

TENEBRAE SERVICE
Thursday, March 20, 2008

"yea though I walk through the valley of the Shadow of Death..."

PRELUDE

David Blazer

CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Kathleen C. Rolenz

We are gathered here to remember the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth,
who whose life we celebrate and whose death we mourn.
His death reminds us of the deaths of many innocents,
 who have stood fast against the forces of oppression,
 of hatred, and of evil.
May the story of his commitment to the truth
 inspire in us to speak the truth in love
 to dwell together in peace
 and to help one another.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERVICE

Kathleen Rolenz

Tenebrae is the Latin word for Darkness, and commemorates the last days of the life of Jesus of Nazarus. The traditional Tenebrae service extinguishes all the candles save one—just as Jesus friends and disciples all abandoned him. Why save one—then, for he was left to die alone, on a cross, crucified as a common criminal.

The one light represents the life that cannot be overcome by darkness—the light that burns inside each of us in the form of hope—the foolish hope that one day human beings can care more for one another and the gift of this good earth than for its destruction. It is carried out of the sanctuary—and for a time—we sit together in darkness; but the light returns, as it will—as it must—and as it always does.

The readings are selected from a variety of ancient and modern sources—ancient sources are from the New Testament that depict the story of Jesus's betrayal, trial, execution and death from the four Gospels. The modern sources this year are all from poets—for it is poetry where we find humanity's deepest expression of despair and hope, intertwined.

Tenebrae is a somber service, yet it does not linger in hopelessness. We cannot know the full glory of Easter—the meaning of resurrection—until we sit in the darkness of the tomb—wherever it is—whether it is by the hospital bed, the graveyard or the battlefield. Yet we will know light, and the darkness shall not overcome it.

After the light is brought back, we partake of communion together. Ours is an open table—no one wishing to partake of communion will be turned away. We use grape juice instead of wine, and this small basket has a few pieces of gluten-free bread for those who could take partake fully otherwise.

May we hear now this ancient story—told countless times throughout the ages, and from it—find truth and meaning.

AGONY OF THE SPIRIT

Luke 22: 39-46

Tom Selby

39] Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. [40] On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." [41] He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, [42] "Father, if you

are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." [43] An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. [44] And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. [45] When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. [46] "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation."

First candle is extinguished

Hymn #101 Abide with Me

Modern Source Sweet Darkness—David Whyte Tom Selby
When your eyes are tired the world is tired also.
When your vision has gone no part of the world can find you.

Time to go into the dark where the night has eyes to recognize its own
There you can be sure you are not beyond love.

The dark will be your womb tonight.
The night will give you a horizon further than you can see.

You must learn one thing.
The world was made to be free in.

give up all other worlds except the one to which you belong.

Sometimes it takes darkness and the sweet confinement of your aloneness to learn
anything or anyone that does not bring you alive
is too small for you.

Second Candle is Extinguished

SHADOW OF ARREST *John 18: 1-8* *Kathleen Rolenz*

1 When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. 2 And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples. 3 Then Judas, having received a detachment *of troops*, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. 4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?" 5 They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth."

Jesus said to them, "I am *He*." And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them.
6 Now when He said to them, "I am *He*," they drew back and fell to the ground. 7 Then He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." 8 Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am *He*. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,"

Third Candle is Extinguished

Hymn #265 *O Sacred Head Now Wounded*

Modern Testimony *The Well of Grief*—David Whyte Kathleen Rolenz

Those who will not slip beneath the still surface on the well of grief
turning downward through its black water
to the place we cannot breath
will never know the source from which we drink, the secret water, cold and clear,
nor find in the darkness glimmering
the small round coins
thrown by those who wished for something else.

Fourth Candle is Extinguished

SHADOW OF DENIAL *Matthew 26: 69-75; 27: 1-5* Wayne Arnason

69 Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, "You also were with Jesus of Galilee." 70 But he denied it before *them* all, saying, "I do not know what you are saying." 71 And when he had gone out to the gateway, another *girl* saw him and said to those *who were* there, "This *fellow* also was with Jesus of Nazareth." 72 But again he denied with an oath, "I do not know the Man!" 73 And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are *one* of them, for your speech betrays you." 74 Then he began to curse and swear, *saying*, "I do not know the Man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. 75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly.

Fifth Candle is Extinguished

Silence for a Time

Modern Testimony Dust—Dorianne Laux Wayne Arnason

Someone spoke to me last night, told me the truth. Just a few words,

but I recognized it.

I knew I should make myself get up, write it down, but it was late,
and I was exhausted from working all day in the garden, moving rocks.

Now, I remember only the flavor—not like food, sweet or sharp.

More like a fine power, like dust.

And I wasn't elated or frightened,

but simply rapt, aware.

That's how it is sometimes—

God comes to your window,

all bright light and black wings,

and you're just too tired to open it.

Sixth Candle is Extinguished

SHADOW OF ACCUSATION *Mark 15: 12-20*

Neal Anderson

12 Pilate answered and said to them again, "What then do you want me to do *with Him* whom you call the King of the Jews?"

