

Catholic Church.
Tenebrae for Good Friday.
AER 3854

TENEBRAE

for

GOOD FRIDAY



New York
THE PAULIST PRESS
401 West 59th Street

The translation used (except in the case of one Psalm, 91) is that of Rev. C. C. Martindale, S.J., as published by the Catholic Truth Society of England in the pamphlet, "Friday Evening Tenebrae."

Of the Latin version, Father Martindale says: "Remember that this ancient Latin version is taken from a yet older Greek one, itself taken from the original Hebrew. In the course of centuries, 'corruptions' often crept into the 'text' of the psalms; or alterations were made, or traditions as to the meaning differed. We have, so far as possible, expressed the direct original meaning of each psalm."

The introduction and notes are adapted in part from Father Martindale's pamphlet.

The division of verse is according to the Roman Breviary.

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TENEBRAE

ON Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of Holy Week, Tenebrae is sung. "Tenebrae" means "darkness" and the service is thus poetically named because, as the reading of the Psalms proceeds, the lights are put out, one by one, until at the end the church is in total darkness.

MATINS AND LAUDS

Tenebrae consists of the Matins and Lauds of the regular Office said by all priests. Originally Matins were said before daybreak; in some religious orders the monks still rise in the midnight to say them; but always they form the first part of the priest's daily Office.

Now the Church, wishing to allow all the people to recite these beautiful, heart-stirring prayers during the mournful days of Holy Week, has arranged that the Matins of Thursday, and its Lauds, be said the evening before,—on Wednesday. Those of Friday are said on Thursday, and those of Saturday are said on Friday.

THE CANDLES

The custom of putting out the lights is very ancient; we know that it was followed in the fifth century. Today fifteen candles are used. After each Psalm a candle is extinguished, to symbolize the gradual desertion of Christ by His followers. One last candle is left burning, but is carried away out of sight. Mysterious darkness fills the church, and a sense of desolation creeps over us. Christ is dead. In the stillness the Miserere is read in a hushed voice.

A noise is made, a clattering sound, to represent the convulsion of the earth at the death of Jesus, and then the one lighted candle is brought back,—to signify that He is not dead indeed, but lives to triumph over the grave in His Resurrection.

THE PSALMS

We shall the better understand the service if we know the theme that runs through the Psalms. The Psalms are the words addressed to God by various great figures of the Old Testament, chiefly by David, the brilliant king and poetic genius of the Hebrew race. In these prayers is revealed the spirit which pervaded all the great heroic characters of the Chosen People. This spirit was an unswerving, unmeasured trust in God and absolute fidelity to His Will.

Abraham, Job, David, each trusts God when put to the severest tests to be conceived in the experience of man. And because of this sublime loyalty, each is regarded as a type of Christ, the Redeemer, Whose whole life was one perfect act of fulfillment of the Will of the Father.

This theme, of man's total dependence upon God, was passionately and fervently proclaimed over and over again by David and the Prophets, in the Psalms, in language of unsurpassed beauty and painful intensity. There is a cry in these prayers which pierces to the very heart.

And we must remember that these wonderful verses were used by Christ Himself, Who, like other Jews, went up to the temple to pray. The first Christians, having been Jews, likewise used the Psalms as prayers. The early churches of the Apostles did likewise. The Catholic Church still in her official prayers follows their example; and the Laity, occasionally, as at Tenebrae, is introduced to these wonderful inspired words.

In reading a Psalm, we may, if we are familiar with the Biblical history, think of David's sorrows or of the tribulations of the Chosen People. We may trace the prophetic parallel between the troubled life of the king and the sufferings of Our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom the prophet is a type and forerunner.

Or we may see in the Psalms a picture of our own deepest griefs, and the attitude of the soul of man towards God in life and in death.

Tenebrae for Good Friday

MATINS OF HOLY SATURDAY

(Matins and Lauds of Holy Saturday Are Recited Good Friday Evening)

The First Nocturn

*A nocturn consists of 3 Psalms and 3 lessons.
At the end of each Psalm a candle is extinguished.*

Antiphon: In perfect peace will I sleep and take my rest.

Psalm 4¹

*The God of my righteousness heard me when I invoked Him: when I was hard pressed, Thou didst make wide room around me.

Have mercy upon me, and grant my prayer.

Ye sons of men, how long will ye be so dull of understanding? Why do ye love emptiness and seek after a lie?

Know ye that the Lord hath dealt wonderfully with His holy one: the Lord will hear me when I shall cry unto Him.

Be angry, but sin not. Lament upon your beds the things that ye say within your hearts.

Offer a sacrifice that is righteous, and in the Lord be your hope. Many are saying—Who shall show us any good?

Upon us, O Lord, the light of Thy countenance is signed: in my heart hast Thou put gladness.

By the fruit of their corn their wine and their oil, they have been given increase.

