

## TENEBRAE SERVICE OF SHADOWS

This is to be done on Easter Thursday evening. If you can, include the communion elements (bread and wine or grape juice) and include it in your service. Also, if you can, have 13 candles – 1 bigger to represent Christ, plus matches. If you can begin with communion, do so. Remember, the bread and the grape juice are just symbols of Jesus's body and blood. If you do not have these in your home, substitute with whatever you think will be appropriate.

Tenebrae means shadows – and the purpose of this service is to recreate the darkness surrounding Christ's crucifixion – particularly the night he was arrested. If you can, light a candle for each reading and have no other lights on. Once each reading is read, blow out the candle. End your service in darkness and silence and then after some contemplation, go to bed. In this way you will experience the growing shadows of sin and this world's darkness gathering around the cross.

### **Communion**

**VOICE 1:** *Take bread, saying*

The last time he sat at table with his disciples, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." Let us share the bread with one another with the words, "The body of Christ broken for you".

*Partake. After eating, continue, pouring the grape juice into a cup, saying*

Thank you, Lord, that after eating together, you took a cup and gave it to your friends, saying, "Drink from this all of you, this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

*Pour the grape juice in one another's cups at your table with the words:* "The cup of the covenant in Christ's blood."

*All lift your cup with the words, "The cup of salvation" and partake.*

**Readings** (blowing out a candle after each one and pausing for contemplation before the next reading is read)

### **READING 1 MATTHEW 26:31-35**

Then Jesus said to them, "You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee." Peter said to him, "Though they all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you." Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." Peter said to him, "Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!" And all the disciples said the same.

*Extinguish 1<sup>st</sup> candle. Silence.*

## **READING 2 MATTHEW 26:36-46**

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and he began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me." And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want." Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again he went away for the second time and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand."

*Extinguish 2<sup>nd</sup> candle. Silence.*

## **READING 3 MATTHEW 26:47-56**

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him." At once he came up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him. Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you have come to do." Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?" At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

*Extinguish 3<sup>rd</sup> candle. Silence.*

## **READING 4: MATTHEW 26:57-68**

Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, in whose house the scribes and the elders had gathered. But Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest; and going inside, he sat with the guards in order to see how this would end. Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to

build it in three days.” The high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?” But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, “I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.” Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, From now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.” Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?” They answered, “He deserves death.” Then they spat in his face and struck him; and some slapped him, saying, “Prophecy to us, you Messiah! Who is it that struck you?”

*Extinguish 4<sup>th</sup> candle. Silence.*

#### **READING 5 MATTHEW 26:69-75**

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Galilean.” But he denied it before all of them, saying, “I do not know what you are talking about.” When he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.” Again he denied it with an oath, “I do not know the man.” After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you.” Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, “I do not know the man!” At that moment the cock crowed. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: “Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.

*Extinguish 5<sup>th</sup> candle. Silence.*

#### **READING 6: MATTHEW 27:1-2**

When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus in order to bring about his death. They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

*Extinguish 6<sup>th</sup> candle. Silence.*

#### **READING 7: MATTHEW 27:3-10**

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. But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, “It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money.” After conferring together, they used them to buy the potter’s field as a place to bury foreigners. For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah, “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one on whom a price had been set, on whom some of the people of Israel had set a price, and they gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord commanded me.”

*Extinguish 7<sup>th</sup> candle. Silence.*

**READING 8: MATTHEW 27:11-14**

Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You say so." But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?" But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

*Extinguish 8<sup>th</sup> candle. Silence.*

**READING 9: MATTHEW 27:15-26**

Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him." Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." Pilate said to them, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" All of them said, "Let him be crucified!" Then he asked, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!" So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." Then the people as a whole answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

*Extinguish 9<sup>th</sup> candle. Silence.*

**READING 10: MATTHEW 27:27-31**

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

*Extinguish 10<sup>th</sup> candle. Silence.*

**READING 11: MATTHEW 27:32-37**

As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; then they sat down there and kept watch

over him. Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

*Extinguish 11<sup>th</sup> candle. Silence.*

**VOICE 2: ISAIAH 53:1-12**

Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account. Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the LORD shall prosper. Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

**READING 12: MATTHEW 27:38-46**

Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, 'I am God's Son.'" The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

From the time of noon onwards, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

*Extinguish 12<sup>th</sup> candle. Silence*

**VOICE 3: PSALM 22:1-30**

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from saving me,  
and from the words of my distress?  
O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer;  
by night as well, but I find no rest.  
Yet you are the Holy One,  
enthroned upon the praises of Israel.  
Our ancestors put their trust in you;  
they trusted, and you delivered them.  
They cried out to you and were delivered;  
they trusted in you and were not put to shame.  
But as for me, I am a worm and not a man,  
scorned by all and despised by the people.  
All who see me laugh me to scorn;  
they curl their lips and wag their heads, saying,  
“He trusted in the LORD; let the LORD deliver him;  
let God rescue him, if God delights in him.”  
Yet you are the one who took me out of the womb,  
and kept me safe upon my mother’s breast.  
I have been entrusted to you ever since I was born;  
you were my God when I was still in my mother’s womb.  
Be not far from me, for trouble is near,  
and there is none to help.  
Many young bulls encircle me;  
strong bulls of Bashan surround me.  
They open wide their jaws at me,  
like a ravening and a roaring lion.  
I am poured out like water;  
all my bones are out of joint;  
my heart within my breast is melting wax.  
My mouth is dried out like a pot-sherd;  
my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;  
and you have laid me in the dust of the grave.  
Packs of dogs close me in,  
and gangs of evildoers circle around me;  
they pierce my hands and my feet;  
I can count all my bones.  
They stare and gloat over me;  
they divide my garments among them;  
they cast lots for my clothing.  
Be not far away, O LORD;  
you are my strength; hasten to help me.  
Save me from the sword,  
my life from the power of the dog.

Save me from the lion's mouth,  
my wretched body from the horns of wild bulls.  
I will declare your name to the community;  
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.  
Praise the LORD, you that are God-fearing;  
stand in awe of the LORD, O offspring of Israel;  
all you of Jacob's line, give glory.  
For the LORD does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty;  
neither is the LORD's face hidden from them;  
but when they cry out, the LORD hears them.  
My praise is of God in the great assembly;  
I will perform my vows in the presence of those who  
worship the LORD.  
The poor shall eat and be satisfied,  
and those who seek the LORD shall give praise:  
"May your heart live forever!"  
All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to God,  
and all the families of the nations shall bow before the LORD.  
For sovereignty belongs to the LORD,  
who rules over the nations.  
To the LORD alone all who sleep in the earth bow down in worship;  
all who go down to the dust fall before the LORD.  
My soul shall live for God;  
my descendants shall serve the LORD;  
they shall be known as the LORD's forever.

**READING 13: MATTHEW 27:47-50**

When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last.

*Blow out Christ candle.*

**VOICE 4 MATTHEW 27:51-54** *(If you can do this reading with as much darkness as possible)*

At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

*Silence. After 10-15 seconds, the Christ candle is relit with the strike of a match.  
Short silence.*

**VOICE 5:** The true light that enlightens everyone came into the world through Christ.

**VOICE 6:** Though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

**VOICE 7:** In him was life, and his life was the light of all.

**VOICE 8:** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it.

*After a time of contemplation, departure in Silence until Friday morning.*

