



TENEBRÆ
OFFICE OF READINGS

Presider:
Cardinal Vincent Nichols
Archbishop of Westminster

HOLY SATURDAY

3 April 2021 10.00am

THE OFFICE OF TENEBRÆ

The service of Tenebræ (meaning 'approaching darkness') dates back to the seventh century. While not part of major ceremonies of the Triduum (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday), the service became widespread and popular, partly on account of its dramatic nature.

When celebrated liturgically, Tenebræ takes part in three nocturns. Each nocturn includes readings from Scriptures – usually the Lamentations of the Prophet Jeremiah – and the recitation of Psalms, or other ancient texts powerfully expressing a sense of desolation and impending darkness.

At the beginning of Tenebræ, at least seven candles are alight, to be extinguished one by one after each nocturn. Originally, the Passion according to John is read at this point. All the candles, save one central candle – representing Christ – are by now extinguished.

At the conclusion of the service, the remaining candle is removed from the church and a loud noise ('strepitus') is heard, sometimes accompanied by confused shouting, to mark the betrayal of Christ and the quenching of his light. In most churches, the choir would bang breviaries upon the bench tops: in the Sistine Chapel, the Cardinals added to the clamour by stamping their feet.

The service ends when the Christ candle is returned, one light against all the darkness. The choir and congregation depart in silence.

ORDER OF SERVICE

All stand.

INTRODUCTION TO THE OFFICE

Cardinal:

○ God, come to our aid.

All:

○ **Lord, make haste to help us.**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

OFFICE HYMN

Christe, cælórum Dómine,
mundi salvátor máxime,
qui crucis omnes múnere
mortis solvísti légibus,

Te nunc orántes póscimus,
tua consérves múnera,
quæ sacra per mystéria
cunctis donásti géntibus.

Tu agnus mitis, ínnocens
oblátus terræ víctima,
sanctórum vestes ómnium
tuo lavásti sánguine.

Quos redemísti prétio
tui sacráti córporis,
cælo resúrgens ádvehis
ubi te laudant pérpetim.

Quorum nos addas número,
te deprecámur, Dómine,
qui Patri nos ex ómnibus
fecísti regnum pópulis. Amen.

*O Christ, the Lord of heaven,
great Saviour of the world,
by dying on the Cross you freed us
from the bonds of death,*

*We come before you praying
may you preserve those gifts
which through the sacred mysteries
you give to all mankind.*

*The Lamb so meek and innocent
was sacrificed for us,
you cleansed the robes of all the saints
in your most precious blood.*

*You have redeemed them at the price
of your most sacred body;
O rise once more, lead them to heaven
to praise you evermore.*

*We pray you, Lord, that we may be
united with them there;
from all the nations you make us
one kingdom for our God. Amen.*

PSALMODY

ANTIPHON I

Now I will lie down in peace * **and sleep comes at once.**

PSALM 4

The psalms will be said antiphonally, beginning with the Cardinal. Please join in with the Chaplains seated on the same side of the Cathedral as you.

1. When I call, answer me, O God of justice;
from anguish you released me, have mercy and hear me!

All sit.

2. **O men, how long will your hearts be closed,
will you love what is futile and seek what is false?**
3. It is the Lord who grants favour to those whom he loves;
the Lord hears me whenever I call him.
4. **Fear him; do not sin,
ponder on your bed and be still.
Make justice your sacrifice and trust in the Lord.**
5. 'What can bring us happiness?' many say.
Let the light of your face shine on us, O Lord.
6. **You have put into my heart a greater joy
than they have from abundance of corn and new wine.**
7. I will lie down in peace and sleep comes at once
for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.
8. **Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,**
9. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

ANTIPHON

Now I will lie down in peace and sleep comes at once.

ANTIPHON 2

My body * shall rest in hope.

PSALM 15

1. Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you.
I say to the Lord: 'You are my God.
My happiness lies in you alone.'
2. **He has put into my heart a marvellous love
for the faithful ones who dwell in his land.**
3. Those who choose other gods increase their sorrows.
Never will I offer their offerings of blood.
Never will I take their name upon my lips.
4. **O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup;
it is you yourself who are my prize.**
5. The lot marked out for me is my delight:
welcome indeed the heritage that falls to me!
6. **I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel,
who even at night directs my heart.**
7. I keep the Lord ever in my sight:
since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm.
8. **And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad;
even my body shall rest in safety.**
9. For you will not leave my soul among the dead,
nor let your beloved know decay.
10. **You will show me the path of life,
the fulness of joy in your presence,
at your right hand happiness for ever.**
11. Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,
12. **As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

ANTIPHON

My body shall rest in hope.