In peace forthwith will I sleep and take my rest:

*Notes on the Psalms, brief suggestions for meditation, may be found at the back of the pamphlet (page 28). These notes are indicated in the text by small numerals inserted after the number of the Psalm.

For Thou, O Lord, hast stablished me exceedingly in hope.

Antiphon: In perfect peace will I sleep and take my rest.

(The first candle is here extinguished.)

* * * * *

Antiphon: He shall dwell in Thy tent; he shall rest upon Thy holy Hill.

Psalm 14²

Lord, who shall dwell in Thy tent? and who shall abide upon Thy holy Mountain?

He that walketh without stain, and worketh righteousness.

He who thinketh truth in his heart, who hath practised no deceit with his tongue,

Nor doeth harm to his neighbor, and accepteth no detraction of his neighbors,

In whose eyes the malicious are brought down utterly low: but them that fear the Lord he praiseth.

Who, having sworn to his neighbor, deceiveth him not; who giveth not out his money at usury, and accepteth no bribes against the innocent.

Whoso acteth thus, shall not be shifted ever.

Antiphon: He shall dwell in Thy tent; he shall rest upon Thy holy Hill.

(The second candle is here extinguished.)

* * * * *

Antiphon: My flesh shall rest in hope.

Psalm 15³

Preserve me, O Lord, for in Thee do I trust. I say to the Lord, "My God art Thou!" for *Thou* hast no need of *my* possessions!

Marvellously hath God accomplished all that I desired for His chosen ones who dwell in His land!

But the woes of them that run after the false gods have been many!

I will not summon assemblies of theirs, because of their blood-thirsty offerings: I will not take their name upon my lips.

The Lord is my portion and my inheritance, and of my cup: Thou art He who establisheth mine inheritance.

The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; yea, lovely in mine eyes is mine inheritance!

I will bless the Lord, who hath given me understanding: yea, even unto night doth my heart lesson me.

I see the Lord ever there before me, for at my right hand is He, lest I be ousted.

Wherefore is my heart gladdened and my tongue exults; yea and my body too dwells in confidence.

For Thou wilt not abandon my life to Death, nor permit Thy holy one to see destruction.

Thou hast made known to me the ways of life: Thou wilt fill me full of joy through the sight of Thee: Thy hand is full of rejoicing for ever more.

Antiphon: My flesh shall rest in hope.

(The third candle is here extinguished.)

Versicle: In perfect peace.

Response: Shall I sleep and take my rest.

Our Father (*in silence*).

* * * * *

FROM THE LAMENTATION OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAS⁴

Chapter 3, 22-30

Lesson 1

*Heth.**—It is by the mercy of the Lord that we are not consumed: for His tender mercy fails not.

Heth.—Every morning the proof thereof is new: great is Thy fidelity!

*Heth, Teth, Jod, etc., are letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The first lesson on Wednesday in Holy Week is indicated by Aleph, the first letter of the alphabet.

Heth.—The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I wait for Him.

Teth.—Good is the Lord to them who hope in Him; to the soul that seeks Him.

Teth.—It is good to wait in stillness for God to rescue us.

Teth.—It is good for a man to carry the yoke from his youth up.

Jod.—Let him sit quiet and keep silence, for he hath placed it on himself.

Jod.—Let him bow his face down to the dust, if (so) there may be hope.

Jod.—Let him yield his cheek to the smiter; gluttony let him be with insult.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, convert thee to the Lord, thy God!

Response: Like a sheep was He led to the slaughter; and, when cruelly treated, He opened not His mouth: He was delivered over to death, that He might give life to His people.

Versicle: He delivered up His life to death, and among criminals was He reckoned. That He might give life to His people.

Chapter 4, 1-6

Lesson 2

Aleph.—How is the gold become dim, how is the lovely color changed! how scattered are the stones of the Sanctuary at the head of every street!

Beth.—The noble sons of Sion, clad in purest gold, how are they to be reckoned as mere earthen pots, work of the potter's hands!

Ghimel.—Even the jackals have bared the breast, and given suck to their young: but the daughter of my people is cruel as the ostrich in the wilderness.

Daeth.—The tongue of the babe at the breast hath cleaved to the roof of its mouth for very thirst; the little ones begged for bread, but there was none to break it to them.

He.—They that had lived delicately perished in the streets; they that had been brought up in crimson, have embraced the dung.

Vau.—And the iniquity of the daughter of my people hath become greater than the sin of Sodom, that was ruined in a moment, and the hand found naught within her.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, convert thee to the Lord, thy God.

Response: Jerusalem, arise, strip thee of the garments of festivity; clothe thee in sackcloth and in ashes: for in thee hath been slain the Saviour of Israel.

Versicle: Let thy tears fall like a stream both day and night; let not the eyes of thine head refrain. For in thee hath been slain the Saviour of Israel.

