

The Office of Tenebræ

The name Tenebræ (the Latin word for darkness or shadows) has traditionally been given to the ancient monastic night and early morning services (Matins and Lauds) of the last three days of Holy Week, which in medieval times came to be celebrated on the preceding evenings. Apart from the chanting of the Lamentations of Jeremiah, in which each verse is introduced by a letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the most conspicuous feature of the service is the gradual extinguishing of candles and other lights in the church to signify the darkness that overshadowed the earth at Christ's crucifixion. The loud noise, or *strepitus*, at the conclusion of the service suggests the earthquake described in the Passion narratives. The single candle left burning is the symbol and promise of Christ's triumph over death and darkness.

ENTRANCE *PLEASE RISE AS THE BELLS ARE RUNG*

Pange lingua gloriosi
Mode I

Sing, my tongue, the Savior's glory; tell His triumph far and wide;
tell aloud the famous story of His body crucified;
how upon the cross a victim, vanquishing in death, He died.

Thus did Christ to perfect manhood in our mortal flesh attain:
then of His free choice He goeth to a death of bitter pain;
and as a lamb, upon the altar of the cross, for us is slain.

Lo, with gall His thirst He quenches! see the thorns upon His brow!
nails His tender flesh are rending! see His side is opened now!
whence, to cleanse the whole creation, streams of blood and water flow.

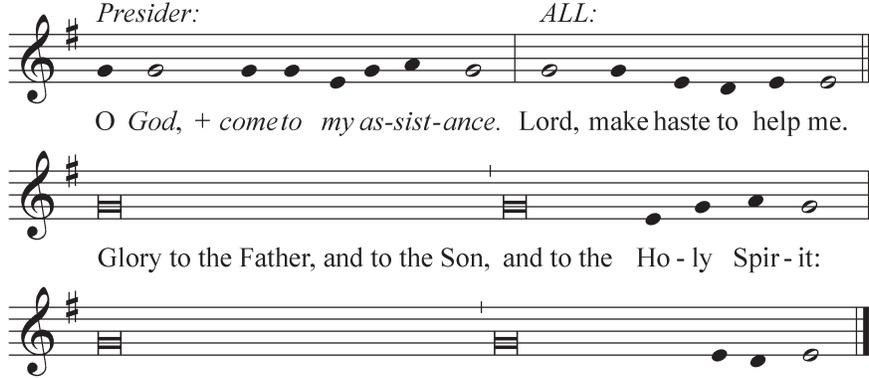
Lofty tree, bend down thy branches, to embrace thy sacred load;
oh, relax the native tension of that all too rigid wood;
gently, gently bear the members of thy dying King and God.

Tree, which solely wast found worthy the world's Victim to sustain.
harbor from the raging tempest! ark, that saved the world again!
Tree, with sacred blood anointed of the Lamb for sinners slain.

Venantius Fortunatus (530–609); translated by Fr. Edward Caswall (1814–1878)

VERSE

Presider: *ALL:*



O God, + come to my as-sist-ance. Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Ho - ly Spir - it:

as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ev - er. A - men.

PSALM 68 *PLEASE BE SEATED*

Salvum me fac
chant

Antiphon Zeal for your house has eaten me up;
the scorn of those who scorn you has fallen upon me.

Response 
In your great love, O Lord, an - swer me.

The cantor repeats the antiphon in Latin.

Psalm Prayer

PSALM 69 *PLEASE BE SEATED*

Deus, in adjutorium
chant

Antiphon Let them draw back and be disgraced who take pleasure in my misfortune.

Response 
O Lord, come to my aid.

The cantor repeats the antiphon in Latin.

Psalm Prayer

PSALM 70 *PLEASE BE SEATED*

In te, Domine speravi
chant

Antiphon Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the ungodly.

Response 
In you, O Lord, I take ref - uge.

The cantor repeats the antiphon in Latin.

Psalm Prayer

LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH *PLEASE BE SEATED*

LESSON 1

Jeremiah 3:22, 27
Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548–1611)

From the Lamentations of Jeremiah the prophet.

HETH. It is because of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed: because his compassion fail not.

TETH. It is good for a man when he has borne the yoke from his youth.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, turn to the LORD your God.

LESSON 2

Jeremiah 4:1-2
Victoria

From the Lamentations of Jeremiah the prophet.

ALEPH. How is the gold become dim, how is the most fine color changed,
the stones of the sanctuary are scattered at the head of every street.

BETH. The renowned sons of Sion, once adorned in fine gold,
how are they considered as pots of clay, the work of the hands of a potter.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the LORD your God.

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