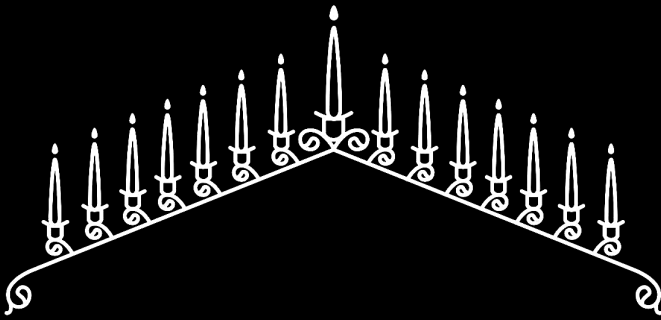


TENEBRAE



CHURCH OF THE
BLESSED SACRAMENT

THE BETRAYAL,
THE ABANDONMENT AND
THE AGONY OF CHRIST

WHAT IS TENEBRAE?

The word "Tenebrae" is latin for "shadows." The purpose of the Tenebrae service is to recreate the betrayal, abandonment, and agony of the passion story. It is left unfinished because the story isn't over until Easter Day.

We see the setting of the sun of justice and enter into the darkness of betrayal. It is meant to be a kind of funeral service, a dirge commemorating the death of Jesus. We come together in mourning.

We pray Matins and Lauds from the Divine Office. This extraordinarily moving service consists of Psalms, Canticles, and verses from the Lamentations of Jeremiah chanted on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday.

The service begins with the nave of the church in darkness, except for a candelabrum on a stand in the sanctuary, usually containing fifteen candles arranged in an inverted "v", called a "Tenebræ hearse." As the chanting of Psalm, Canticle or The Lamentations of Jeremiah is finished one of the candles is extinguished until only one, representing the Light of Christ remains. Then this is extinguished, leaving the church in darkness. The ministers and cantor leave the sanctuary, and a loud noise like a thunderclap (representing the earthquake during the Crucifixion) is heard. The people leave in silence.

The symbolism of the "Tenebrae hearse" and its candles is variously explained. One explanation is that the highest candle represents Christ while the other fourteen represent the eleven apostles and the three Marias. In some explanations the candles represent the Apostles and Disciples and the gradual extinction of the 14 candles represents the waning faith of the Apostles and Disciples.

The Tenebrae Service

Chanting

The Office of the Readings is chanted by all.

The Antiphons are chanted by the Cantor.

The first line of the Psalm is chanted by the Cantor or Priest.

The subsequent lines are chanted by the participants.

Each verse/section of the Psalms is chanted antiphonally —

alternating between the groups on either side of the church.

The Lamentations of Jeremiah are chanted by the Priests and/or Cantor.

The Responsory is chanted by the Cantor.

The Canticle of Zacharias is chanted by all.

Stand at the

Office of the Readings

Singing of Hymns

Antiphons

Doxology (and bow) (Glory to...)

Canticle of Zacharias

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