THE BEGINNING OF THE PRAYER OF JEREMIAS

Chapter 5, 1-11

Lesson 3

Remember, O Lord, what has come upon us: look on us, and behold our humiliation. Our inheritance hath been made over to aliens, and our house unto strangers. We are become like orphans without father; and our mothers are as widows. We have drunk our water at a price, and have bought wood for money. We were dragged by our necks; to our weariness no rest was given. We held out our hand to Egypt, and to Assyria, that we might have bread enough. Our fathers sinned, but they are no more: 'tis we who carry their iniquities. Mere slaves have lorded it over us, and there was none to buy us back from their

hands. We fetched our bread at peril of our lives, because of the sword in the desert. Our skin was parched as in an oven, by reason of the violence of the famine. They disgraced the women in Sion, and the maidens in the cities of Juda.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, convert thee to the Lord thy God.

Response: Weep, my people, as weeps a maid; wail, ye shepherds, in sackcloth and in ashes: for the day of the Lord hath come, great and most bitter.

Versicle: Gird yourselves, ye priests, and lament, ye ministers of the altar, sprinkle ashes upon you. For the day of the Lord hath come, great and most bitter. Weep, my people (*as above*).

* * * * *

*The Second Nocturn*⁵

Antiphon: Lift yourselves up high, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.

Psalm 23

The earth is the Lord's, and all that therein is; the whole round world, and all that dwell therein.

Himself hath He established it upon the seas, and upon the waters hath He founded it.

Who shall ascend the Lord's hill? and who shall stand within His Sanctuary?

He that is clean of hand and pure of heart, that hath not set his soul on wantonness, nor sworn treacherously to his neighbour.

This is he that shall receive blessing from the Lord, and mercy from God his Saviour.

Such are the men who seek Him—who seek the Face of the God of Jacob.

Lift up your gates, ye princes, and lift yourselves up high, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.

Who is this King of Glory? The Lord, the Mighty, the Strong! The Lord, powerful in battle!

Lift up your gates, ye princes, and lift yourselves up high, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.

Who is the King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory!

Antiphon: Lift yourselves up high, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.

(The fourth candle is here extinguished.)

* * * * *

Antiphon: I trust that I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.

Psalm 26

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

The Lord, the Protector of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?

When foemen draw nigh against me, to devour my flesh,

The enemies that harass me, 'tis they have weakened and are fallen!

Though an army drew up against me, my heart would not fear;

Though battle should rage against me, still am I confident.

One thing have I begged from the Lord, and it do I desire—to dwell in the House of the Lord all my life's days;

To watch what the Lord delights in, and visit His Sanctuary.

For He hides me in His Tent on the evil day: in the secret places of His Tent He protecteth me.

On a rock hath He set me up, and now raiseth He up my head above mine enemies.

I approach, I sacrifice in His Tent, a sacrifice with song; sing will I, and make music to the Lord.

O Lord, hear my voice, wherewith I cry to Thee: show pity to me, and grant my prayer.

To Thee my heart doth speak, and Thee mine eyes do seek; Thy face, O Lord, I long for.

Turn not Thy face from me; turn not in anger from Thy servant!

Be Thou my helper, abandon not Thou me; nor disdain me, O God that savest me!

Though father and though mother should desert me, the Lord lifteth me up.

Give me a law, O Lord, for Thy path; guide me into the right road because of my enemies;

Give me not over to the thoughts of my oppressors; for evil witnesses are risen up against me, and godlessness proveth itself a liar.

Yet do I trust to see the good things of the Lord in the land of Life.

Trust in the Lord; act manfully; let thy heart be strong; wait for the Lord!

Antiphon: I trust that I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.

(The fifth candle is here extinguished.)

* * * * *

Antiphon: Lord, Thou hast withdrawn my soul from the Grave.

Psalm 29

I will extol Thee, O Lord, for Thou hast accepted me, and hast not granted my foes to exult over me.

O Lord, my God, I cried unto Thee, and Thou didst heal me.

O Lord Thou hast drawn out my soul from the Grave; Thou hast rescued me from among those that go down into Death.

Sing ye to the Lord, ye His chosen servants; and give thanks to His Holy Name.

For though He chastise in His wrath, yet life is His will!

Though weeping be with us in the evening, with the dawn cometh joy.

I said, in the days of my riches, "I shall never be stirred."

Lord, by Thy good pleasure, Thou hast added power to my high dignity.

But Thou didst turn Thy face away, and I was in dismay.

Then to Thee, O Lord, I cried, and to my God I prayed.

What profit is there in my blood, if I go down to corruption?

Can mere dust praise Thee, and tell forth Thy fidelity?

The Lord heard me and took pity on me; the Lord became my helper.

Thou hast turned my wailing into joy; Thou hast rent off my sackcloth, and in gladness hast arrayed me.