ANTIPHON 3

Grow higher ancient doors * and let the king of glory enter.

PSALM 23

1. The Lord's is the earth and its fulness,
the world and all its peoples.
2. It is he who set it on the seas;
on the waters he made it firm.
3. **Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord?
Who shall stand in his holy place?**
4. The man with clean hands and pure heart,
who desires not worthless things,
who has not sworn so as to deceive his neighbour.
5. **He shall receive blessings from the Lord
and reward from the God who saves him.**
6. Such are the men who seek him,
seek the face of the God of Jacob.
7. **O gates, lift high your heads;
grow higher ancient doors.
Let him enter, the king of glory!**
8. Who is the king of glory?
The Lord, the mighty, the valiant,
the Lord, the valiant in war.
9. **O gates, lift high your heads;
grow higher, ancient doors.
Let him enter, the king of glory!**
10. Who is he, the king of glory?
He, the Lord of armies,
he is the king of glory.
11. **Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,**
12. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

ANTIPHON

Grow higher ancient doors and let the king of glory enter.

℣ Uphold my cause and defend me.

℟ **By your promise give me life.**

FIRST READING

Hebrews 4: 1-13

We must do everything we can to reach God's place of rest.

The Choir sings the first of three Tenebræ Responsories

Recéssit pastor noster, fons aquæ vivæ, ad cuius tránsitum sol obscurátus est: Nam et ille captus est, qui captívum tenébat primum hóminem: hódie portas mortis et seras páriter Salvátor noster disrúpit. Destrúxit quidem claustra inférni, et subvértit poténtias diáboli. Nam et ille captus est, qui captívum tenébat primum hóminem: hódie portas mortis et seras páriter Salvátor noster disrúpit.

Our shepherd, the source of living water, has departed. At his passing the sun was darkened, for he who held the first man captive is now taken captive himself. Today our Saviour has shattered the bars and burst the gates of death. He has torn down the barricades of hell and overthrown the power of Satan. For he who held the first man captive is now taken captive himself. Today our Saviour has shattered the bars and burst the gates of death.

SECOND READING

Jeremiah 5: 1-11

The reading is chanted in Latin; a translation reads:

Lord, remember what has happened to us; look on us and see our degradation. Our inheritance has passed to aliens, our homes to barbarians. We are orphans, we are fatherless; our mothers are like widows. We drink from our water - at a price; we have to pay for what is our own firewood. The yoke is on our necks; we are persecuted; we are worked to death; there is no relief for us. We hold out our hands to Egypt, or to Assyria, just to get enough bread. Our fathers have sinned; they are no more, and we ourselves bear the weight of their crimes. Slaves rule us; no one rescues us from them. At peril of our lives we earn our bread, by risking the sword of the desert. Our skin is as hot as the oven, such is the fever of famine. They have humbled the women of Sion, the virgins in the towns of Judah. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, be converted to the Lord, your God.

The Choir sings the second Responsory:

O vos omnes, qui transitis per viam, attendite, et videte si est dolor similis sicut dolor meus. Attendite universi populi, et videte dolorem meum. Si est dolor similis sicut dolor meus.

All you who pass by, attend and see if there be sorrow like my sorrow. Behold, all you people, and see my sorrow. If there be sorrow like my sorrow.

THIRD READING

from an ancient homily for Holy Saturday

The Lord's descent into hell.

The Choir sings the third Responsory:

Sepulto Domino, signatum est monumentum, volventes lapidem ad ostium monumenti: Ponentes milites, qui custodirent illum. Accedentes principes sacerdotum ad Pilatum, petierunt illum. Ponentes milites, qui custodirent illum.

When the Lord was buried, they sealed up the tomb, rolling a stone before the entrance to the sepulchre, placing soldiers to guard it. The chief priests went to Pilate and petitioned him, placing soldiers to guard it.

HOMILY

All kneel.

CHRISTUS FACTUS EST

Christus factus est pro nobis obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis. Propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum, et dedit illi nomen, quod est super omne nomen.

Christ became obedient for us unto death, even the death of the cross. But God raised him high, and gave him the name which is above all other names.

Plainsong

STREPITUS

All stand.

COLLECT

Almighty, ever-living God,
whose only-begotten Son descended to the realm of the dead,
and rose from there to glory,
grant that your faithful people,
who were buried with him in baptism,
may, by his resurrection, obtain eternal life.
We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

May almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Clergy leave in silence.

