

He said this to indicate what kind of death he was to die. The crowd answered him,

“We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?”

Jesus said to them, “The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in darkness, you do not know where you are going. While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light.”

Then they came to Jerusalem. And Jesus began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple. He was teaching and saying,

“Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a den of robbers!”

And when the chief priests and the scribes heard it, they kept looking for a way to kill him; for they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was spellbound by his teaching.

The first candle is extinguished.

THE DARKNESS OF BETRAYAL

Words in the Upper Room - Matthew 26:20-28

When it was evening, Jesus took his place with the twelve; and while they were eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.”

And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him, one after another, “Surely not I, Lord?”

He answered, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.”

Judas, who betrayed him, said, “Surely not I, Rabbi?” He replied, “You have said so.”

The second candle is extinguished.

Meditation

Communion Hymn - #527 *“Eat This Bread”* (Opt. A only – Sing 5x)

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Words of Institution - Matthew 26:26-28

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it, he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.

“Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them saying, “Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

Distribution of the Elements

Prayer after Communion

THE DARKNESS OF TEMPTATION

Words in the Garden - Matthew 26:30-31, 36-46

When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Then Jesus said to them, “You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’”

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.”

He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated.

Then he said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.”

And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.”

Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, “So you could not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Again he went away for the second time and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot not pass unless I drink it, your will be done.”

Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words.

Then he came to his disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up; let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.”

The third candle is extinguished.

Hymn #220

“Go to Dark Gethsemane”

(vv 1&2)

THE DARKNESS OF INJUSTICE

Words of the Trial - Mark 14:53, 57-58, 60-64; 15:1-5; Luke 23:7, 11

They took Jesus to the high priest; and all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes were assembled. Some stood up and gave false testimony against him, saying, “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple that is made with human hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.’”

Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, “Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?”

But he was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?”

Jesus said, “I am; and ‘you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power,’ and ‘coming with the clouds of heaven.’”

Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?”

All of them condemned him as deserving death. As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate.

Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" And he answered, "You have said so."

Then the chief priests accused him of many things. Pilate asked him again, "Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you."

But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed. And when he learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him off to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. Even Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him; then he put an elegant robe on him and sent him back to Pilate.

The fourth candle is extinguished.

THE DARKNESS OF DENIAL

Words in the Courtyard - Mark 14:66-72

While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came by. When she saw Peter warming himself, she stared at him and said, "You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth."

But he denied it, saying, "I do not know or understand what you are talking about." And he went out into the forecourt. Then the cock crowed.

And the servant-girl, on seeing him, began to say to the bystanders, "This man is one of them."

But again he denied it. Then after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, "Certainly you are one of them; for you are a Galilean."

But he began to curse, and he swore an oath, "I do not know this man you are talking about."

At that moment the cock crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, "Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times." And he broke down and wept.

The fifth candle is extinguished.

Special Music **“Three Crosses”** Eva Garst and Ruth Vehegge

THE DARKNESS OF REJECTION

Words Before Pilate - Luke 23:13-24 (Selected Verses)

Pilate then called together the chief priests, the leaders and the people, and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was perverting the people; and here I have examined him in your presence and have not found this man guilty of any of your charges against him. Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us. Indeed, he has done nothing to deserve death. I will, therefore, have him flogged and release him.”

Then they all shouted together, “Away with this fellow! Release Barabbas for us!”

“Crucify him!

“Crucify him!”

And their voices prevailed. So Pilate gave his verdict that their demand should be granted.

The sixth candle is extinguished.

Hymn #228 **“Were You There?”** (All verses)

****As we begin to sing the hymn, all who are willing to help in stripping the chancel are invited to come forward.***

THE DARKNESS OF CRUCIFIXION

Words from the Cross - (Selected Verses)

When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified him there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.

And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him, saying, “Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”

But the other rebuked him saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?”

“And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong. Jesus,” he said, “remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

Jesus replied, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

Hymn #227

“Jesus, Remember Me”

(Sing 5x)

THE DARKNESS OF DEATH

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son.”

Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o’clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said, “I am thirsty.” A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth.

When Jesus had received the wine, he said, “It is finished.”

Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Having said this, he breathed his last.

And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts.

The seventh candle is extinguished.

The Christ Candle is rekindled.

***Benediction**

Please exit in meditative silence.