



ST. GERTRUDE CHURCH



TENEBRAE

March 27, 2024 at 8 P.M.

ABOUT THE SERVICE

Welcome to this service of choral *Tenebrae*. The Latin word “*tenebrae*” means “darkness,” referring to the ancient liturgical practice of gradually extinguishing 14 candles throughout a Holy Week service until only one remained. Originally, the liturgy of *Tenebrae* comprised six individual services: the Divine Office of matins and lauds (morning prayer) during the final three days of Holy Week — Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday.

This evening’s service is a highly abbreviated version of the six aforementioned liturgies, yet includes the essential elements of the original Office of *Tenebrae*. Each of the portions of the service, called nocturns, include a chanted psalm, followed by a portion of the Lamentations of Jeremiah or a writing by one of the early Church Fathers. Then follows a sung responsory, the texts of which refer to some aspect of Christ’s Passion and have been set by many composers through the centuries. The first two nocturns of this evening’s service are from the medieval Dominican Rite’s Office of *Tenebrae* for Holy Thursday, which was typically sung on Wednesday of Holy Week after sunset (similar to how attending mass on Saturday night fulfills one’s Sunday obligation). The texts of our third nocturn are compiled from the other days of Holy Week.

The end of our service is inspired by the medieval Dominican Rite of *Tenebrae*, in which two friars or nuns would stand at the foot of the altar and chant a series of responses back and forth between the conventual choir in the sanctuary; after proclaiming “Christ the Lord became obedient, even unto death, even to death on the cross,” the Dominicans would immediately prostrate themselves and recite Psalm 51 in silence.

In our liturgy, this final psalm will be sung to an extremely famous setting for three separate choirs by Gregorio Allegri; the piece dates from at least 1514 and was used mainly in the papal Office of *Tenebrae* in the Sistine Chapel. Allegri’s *Miserere* became legendary in large part because the Vatican fiercely guarded the secrets of how their singers would ornament/embellish the piece; according to legend, the secrets only “got out” in 1770 because the 14-year-old Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart visited Rome, attended the papal *Tenebrae*, and transcribed the ornamentation from memory. In recent decades music historians have definitively debunked the story, yet the existence of such a legend in the first place speaks to the power of Allegri’s most famous masterpiece, sung tonight by three choirs spaced throughout the church.

Another famous part of *Tenebrae* is the *strepitus*, or loud noise, which symbolizes the earthquake recorded in the Gospels upon Jesus’s death. However, this was a later addition to the Roman Rite, and was never a part of the Dominican *Tenebrae*. Being a Dominican parish, following the conclusion of the Allegri, we will hear the Dominican closing collect of *Tenebrae*, and then depart in silence, in hope of the Resurrection.



ORDER OF SERVICE

Tenebrae

HYMN

Vexilla regis prodeunt:
Fulget crucis mysterium
Quo carne carnis conditor,
Suspensus est patibulo.

O Crux ave, spes unica,
Hoc passionis tempore
Auge piis justitiam,
Reisque dona veniam.

Te, summa Deus Trinitas,
Collaudet omnis spiritus:
Quos per crucis mysterium
Salvas, regem per saecula. Amen.

At the ringing of the sacristy bell, all stand as the Capella sings:

*The banners of the king go forth.
The mystery of the cross shines,
On which the creator of flesh
was hung upon the gallows.*

*Oh hail the cross, our only hope,
in this Passiontide
increase the justice of the pious,
and grant to us forgiveness.*

*To you, supreme God, the Trinity,
let every spirit together offer praises,
whom you have saved by the mystery of the cross
and reign for ever. Amen.*

Words: Venantius Fortunatus

Music: Dominican Chant

MOTET

Media vita in morte sumus
quem quaerimus adiutorem
nisi te, Domine, qui pro peccatis nostris
juste irasceris?

Sancte Deus, sancte fortis,
sancte et misericors Salvator:
amarae morti ne tradas nos.