So that my soul may praise Thee, nor need I keep grief-struck silence: O Lord, my God, for ever will I thank Thee!

Antiphon: Lord, Thou hast withdrawn my soul from the Grave.

(The sixth candle is here extinguished.)

Versicle: Do Thou, O Lord, have mercy on me!

Response: And lift me up again, that I may requite them.

Our Father (*in silence*).

FROM THE TREATISE OF ST. AUGUSTINE, BISHOP,
ON THE PSALMS

On Psalm 63, Verse 7

Lesson 4

“A man shall approach the ‘deep’ (or ‘hidden’) Heart and God shall be exalted.” As for them they said: “Who shall see us?” They tired themselves out with scheming—evil plots. But a Man approached those very plots, and, as man, suffered Himself to be arrested. For, save as man, arrested He could not be, nor, save as man, be so much as seen; nay, nor stricken save because He was man; nor crucified; nor, save as man, have died. So He drew near, a man, to all those human experiences which would have had no force for Him at all, had He not been man. But, had He *not* been man, mankind would not have been set free. So a Man drew near to the “deep heart,” that is, the secret inmost heart—offering His humanity to the human eye, but within, guarding God! Yea, concealing that Nature of God, whereby He is equal to the Father, and displaying the nature of the slave, wherein He is less than the Father.

Response: Our Shepherd hath departed, the Source of Living Water, at Whose passing the sun grew dark. For he, too, is captured, who took captive the first Man: but today Our Saviour hath broken through the bars and very doors of Death.

Versicle: Yea He hath destroyed the barriers of hell, and overturned the rule of Satan. For he, too, is captured (*as above*).

Lesson 5

How far carried they through these schemes, that they tired themselves out to fabricate? To the point of placing guards at the sepulchre, even when the Lord was dead and had been buried. For they said to Pilate: That se-

ducer—by that name the Lord Jesus Christ was called, to console His servants when they too should be called seducers—well, they therefore said to Pilate: That seducer, while yet alive, said—After three days I shall rise again. Bid therefore that the sepulchre be guarded until the third day, lest perhaps His disciples come and steal Him away, and say to the people: He is risen from the dead, and the last error be worse than the first. Pilate said to them: You have a guard; go, and guard it as you know how. So they went away and set a guard upon the tomb, with sentinels, and sealing the stone.

Response: O all you who pass by the way, look and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow.

Versicle: Look, all ye peoples, and see My sorrow. If there be (*as above*).

Lesson 6

They put soldiers at the tomb to guard it. The earth shook: the Lord arose: such miracles took place round about the tomb, as that the soldiers, who had come to guard it, might themselves be witnesses, did they choose to declare the truth. But that avarice, that captured the disciple that was comrade to Christ, captured too the soldier that was guardian of the tomb. "Here," said they, "is money for you. Say, that His disciples came while you were asleep, and took Him away." Indeed had they tired themselves out over their scheming! Unlucky ingenuity! Have you so completely abandoned the light of kindly counsel, and have plunged so deep into the abyss of craft, that you can say—"Say the while you were asleep His disciples came and took Him away from you?" So you call witnesses who were sleeping! Assuredly you were asleep yourself, after exhausting yourself with making such a scheme!

Response: See how the righteous dies, and no one realizes it within him, and how righteous men are taken

off, and none attends to it. The righteous man is removed from the presence of ungodliness. And his memory is peace.

Versicle: Like a lamb before the shearers, so was He dumb, and opened not His mouth. From prison and from judgment was He taken. And His memory (*as above*). See how (*as above*).

* * * * *

The Third Nocturn

Antiphon: It is God who helpeth me; the Lord is the support of my life.

Psalm 53⁶

O God, for Thy Name's sake, save me; and by Thy power give judgment for me.

O God, hear my prayer; let Thine ears hear the words of my mouth.

For strangers rise up against me; and mighty men seek for my soul; and set not God before their eyes.

Yet it is God who helpeth me; the Lord is the support of my life.

Turn back evil on my foes, and in Thy fidelity disperse them.

Gladly will I sacrifice to Thee, and to Thy Name, O Lord, give thanks, for it is good.

For from all distress Thou succorest me, and my eye feasts itself upon my foes.

Antiphon: It is God who helpeth me; the Lord is the support of my life.

(The seventh candle is here extinguished.)

* * * * *

Antiphon: In peace is His place established, and His dwelling in Sion.

Psalm 75⁷

Famed in Judea is God; great is His Name in Israel.
In "Peace" is His place established, and in Sion His dwelling.

There brake He the might of the bow, the shield, the sword, the armour!

Wondrously blazedst Thou forth from the eternal hills; those foolish hearts were all of them in dismay!

They slept their sleep—not one of their powerful men found aught (of strength) in his hands.

At Thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, their horsemen sank to sleep.

