story ourselves, and to bear witness to Christ who is still a light in the midst of darkness.....

Tonight as we listen to the story, we are invited in once more
to BE part of the story;
to experience the darkness of the disciples' fears;
to imagine what motivated the shadowy actions
of Judas, the High Priests, and members of the crowd;
to bear with Jesus the dark violence of the soldiers
and the black betrayal of his friends.

We enter into the darkness with Jesus,
asking for courage to stay with him to the end.

Prayer:

Holy God, you promise to walk with us
through the valley of the shadow of death,
and you promise never to leave us.

Give us courage to enter into your story tonight.

Help us to stay with Jesus, and not to leave him.

Help us to face the darkness and the shadowy motives in our own lives.

**And as we weep in sorrow for our own sins
and the sins of the world that killed your Son,**

help us to reach out our hands

and receive the love that he still has for us and your world -

- the love that he was willing to die to show to us. Amen.



The fourth candle is extinguished

♪ We sing: Stay with me

**Stay with me, remain here with me, watching and praying
Watching and praying...**

Reading: A Rooster Crowed – Matthew 26: 69-75



Fifth candle is extinguished

Prayer:

O God,

we flinch when Peter says so many times that he doesn't know you.

When we are frightened,

we too say things to protect ourselves that later we regret.

Give us strength to stay loyal to you in our words and actions.

Keep us walking through the shadows with you.

Amen.

♪ We sing: Jesus, your light

Jesus, your light is shining within us

Let not our doubts or our darkness dim the flame

Jesus, your light is shining within us

Let my heart always welcome your love.

Reading: Standing Before Pilate – Matthew 27: 1-26



Sixth candle is extinguished

Prayer:

Loving God, when people who are in power make bad decisions,

and fail to use their authority wisely,

your gift of life is betrayed and suffering follows.

When we have no power to change bad decisions,

give us courage to remain true to your gift of love.

Help us to stay with Jesus.

Amen.


♪ We sing: By Night we hasten in darkness

By night we hasten in darkness to seek for the living water

Only our thirst lights us onwards

Only our thirst lights us onwards...

Reading: The Crucifixion – Matthew 27: 27-44

 *Seventh candle is extinguished*

Prayer:

Jesus, your compassion has led to this, your passion – your suffering.
To see you, whom we love, and who has done no wrong, suffering
is almost more than we can bear.

It is not fair!

But it is your gift.

**As we look on in horror, or weep, or shake our heads in disbelief,
help us to understand that your love has brought you to this.**

Give us the love we need to stay with you at the cross.

Amen.

♪ We sing: Stay with me

**Stay with me, remain here with me, watching and praying
Watching and praying...**

*We will continue this pilgrimage through the shadowy story of Jesus' passion
on Wednesday evening...*

...in the meantime, stay present to the Holy One, watching and praying...

Wednesday Night

Nine candles are displayed. Two Candles are lit.

Introduction

Tonight we gather in a dimly lit room to continue witnessing the gathering
darkness.....

We gathered last night, and we come tonight and tomorrow, to hear the story of
Jesus' last hours; to hear what witnesses of the events have to tell us; to be drawn
into the story ourselves, and to bear witness to Christ who is still a light in the midst
of darkness.....

Tonight as we listen to the story, we are invited in once more
to BE part of the story;
to experience the darkness of the disciples' fears;
to imagine what motivated the shadowy actions
of Judas, the High Priests, and members of the crowd;
to bear with Jesus the dark violence of the soldiers

and the black betrayal of his friends.
We enter into the darkness with Jesus,
asking for courage to stay with him to the end.

Prayer:

Holy God, you promise to walk with us
through the valley of the shadow of death,
and you promise never to leave us.

Give us courage to enter into your story tonight.

Help us to stay with Jesus, and not to leave him.

Help us to face the darkness and the shadowy motives in our own lives.

**And as we weep in sorrow for our own sins
and the sins of the world that killed your Son,**

help us to reach out our hands

and receive the love that he still has for us and your world -

- the love that he was willing to die to show to us. Amen.

♪ We sing: Stay with me

**Stay with me, remain here with me, watching and praying
Watching and praying...**

Reading: Jesus dies – Matthew 27: 45-56



Eighth candle is extinguished

Prayer:

Dead.

Jesus dead.

How can it be?

He has given his all, O God, to show how much you love.

He hangs, spent, but your love is not dead.

It is here in the love of his friends, here in our hearts.

Your love in us cannot die.

Amen.

♪ We sing: Jesus, remember me

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom

Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom

As we sing, the painted cross is taken down and laid on the table

Reading: Taken to a Tomb – Matthew 27: 57-66



Ninth candle is extinguished

silence is kept.....

As we come to the end of this third day of our Tenebrae liturgies, we are going to follow a slightly newer tradition, perhaps only a few hundred years old, where after the last passage has been read, we wait in the dark, waiting in the silence, recalling the days when Jesus was in the tomb. Then, a single candle will be relit to represent the hope of the prophecy of Easter. This candle flame will help us to remember that Christ continues to be a light in the midst of darkness, and that he calls us to witness to that.

Prayer:

Loving God, we pray for all those whom we have loved, but see no longer, our dead and all who have influenced our lives.

We thank you for the care of friends, and those who support us in times of grief.

**In the darkness of the tomb,
let us wait in trust,
that your life can never be truly extinguished.
Amen.**

silence is kept.....



A candle is lit

♪ as we sing: Jesus, your light

**Jesus, your light is shining within us
Let not our doubts or our darkness dim the flame
Jesus, your light is shining within us
Let my heart always welcome your love.**

Thank you for being with us on this pilgrimage through the shadowy story of Jesus' passion.

*As Holy Week continues,
stay present to the Holy One,
watching and praying...*