All sit as the Capella sings:

*We are in the midst of death.
Whom shall we seek for a helper
but you, O Lord, who for our sins
are justly angered?*

*Holy God, holy and mighty,
holy and merciful Savior,
do not hand us over to a bitter death.*

Words: Antiphon for compline (Dominican Rite), attr. Notker the Stammerer, OSB

Music: Kerensa Briggs

The first pair of candles are extinguished.

FIRST NOCTURN

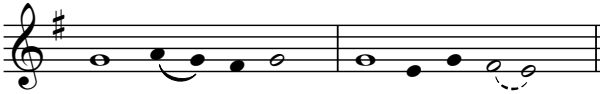
PSALM 69:1–6, 14–15

All stand

The Capella sings the antiphon and the words in normal typeface; all sing the text in bold.

Zelus domus tuae comedit me:
et opprobria exprobrantium tibi
ceciderunt super me.

*Zeal for your house has consumed me,
and the reproaches of those who mock you
have fallen upon me.*



Save me, O God, *for* the waters
have risen *to* my neck.

Mighty are those *who* attack me,
enemies with lies.

**I have sunk into the mud *of* the deep,
where there *is* no foothold.**

**What I have *never* stolen,
how can *I* restore?**

I have entered the waters *of* the deep,
where the flood *overwhelms* me.

O God, you *know* my folly;
from you my sins *are* not hidden.

**I am wearied *with* my crying;
my *throat* is parched.**

**I pray to *you*, O Lord,
at an *acceptable* time.**

My eyes *are* failing
while waiting *for* my God.

In your great mercy, answer *me*, O God,
with your *faithful* salvation.

**More numerous than the
hairs *on* my head
are those who hate
me *without* cause.**

**Rescue me *from* the mire,
lest I *begin* to sink.**

The Capella repeats the antiphon.

Music: Dominican Chant

The second pair of candles is extinguished. All sit.

LAMENTATION

Incipit lamentation
Jeremiae Prophetae.

- ℟. Quomodo sedet sola civitas
plena populo! Facta est quasi vidua
domina gentium; princeps
provinciarum facta est sub tributo.
2. Plorans ploravit in nocte,
et lacrimae ejus in maxillis ejus:
non est qui consoletur eam ex omnibus
caris ejus; omnes amici ejus spreverunt
eam, et facti sunt ei inimici.
- λ. Migravit Judas propter afflictionem,
et multitudinem servitutis; habitavit
inter gentes, nec invenit requiem:
omnes persecutores ejus apprehenderunt
eam inter angustias.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, convertere
ad Dominum Deum tuum.

RESPONSORY

In monte Oliveti
oravit ad patrem:
Pater si fieri potest
transeat a me calix iste.
Fiat voluntas tua.

The cantor chants:

*The beginning of the lamentation
of the Prophet Jeremiah.*

- ℟. *How solitary sits the city, once
filled with people. She is now like a widow,
who was great among the nations; the chief
of the provinces has now become a tributary.*
2. *She weeps incessantly in the night,
her cheeks damp with tears.
She has no one to comfort her from all
her lovers; all her friends have all betrayed
her, and become her enemies.*
- λ. *Judah has gone into exile, after
oppression and harsh labor; she dwells
among the nations, yet finds no rest.
All her persecutors have overtaken
her in her distress.*

*Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return
to the Lord your God.*

Words: Lamentations 1:1–3

Music: Dominican Chant

The Capella sings:

*On the Mount of Olives
he prayed to the Father:
Father, if it be possible,
let this cup pass from me.
Your will be done.*

Words: First Tenebrae responsory for Holy Thursday

Music: Anton Bruckner

The third pair of candles is extinguished.

SECOND NOCTURN

PSALM 70

All stand

The Capella sings the antiphon and the words in normal typeface; all sing the text in bold.