Terrible art Thou, and who shall resist Thee in the hour of Thy wrath?

From heaven makest Thou heard Thy judgment, and the earth trembles and is still.

When to judgment riseth God—to save all the meek ones of the earth.

Even men that do plot (against Thee) must praise Thee; they of those plotters that are left must keep festival for Thee.

Make ye vows, and fulfil them unto the Lord, your God; all ye that round about bring gifts to the Dread One,

Even to Him who takes away the high pride of princes, to Him who is the dread of the kings of the earth.

Antiphon: In peace is His place established, and His dwelling in Sion.

(The eighth candle is here extinguished.)

* * * * *

Antiphon: I became like a man without strength, alone among the dead.

Psalm 87⁸

O Lord God who savest me, by day, yea and by night, my cry comes before Thee.

Let my prayer come into Thy presence; lean Thine ear to my petition!

For my soul is filled with woe, and my life has come down near unto the Grave.

I am reckoned along with them that sleep in the Tomb; I am become like a wraith, all alone among the dead;

Like dead men in their sepulchres, whom Thou rememberest no more, who are rejected from Thy hand.

In the depths of the Pit they have set me, in black places, and in the shadow of death.

Thy wrath weighs steadily upon me; all Thy waves hast Thou brought sweeping over me.

Thou hast put my friends far from me; they regard me as some foul thing.

I am delivered up and cannot go forth; my eyes grow dim through misery.

To Thee, O Lord, all the day long I cry—to Thee I stretch out my hands.

Wilt Thou work wonders for the dead? or shall the Ghosts rise again to praise Thee?

Will anyone relate Thy mercies in the Tomb? or Thy loyalty in the Lost Land?

Shall Thy wonders be made known in the Dark, and Thy righteousness in the Land of Forgetfulness?

But to Thee, O Lord, I cry, and early in the morning shall my prayer come unto Thee.

Why, Lord, dost Thou repel my prayer, and turn away from me Thy face?

Poor am I, and woeful from youth up; a grown man, still am I cast down and in dismay.

Ever Thine anger sweeps over me, and Thy terrors dismay me.

Like waterfloods, they surround me all day long—they utterly surround me.

Far from me puttest Thou friend and neighbor, and my comrades—such my misery!

Antiphon: I became like a man without strength, alone among the dead.

(The ninth candle is here extinguished.)

Versicle: In Peace His place is put.

Response: And in Sion His dwelling.

Our Father (*in silence*).

* * * * *

FROM THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE
TO THE HEBREWS

Chapter 9, 11-14

Lesson 7

Christ, being come, an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation, neither by the blood of goats, nor of calves, but by His own blood, entered once into the Holies, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and of oxen, and the ashes of an heifer being sprinkled, sanctify such as are defiled, to the cleansing of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the Holy Ghost offered Himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?

Response: The kings of the earth rose up and the chieftains conspired together: against the Lord and against His Anointed.

Versicle: Why are the heathen in tumult, and why do the people plot such folly? Against (*as above*).

Chapter 9, 15-18

Lesson 8

And therefore is He the mediator of the New Testament, that by means of His death, for the redemption of those transgressions which were under the former testament, they that are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where there is a testament, the death of the testator must of necessity come in. For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no

strength, whilst the testator liveth. Whereupon neither was the first indeed dedicated without blood.

Response: I was reckoned among them that go down to the Pit. I was like a man without help, abandoned to the Dead.

Versicle: They placed me in the deepest Pit, in dark places, and in the shadow of death. I was like (*as above*).

Chapter 9, 19-22

Lesson 9

For when every commandment of the law had been read by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying: This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. The tabernacle also, and all the vessels of the ministry, in like manner, he sprinkled with blood, and almost all things, according to the law, are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

Response: When the Lord was buried, the sepulchre was sealed, and they rolled a stone to the mouth of the sepulchre: setting soldiers to guard it.

Versicle: The chiefs of the priests came to Pilate, and besought him. Setting soldiers (*as above*). When the Lord (*as above*).

* * * * *

THE SERMON

LAUDS*

Antiphon: O Death, I will be thy death! O Grave, I will be thy doom.

Psalm 50⁹

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy great mercy,

And according to the multitude of Thy mercies blot out mine iniquity.

Wash me altogether from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

For myself I acknowledge mine iniquity, and my sin is ever before me.

Against Thee, Thee, have I sinned and done that which is wrong in Thy sight; yea, Thou art just in what Thou sayest—Thou art victorious when put upon Thy trial!

For behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother conceive me.

But behold Thou lovest sincerity: the mysteries and secrets of Thy wisdom Thou hast made known to me.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, that I may be whiter than snow!

Give joy and gladness to my ears, and let the bones that were broken rejoice!

Turn away Thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

Create a clean heart in me, O God, and set a new, right spirit within my heart.