13 So they cried out again, "Crucify Him!"

14 Then Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has He done?"

But they cried out all the more, "Crucify Him!"

15 So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged *Him*, to be crucified.

Seventh Candle is Extinguished

Musical Meditation

Modern Testimony *Ibe Crucifixion is recorded—only--* Neal Anderson

One Crucifixion is recorded -- only --

How many be

Is not affirmed of Mathematics --

Or History --

One Calvary -- exhibited to Stranger --

As many be

As persons -- or Peninsulas --

Gethsemane --

Is but a Province -- in the Being's Centre --
Judea --
For Journey -- or Crusade's Achieving --
Too near --

Our Lord -- indeed -- made Compound Witness --
And yet --
There's newer -- nearer Crucifixion
Than That --

Eight Candle is Extinguished

SHADOW OF MOCKERY

Matthew 27: 27-31

David Frazier

27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. 28 And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. 29 When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put *it* on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" 30 Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. 31 And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His *own* clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.

Ninth Candle is Extinguished

SHADOW OF CRUCIFIXION

Matthew 27: 32-44

Tom Selby

32 Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross. 33 And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, 34 they gave Him sour^[a] wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted *it*, He would not drink. 35 Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots,^[b] that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet:

" They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots. "^[c]

36 Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there. 37 And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. 38 Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left. 39 And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads 40 and saying, "You who destroy the temple and build *it* in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross." 41 Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders,^[d] said,

42 "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel,^[e] let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him.^[f] 43 He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'" 44 Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing.

Tenth Candle is Extinguished

Modern Testimony *When Death Comes—Mary Oliver*

Wayne Arnason

When death comes
like the hungry bear in autumn;
when death comes and takes all the bright coins from his purse

to buy me, and snaps the purse shut;
when death comes
like the measles-pox;

when death comes
like an iceberg between the shoulder blades,

I want to step through the door full of curiosity, wondering:
what is it going to be like, that cottage of darkness?

And therefore I look upon everything
as a brotherhood and a sisterhood,
and I look upon time as no more than an idea,
and I consider eternity as another possibility,

and I think of each life as a flower, as common
as a field daisy, and as singular,

and each name a comfortable music in the mouth
tending as all music does, toward silence,

and each body a lion of courage, and something
precious to the earth.

When it's over, I want to say: all my life
I was a bride married to amazement.
I was the bridegroom, taking the world into my arms.

When it is over, I don't want to wonder
if I have made of my life something particular, and real.
I don't want to find myself sighing and frightened,
or full of argument.

I don't want to end up simply having visited this world.

Eleventh Candle is Extinguished

SHADOW OF DEATH

Luke 23: 44-49

Neal Anderson

44 Now it was^[a] about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. 45 Then the sun was darkened,^[b] and the veil of the temple was torn in two. 46 And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, *'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'*"^[c] Having said this, He breathed His last. 47 So when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous Man!" 48 And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned. 49 But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

Twelfth Candle is Extinguished

Solo *Were You There* –African American Spiritual

The last Candle is taken out of the sanctuary

THE DARKNESS IS COMPLETE

PRAYER

Rev. Kathleen C. Rolenz

The Candle Returns to the Sanctuary

RETURN OF THE LIGHT *Life* by Juan Ramon Jimenez Kathleen Rolenz

What I used to regard as a glory shut in my face, was a door, opening toward this clarity:
Country without a name:
Nothing can destroy it, this road of doors, opening, one after another,
always toward reality: Life without calculation!

MUSICAL OFFERING

SHARING COMMUNION *Ours is an open table. Bread & juice are served. Gluten free bread is available in small basket held by Rev. Rolenz*

Words of Institution

On the night before he was betrayed, Jesus was at table with his friends & disciples. He took a piece of bread, blessed it, broke it, and said—take and eat. Do this in remembrance of me. And in the same way he took the cup and said "this cup represents a new covenant." Take, drink and eat time you drink, do this in remembrance of me."

We join together now—eating the bread of community; the cup of commitment. All are welcome to come forward now to share in this ritual meal.

HYMN #406 *Let us Break Bread Together*

Let us break bread together on our knees
Let us break bread together on our knees
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,
Oh, Lord, have mercy on me.

Let us drink wine together on our knees
Let us drink wine together on our knees
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,
Oh, Lord, have mercy on me.

Let us praise God together on our knees
Let us praise God together on our knees.
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,
Oh, Lord, have mercy on me.

UNISON PRAYER *Psalm 23—New King James Version*

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want
He makes me lie down in green pastures
He leads me beside still waters—He restores my soul.
Yea, tho I walk through the valley of the shadow of death
I shall fear no evil,
For thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff—they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of enemies
Thou annointest my head with oil, my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

BENEDICTION & POSTLUDE

**We extinguish this chalice-
but not the light of truth,
nor the fire of commitment
nor the warmth of community;
these we shall take with us, until we meet again.
Amen, and go in peace.**

*Traditionally, participants leave the sanctuary in silence
Thank you for coming.
We look forward to seeing you on Easter Morning.*