Avertantur retrorsum et erubescant,
qui cogitant mihi mala.

*Let them turn back and be ashamed,
those who think evil of me.*



O God, come to my assistance;
O Lord, make *haste* to help me!

O let there be rejoicing *and* gladness
for *all* who seek you.

**Let there be shame and *confusion*
on those who *seek* my life.**

**Let them say forever, “God *is* great,”
who love your *saving* help.**

O let them be turned back in *confusion*,
who delight *in* my harm;

As for me, who am wretched *and* poor,
hasten to *me*, O God.

**Let them turn because of *their* shame
who jeer at *me* and mock.**

**You are my rescuer, *my* help;
O Lord, do *not* delay.**

The Capella repeats the antiphon.

Music: Dominican Chant

The fourth pair of candles is extinguished. All sit.

LAMENTATION

The cantor chants:

7. Viae Sion lugent, eo quod non sint qui veniant ad solemnitatem: omnes portae ejus destructae, sacerdotes ejus gementes; virgines ejus squalidae, et ipsa oppressa amaritudine.

7. Facti sunt hostes ejus in capite; inimici ejus locupletati sunt: quia Dominus locutus est super eam propter multitudinem iniquitatum ejus. Parvuli ejus ducti sunt in captivitatem ante faciem tribulantis.

7. Et egressus est a filia Sion omnis decor ejus; facti sunt principes ejus velut arietes non invenientes pascua, et abierunt absque fortitudine ante faciem subsequentis.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.

7. *The roads to Zion mourn, empty of pilgrims to her feasts. All her gateways are desolate, her priests groan, her young women grieve; her lot is bitter.*

7. *Her foes have come out on top, her enemies are secure; because the LORD has afflicted her for her many rebellions. Her children have gone away, captive before the foe.*

7. *From daughter Zion has gone all her glory: her princes have become like rams that find no pasture. They have gone off exhausted before their pursuers.*

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord your God.

Words: Lamentations 1:4–6

Music: Dominican Chant

RESPONSORY

The Capella sings:

Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem: sustinete hic et vigilate mecum.

Nunc videbitis turbam quae circumdabit me. Vos fugam capietis, et ego vadam immolari pro vobis.

¶. Ecce appropinquat hora, et Filius hominis tradetur in manus peccatorum.

My soul is sorrowful even unto death.

Stay here and watch with me.

Now you shall see the mob that will surround me. You shall take flight, and I shall be sacrificed for you.

¶. *Behold, the hour is at hand, when the Son of Man will be handed over to sinners.*

Words: Second Tenebrae responsory for Holy Thursday

Music: Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina

The fifth pair of candles is extinguished.

THIRD NOCTURN

PSALM 64

All stand

The Capella sings the antiphon and the words in normal typeface; all sing the text in bold.

Deus meus, eripe me de manu peccatoris.

My God, deliver me from the hand of the sinner.



Hear, O God, the voice of *my* complaint;
guard my life from the dread *of* the foe.

**From the assembly of
the *wicked*, hide me,
from the throng of
those *who* do evil.**

They sharpen their *tongues* like swords.
They aim bitter *words* like arrows,

**They shoot in secret *at* the blameless,
shooting suddenly and *fearlessly*.**

Holding firm in their *evil* course,
they conspire to lay *secret* snares.

**They are saying, “*Who* will see us?
Who can search *out* our crimes?”**

They have hatched their *wicked* plots,
and brought their
plots *to* perfection.

**God will shoot them *with* his arrow,
and deal them *sudden* wounds.**

Their own tongue will bring *them* to ruin;
all who see them
will *shake* their heads.

**Then will all *be* afraid;
they will tell what *God* has done.**

They will ponder his deeds.
The just one will rejoice *in* the Lord;

**And fly to *him* for refuge.
All upright hearts *will* rejoice.**

The Capella repeats the antiphon.

Music: Dominican Chant

The sixth pair of candles is extinguished. All sit.