Cast me not forth from Thy face, and take not Thy holy spirit from me.

Restore to me joy in Thy salvation, and strengthen me with a right royal spirit.

I will teach the wicked Thy ways, and the impious shall be converted unto Thee.

*In the Roman Liturgy of today "Lauds" (praises) designates a part of the office composed of Psalms and Canticles, usually recited after Matins.

Save me from blood, O God, God of my help, and my tongue shall extol Thy righteousness:

Lord, open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim Thy praise.

For if Thou hadst desired a sacrifice, I would surely have given it: but Thou hast no pleasure in burnt-offerings.

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit: a heart that is crushed and broken, O God, Thou wilt not despise.

Deal graciously, O Lord, in Thy good will with Sion, that the walls of Jerusalem may be built up;

Then wilt Thou receive due sacrifice and holocausts: then shall men offer bullocks upon Thine altar.

Antiphon: O Death, I will be thy death! O Grave, I will be thy doom.

(The tenth candle is here extinguished.)

* * * * *

Antiphon: They shall mourn for Him as for an only son; for the Lord in His innocence was slain.

Psalm 91¹⁰

* It is a good thing to give thanks to the Lord: to sing psalms to Thy Name, O Most High,

To proclaim Thy mercy in the morning: and Thy truth by night,

On a ten-stringed (instrument), the psaltery: with jubilant song upon the harp.

For Thou, O Lord, hast gladdened me by Thy doing: and in the works of Thy hands will I exult.

How have Thy works been magnified, O Lord! Thy thoughts are exceeding deep!

A senseless man knows not: neither does a fool understand these things;

*The translation of Psalm 91 is taken from "Translation of the Psalms and Canticles" by Rev. James M'Swiney, S.J.

When sinners spring up like grass; and all the workers of iniquity come to light,

It is that they may perish for ever: but THOU, O Lord, art Most High for evermore.

For, lo, Thine enemies, O Lord, for, lo, Thine enemies shall perish: and all the doers of iniquity shall be scattered.

But my horn shall be exalted as (that of) the unicorn: and mine old age with rich mercy.

Mine eye also has looked upon mine enemies: and mine ear has heard of the evil doers that rise up against me.

The just shall flourish like a palm-tree: he shall grow like the cedar of Libanus.

Planted in the house of the Lord: they shall flourish in the courts (of the house) of our God;

They shall still increase in a vigorous old age: and hale and hearty shall they be,

To declare that the Lord our God is upright: and that there is no iniquity in Him.

Antiphon: They shall mourn for Him as for an only son; for the Lord in His innocence was slain.

(The eleventh candle is here extinguished.)

* * * * *

Antiphon: Look, all ye peoples, and see My pain.

Psalm 63¹¹

Grant my prayer, O God, when I pray—deliver me from panic of my foes!

Shield me from the band of evil-doers, from the multitude of them whose work is sin!

For they have whetted their tongue like a sword: they have strung their bow—O bitter thing!—to shoot in secret at the innocent.

Suddenly shall they shoot at him, fearing nought; they establish themselves in their vile plan.

They tell how they have laid secret snares: they say: Who will notice them?

They scheme iniquities: they weary themselves with scheming.

But if a man consents to such proud schemes, then shall God show Himself on high.

Their blows will become as but mere children's arrows: powerless grow their tongues against them.

All are appalled that see them: every man feareth.

And men recount the works of God, and understand His deeds.

And the just man is glad in the Lord, and trusts in Him; and all that are right of heart rejoice.

Antiphon: Look, all ye peoples, and see My pain.

(The twelfth candle is here extinguished.)

* * * * *

Antiphon: From the gates of Death, deliver my soul, O Lord.

THE PRAYER OF EZECHIAS¹²

Isaias 38

I said: In the midst of my days I must go to the gates of the Grave—

I look in vain for the rest of my years: I said, I shall see God the Lord (no more) in the land of the living.

I shall see man no more, nor the inhabitants of peace.

My human life is taken away from me and rolled up like a shepherd's tent.

As by a weaver's shears, my life is lopped off; while I was still but begun, he cut me off; from dawn to dusk, Thou wilt make an end of me.

I hoped and hoped till daybreak; but like a lion so breaketh He all my bones.

From dawn to dusk wilt Thou make an end of me: like the fledglings of the swallows, so is my cry; like any dove I moan.

My eyes waste away with looking up to heaven—

O Lord, I am suffering violence—answer Thou for me! But what shall I say? or what can He answer me, since 'tis Himself that hath done it?

Before Thee will I reflect upon all my years in the bitterness of my heart.

O Lord, if such indeed be the life of man, and if in such chances be the life of my spirit, rebuke me, but then give me back my life: when I am left in peace, then bitterness is my bitterness!

But Thou hast snatched away my life, and wilt not let it perish—behind Thy back Thou hast cast all my sins!

