



“TENEBRAE” is the Latin word for “darkness” or “shadows.”

The liturgy is so named because it is intended to recall the time of darkness and the desolation and abandonment endured by Jesus on the final day of his earthly life. In the darkness, there is but one light – the eternal light of Christ. This light reminds us that even in the darkest times, God’s forgiveness and grace *never* cease to be present in our lives; thanks to the gift we remember this evening.

Over the course of this evening’s worship, assistants will gradually strip the altar and pulpit of all worship materials. We will hear Bible readings and sing hymns that draw our attention to the incredible nature of God’s gift to us in Christ. By the end of the service, our sole focus will be the cross and the crown of thorns, symbolizing our Lord’s suffering for our sake.

PRELUDE

(All Gather in Silence)

**Please stand when the Pastor stands*

Opening Prayer:

P: Almighty God...

**C: Look with mercy upon us,
your family for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to
be betrayed
and to be given over to the hands of sinners,
and to suffer death on the cross,
through the same Jesus Christ,
who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen.**

You may be seated

First Reading: Matthew 26:26-36a, 38

P: This is the Passion of our Lord. **C: Thanks be to God.**

SILENCE

The communion materials are removed, symbolizing the end of the Last Supper, and Jesus’ promise that he would not again drink of the wine until he drinks it new with us in the Kingdom of God.

Response.....“Go to Dark Gethsemane” (verses 1-3).....# 347

Second Reading: Matthew 26:55-63a

P: This is the Passion of our Lord. **C: Thanks be to God.**

SILENCE

The parament on the pulpit is removed, symbolizing Jesus’ silence in the face of his accusers.

Response.....“Stay With Me”.....# 348

Third Reading: Mark 14:66-72

P: This is the Passion of our Lord. **C: Thanks be to God.**

SILENCE

The liturgy book, the very book that contains our words of worship and praise, is removed...symbolizing our silence and our betrayal.

Response.....“Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed”.....# 337

Fourth Reading: John 1:9-11 & Luke 23:20-25

P: This is the Passion of our Lord. **C: Thanks be to God.**

SILENCE

The candles are removed, symbolizing our rejection of the one who is called "the true light of the world."

Response....."Ah, Holy Jesus" (verses 1-2).....# 349

Fifth Reading: Matthew 27:27-36

P: This is the Passion of our Lord. **C: Thanks be to God.**

SILENCE

The parament on the altar is removed, symbolizing the soldiers' stripping of Jesus, and their division of his clothes by casting lots.

Response....."Ah, Holy Jesus" (verses 3-5).....# 349

Sixth Reading: Isaiah 52:13 – 53:11

P: This is the Passion of our Lord. **C: Thanks be to God.**

SILENCE

The crown of thorns is placed on the altar, symbolizing the pain and suffering of Jesus. You are invited to pray silently the words of Isaiah 53:5: "...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..."

Response....."O Sacred Head, Now Wounded"# 351

Seventh Reading: Luke 23:39-47

P: This is the Passion of our Lord. **C: Thanks be to God.**

SILENCE

The cross is draped with a shroud, and the lights are dimmed, symbolizing the death of Jesus and the darkness that fell over the earth.

Response....."Were You There"# 353

The remaining sanctuary lights are extinguished, with a focus on the crown.

SILENCE FOR REFLECTION

"Were You There" intentionally ends with a reference to the resurrection, for while it is hidden from us this evening, we still rest in the faith that the tomb will come up empty on Easter morning. For this reason, the "eternal flame" never leaves the sanctuary this evening – reminding us that even in the midst of pain and even death, God's presence never fails us.

**Please stand when the Pastor stands*

Closing Dialogue:

P: Behold, the life-giving cross on which was hung the salvation of the whole world.

C: Come, let us adore him.

P: Behold, the life-giving cross on which the love of God conquers all fear and death.

C: Come, let us worship him.

P: We bless you, O Christ, and we adore you,

C: For by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

P: In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

C: Amen.

You may be seated for silent reflection in the sanctuary if you wish.

We exit in silence, waiting for the glory of Easter morning.