READING

Commentary on Psalm 64 of St. John Chrysostom

Though chiefly the Lord's Passion is noticed in this Psalm, neither could the Martyrs have been strong, unless they had beheld Him, that first suffered; nor such things would they have endured in suffering, as He did, unless they had hoped for such things in the Resurrection as He had showed of Himself: but your Holiness knows that our Head is our Lord Jesus Christ, and that all that cleave unto Him are the members of Him the Head And let no one say, that nowadays in tribulation of passions we are not. For always you have heard this fact, how in those times the whole Church together, as it were, was smitten against, but now through individuals she is tried. Bound indeed is the devil, that he may not do as much as he could, that he may not do as much as he would: nevertheless, he is permitted to tempt as much as is expedient to men advancing. It is not expedient for us to be without temptations: nor should we beseech God that we be not tempted, but that we be not led into temptation.

RESPONSORY

The Capella sings:

Vinea mea electa,
ego te plantavi:
quomodo conversa es
in amaritudinem,
ut me crucifigeres et
Barrabam dimitteres.

*O vineyard, my chosen one,
I planted you.
How is your sweetness
turned into bitterness,
to crucify me and
set Barabbas free in my place?*

Sepivi te, et lapides elegi ex te,
et aedificavi turrim.

*I protected you and took the hard stones away,
and built a tower in your defense.*

Words: Third Tenebrae responsory for Good Friday

Music: Francis Poulenc

The seventh pair of candles are extinguished.

TENEBRAE

Two novice brothers sing from the steps of the altar:

Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy.

The Novitiate Choir responds:

Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy.

Two brothers sing from the steps of the altar:

Kyrie eleison.

Lord, have mercy.

Two brothers sing from the middle of the choir:

Domine, miserere.

Lord, have mercy.

The Novitiate Choir responds:

Christus Dominus factus est
oboediens usque ad mortem.

*Christ the Lord became
obedient, even unto death.*

Two brothers sing from the steps of the altar:

Qui passurus advenisti propter nos.

You who came to suffer for us.

The Novitiate Choir responds:

Christe eleison.

Christ, have mercy.

Two brothers sing from the steps of the altar:

Qui, expansis in cruce manibus,
traxisti omnia ad te saecula.

*Who, with hands outstretched on the cross,
have drawn all ages to yourself.*

The Novitiate Choir responds:

Christe eleison.

Christ, have mercy.

Two brothers sing from the steps of the altar:

Qui propheticè prompsisti:
ero mos tua, o mors!

*Who prophetically promised:
I will be your death, O death!*

The Novitiate Choir responds:

Christe eleison.

Christ, have mercy.

Two brothers sing from the middle of the choir:

Domine, miserere.

Lord, have mercy.

The Novitiate Choir responds:

Christus Dominus factus est
oboediens usque ad mortem.

*Christ the Lord became
obedient, even unto death.*

Two brothers sing from the steps of the altar:

Mortem autem crucis!

Even to the death on the cross!

Music: Dominican Chant

Immediately all kneel and the novices prostrate themselves.

After a period of silence, the final candle is removed, and all sit.

PSALM 51

The Capella sings from the organ loft:

Miserere mei, Deus:
secundum magnam misericordiam tuam.

*Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your merciful love.*

The Novitiate Choir sings from the sanctuary:

Et secundum multitudinem miserationum
tuarum, dele iniquitatem meam.

*According to your great compassion,
blot out my transgressions.*

The quartet sings from the Altar of Our Lady:

Amplius lava me ab iniquitate mea:
et a peccato meo munda me.

*Wash me from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.*

The Novitiate Choir sings:

Quoniam iniquitatem meam ego cognosco:
et peccatum meum contra me est semper.

*My transgressions, truly I know them;
my sin is always before me.*

The Capella sings:

Tibi soli peccavi,
et malum coram te feci:
ut justificeris in sermonibus tuis,
et vincas cum judicaris.