Ah, for the Grave cannot thank Thee: Death shall not praise Thee—they that go down to the Pit cannot hope for fidelity from Thee!

The living, the living, *he* shall praise Thee, as I do to-day: the father to the children shall make known Thy loyalty!

O Lord, save me: and we shall sing our hymns in the House of the Lord all the days of our life!

Antiphon: From the gates of Death, deliver my soul,
O Lord.

(The thirteenth candle is here extinguished.)

* * * * *

Antiphon: O all you that pass by the way, look and see if there be pain like unto My pain.

Psalm 150

Praise the Lord in His holy place: praise Him in His mighty firmament!

Praise Him in His mighty acts: praise Him according to the greatness of His exaltation.

Praise Him with voice of trumpet: praise Him with lyre and harp.

Praise Him with tabret and with dance: praise Him with strings and reeds.

Praise Him with sweet-sounding cymbals; praise Him with crashing cymbals. Let all that draws breath of life praise the Lord!

Antiphon: O all you that pass by the way, look and see if there be pain like unto My pain.

(The fourteenth candle is here extinguished.)

Versicle: My flesh shall rest in hope.

Response: And Thou shalt not cause Thy Holy One to see corruption.

* * * * *

Antiphon: The women sat mourning at the Sepulchre, weeping for the Lord.

THE BENEDICTUS¹³

Luke 1, 68-79

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel: for He hath visited and redeemed His people.

And He hath raised up a horn of salvation for us: in the house of David His servant.

Even as He spoke by the mouth of His holy ones, the prophets, who have been since the beginning,

Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us.

To show mercy unto our Fathers, and to remember His holy Covenant,

Even the oath that He sware to our father Abraham, of what He would give to us—

That without fear, and freed from the hands of our enemies, Him might we serve,

In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.

And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Most High, for thou shalt go before the Face of the Lord to prepare His ways,

To give the knowledge of salvation to His people, unto the remission of their sins.

Through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the Dawn from the deep hath visited us,

To give light unto them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

(During the last six verses of the "Benedictus," the six tall candles on the altar are put out,—one after each verse.)

Antiphon: The women sat mourning at the Sepulchre, weeping for the Lord.

(The last candle of the fifteen is here carried away, alight, and hidden behind the altar.)

Antiphon: Christ became obedient for us even unto death, yea, the death of the Cross. Wherefore God indeed exalted Him, and gave to Him a Name that is above every name.

Our Father (*in silence*).

Repeat Psalm 50 (*see above, page 21*). Have mercy.

(In a low voice.)

(Church in darkness.)

Prayer

Look down, O Lord, we pray Thee, upon this Thy family, for which Our Lord Jesus Christ did not hesitate to be betrayed into the hands of wicked men, and to endure the torment of the cross. (*In a low voice*) Who with Thee and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. Amen.

(At the end of the prayer, a noise is made. The lighted candle is brought out. All rise and retire in silence.)

NOTES

¹Note on Psalm 4

Hope and Trust

David, the King, is said to have composed this psalm after he had been saved from humiliating defeat at the hands of his own beloved son, Absalom, who had treacherously incited the people to insurrection. After the miraculous victory David urges his companions to trust God wholly, arguing with them: "Who shall show us any good?" For who has rescued them but the Lord Himself?

Shall we, too, not learn, even when almost broken by trouble, to have child-like confidence in God, and, in peace, to sleep and to rest?

The application to Good Friday is clear. Hanging on the cross in ignominy Christ conquered His foes. And on Holy Saturday morning, when we are supposed to be reading these prayers, He rests, calm, quiet, a Victor in His tomb.

²Note on Psalm 14

The Ideal Man

An ideal man is here pictured, the man pure of heart, honorable, and upright.

And the Eternal Model of this ideal man is Jesus Christ, He Who is best fitted to rest in the grave on the "hill" of Calvary and to abide upon the holy "mountains" of Heaven.

³Note on Psalm 15

The Reward of Trust

Trust in God here rises to the highest prophetic pitch. David perceives that his efforts are not the cause of Israel's victory. It is God Who gives success to those that depend upon Him. He gives them happiness even on earth, and, after death, the boundless joy of the beatific vision.

This outburst of David's is most remarkable. The Hebrews had a rather hazy idea of life after death. We must remember that we of today have the advantage of all the Christian revelation and of all the visions of the saints as to the joy that will be ours in the next life. Lit up with the fire of inspiration David realized that "God would give joy through the sight of Him."

⁴Note on Lamentations

Repentance

Jeremias uttered his Lamentations over the impending captivity of the Jews in Babylonia. Jeremias is one of the tragic figures of history. He not only had to proclaim to the unbelieving and scoffing Jews that the beloved Jerusalem, the Golden, would be destroyed, but his was the bitterly cruel task of making it plain that the coming catastrophe was a moral necessity, the result of their own sinfulness. There was no other way of bringing them to repentance but by suffering and disaster. This we may well recognize is often the case with ourselves.

We read these Lamentations in Holy Week because they made prophetic references to the future shocking crime to be committed by the Jews, the slaying of Christ, the Messiah. Then indeed, was not a stone left upon a stone. And the Jews were scattered over the earth to learn the hard lesson of repentance.

⁵Note to the Second Nocturn

Triumphant Trust

The Psalms of the first Nocturn are permeated with trust in God, but it is a hard-won, almost a bitter trust, such as exists at the very moment of defeat and agony. It is as if the singer says: My God, I cleave to You with my will, though all my senses cry out that You have forgotten me.

The Lamentations bring repentance.

The Psalms of the second Nocturn burst out into that glorious and triumphant trust in God, which always fol-

lows on repentance. "On a rock hath He set me up." Death itself is overcome.

The shameful crucifixion of Christ and His startling conquest of death in His Resurrection made a sort of undertone to the song of exultation. The singer seems to say that as Christ conquered, so we shall win our battles on one condition, that we unite ourselves to Him by trust. "Trust in God. Act manfully."

⁶Note on Psalm 53

The Daily Struggle

Raised to high hope and trust in the second Nocturn, we now must return to our daily battle. It is still hard; still unwon. And we are forced to realize that God's promise of Resurrection is contingent upon daily trusting in Him for help and support.

⁷Note on Psalm 75

High Hope

Up again go our hearts! We are reminded of the victory of the Israelites over Sennacherib, the monarch of the East. Recall how "The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold," and how in the night by God's command "The Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast and breathed in the face of the foe as he passed." Just so Christ, the Messiah, will one day completely rout all evil.

⁸Note on Psalm 87

In Purgatory

Another conquest of Christ! Also in the world after death, which to the Hebrew was a land of gloom, God's power is supreme. There too will I trust Him. We may imagine ourselves praying thus when we come to Purgatory, the place of suffering, but of confidence.

⁹Note on Psalm 50

Contrition

What is the Miserere but a prolonged Act of Contrition? And once contrite we may grow wise with the wis-

dom of David if we recognize with him this fact, that it is God Who will "set a new spirit" in our hearts, and that it is God Who will "open our lips to proclaim" His praise. Also we may observe that we are to ask for a "right royal spirit,"—and then shall we teach the wicked God's ways. Therefore we may take heart and in the works of God which we attempt, look for success, on the one everlasting condition,—that we turn trustingly to God and draw strength from Him.

¹⁰Note on Psalm 91

Joy in God's Works

We asked for a "right royal spirit" in the "Miserere." And here, in this Psalm, we behold man, high-hearted, exultant, gladdened by the works of the Creator.

Some of us can recall people, who, seeing the Divine Hand in nature's loveliness, and in all the events of life, trust God to do all things well and go along their way, serene and contented. These people retain the freshness of youth and seem ageless.

One translation of the Psalm gives us this idea very strikingly: ". . . in old age, full of sap and green-of-leaf shall they be." It is a picture very welcome today, when we gauge a man's age, not by his years, but by the elasticity of his arteries and by the responsiveness of his mind. Joy in the Lord is a good prescription for health of body and of soul.

¹¹Note on Psalm 63

Vindication

A new occasion for trust presents itself. The just man is calumniated. But he suffers no harm, and is glad in the Lord.

In this Psalm the prophetic spirit is strong. We are reminded of the scheming against Christ, but we perceive that it came to nothing,—because God had ordained this triumph in the Resurrection.

¹²Note on Isaias 38**Triumph Over Death**

Ezechias, the king, is seriously ill,—in danger of death. He is young, and wants to live. He is frightened. He fears death. His prayer is one of desperation. Then he seems suddenly to realize that, after all, it is God's will that he should be sick and suffering. “. . . 'tis Himself that hath done it.”

After that admission, the king was less desperate and unhappy, and, as history tells us, he recovered and praised the Lord exultingly for his miraculous escape from death.

We perceive that, applied to Our Lord, the Psalm suggests that even although He died, yet did He escape from death, and triumph over it, not just temporarily, like Ezechias, but absolutely and eternally.

¹³Note on Luke 1**The Reward of Trust**

It is Good Friday, and the Antiphon pictures the women mourning at the Sepulchre. Why, then, sing the “Benedictus,” a song of joy? Why introduce the story of Zachary at this point?

The whole Tenebrae has portrayed the necessity of trust in God. Like a clever teacher, the Church closes her lesson with a perfect illustration of the point she has been teaching.

Zachary, doubting the amazing message of the angel, is troubled, and is made dumb. But Zachary, full of faith, is happy, exultant, prophetic,—and now, blessed by God, he is rewarded by the return of the gift of speech.

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