*Against you, you alone, have I sinned;
what is evil in your sight I have done.
So you are just in your sentence,
without reproach in your judgment.*

The quartet sings:

Ecce enim in iniquitatibus conceptus sum:
et in peccatis concepit me mater mea.

*Behold, in guilt I was born,
a sinner when my mother conceived me.*

The Novitiate Choir sings:

Asperges me hyssopo, et mundabor:
lavabis me, et super nivem dealbabor.

*Cleanse me with hyssop, and I shall be pure;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

The Capella sings:

Auditui meo dabis gaudium et laetitiam:
et exsultabunt ossa humiliata.

*Let me hear rejoicing and gladness,
that the bones you have crushed may exult.*

The Novitiate Choir sings:

Averte faciem tuam a peccatis meis:
et omnes iniquitates meas dele.

*Turn away your face from my sins,
and blot out all my guilt.*

The quartet sings:

Cor mundum crea in me, Deus:
et spiritum rectum innova in visceribus meis.

*Create a pure heart for me, O God;
renew a steadfast spirit within me.*

The Novitiate Choir sings:

Ne proicias me a facie tua:
et spiritum sanctum tuum ne auferas a me.

*Do not cast me away from your presence;
take not your holy spirit from me.*

The Capella sings:

Redde mihi laetitiam salutaris tui:
et spiritu principali confirma me.

*Restore in me the joy of your salvation;
sustain in me a willing spirit.*

The Novitiate Choir sings:

Docebo iniquos vias tuas:
et impii ad te convertentur.

*I will teach transgressors your ways,
that sinners may return to you.*

The quartet sings:

Libera me de sanguinibus, Deus,
Deus salutis meae:
et exsultabit lingua mea justitiam tuam.

*Rescue me from bloodshed, O God,
O God of my salvation,
and then my tongue shall ring out your justice.*

The Novitiate Choir sings:

Domine, labia mea aperies:
et os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam.

*O Lord, open my lips
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.*

The Capella sings:

Quoniam si voluisses sacrificium, dedissem
utique: holocaustis non delectaberis.

*For in sacrifice you take now delight;
burnt offering from me would not please you.*

The Novitiate Choir sings:

Sacrificium Deo spiritus contribulatus:
cor contritum, et humiliatum,
Deus, non despicias.

*My sacrifice to God is a broken spirit:
a broken and humbled heart,
you will not spurn, O God.*

The quartet sings:

Benigne fac, Domine, in bona voluntate tua
Sion: ut aedificentur muri Jerusalem.

*In your good pleasure, Lord, show favor to
Zion; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.*

The Capella sings:

Tunc acceptabis sacrificium justitiae,
oblationes, et holocausta.

*Then you will accept a just sacrifice,
oblations, and holocausts.*

The Capella and quartet sing together:

Tunc imponent super altare tuum vitulos.

Then you will be offered young bulls on your altar.

Music: Gregorio Allegri

COLLECT

All stand

Almighty and eternal God, whose Only-Begotten Son descended to the depths of the earth, from whence he also ascended gloriously, grant, according to your will, that your faithful, being buried with him in baptism, and gloriously rising, may be brought to eternal life, who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Amen.

All depart in silence.

HOLY WEEK

Holy Thursday at 7 P.M.

Mass of the Lord's Supper with the Parish Choir

Good Friday at 3 P.M.

Choral service and chanted Passion sung by the Novitiate Choir and Capella

Good Friday at 7 P.M.

Outdoor stations of the cross and the Entombment of Christ

Holy Saturday at 9 P.M.

Easter Vigil with the Parish Choir

Easter Sunday at 8 A.M.

Sung mass with cantor and organ

Easter Sunday at 10 A.M. and 12 P.M.

Choral mass sung by the Capella

Easter Sunday at 6 P.M.

Sung mass with the ensemble Laudare

