

HOLY SATURDAY: THE SERVICE OF LIGHT

9:00am, Saturday, April 15, 2017, in the Westminster Chapel

Holy Saturday is a quiet day, a day of waiting. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday are past. But for us it is not a dark day—as it must have been on that first Saturday—for we know the rest of the story, that Easter morning will come. For us, it can be a day of quiet but joyful anticipation.

Jesus said, “I am the light of the world; one who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” Since at least the seventh century, the Paschal Candle was lighted at the beginning of the service on Holy Saturday, the newly kindled fire being a symbol of Christ newly present and active in the Easter mystery. The Paschal Candle was then used at services during the first forty days of Eastertide, Christ the Light of the World leading us out of the slavery of sin into the freedom of sons and daughters of God.

Let us now come together in the quiet of this place, as we wait in anticipation.

GATHERING MUSIC

Three Sung Prayers from Taizé (Instrumental)

“Jesus, remember me”

“Ubi Caritas”

“In your resurrection, O Christ”

A brief period of calm and silence

OPENING WORDS

From the *Book of Common Worship*, for Holy Saturday

Leader The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Leader May the light of Christ, who rises this very night in glory, scatter the darkness of our hearts and minds. The Light of Christ!

The Paschal Candle is lighted

Let the people say: . . .

People Thanks be to God!

Leader May this Easter Candle dispel the darkness, always.
May the Morning Star, which never sets, find its flame burning in hearts everywhere.
Let it be known that Christ—who came back from the dead, and who shed his peaceful light on all creation—lives and reigns forever and ever!

All Amen.

A brief period of calm and silence

PSALM OF THE DAY The Morning *Psalm* for Holy Saturday, from the *Lectionary*, from *Psalm 43*

Leader O send out your light and your truth;
 let them lead me;
 let them bring me to your holy hill
 and to your dwelling.

**People Then I will go to the altar of God,
 to God my exceeding joy;
 and I will praise you with harp,
 O God, my God.**

Leader Why are you cast down, O my soul,
 and why are you disquieted within me?

**People Hope in God; for I shall again praise the Lord,
 my help and my God.**

A brief period of silence, for reflection on the Psalm

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Isaiah 9:2-7

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.”

A SUNG PRAYER FROM TAIZÉ

“Jesus, Remember Me”

Listen to the words, or hum them, or sing them quietly, as you wish.

Jesus, remember me, when you come into your kingdom.

Brief silence

A NEW TESTAMENT LESSON

I Peter 4:1-2, 8-11

Leader Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the
 same intention, so as to live the rest of your earthly life no longer by human
 desires but by the will of God.

**People Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers
 a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without
 complaining. Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God,
 serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.**

Leader: Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God;
 whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that
 God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong
 the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

Brief silence

A SUNG PRAYER FROM TAIZÉ

“Ubi caritas”

Listen to the words, or hum them, or sing them quietly, as you wish.

**Ubi caritas, et amor, Where there is charity, selfless love,
ubi caritas, Deus ibi est. where there is charity, God is always there.**

GREAT SILENCE

The sound of the gong signals the beginning and the ending of this time for listening with the ears of our hearts, for seeking to rest in God’s embrace. As the silence begins, you may wish to allow your breathing to slow, and the muscles of your face and neck and shoulders to relax.
[c. 10 minutes]

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

From the Book of Common Worship

Leader Gracious God, you have made us one
 with all your people in heaven and on earth.
 We have recalled your mighty acts in holy history,
 we have seen your power
 in sending light to conquer darkness.
 This Holy Saturday morning we thank you for the resurrection dawn
 that makes every day new. This morning we thank you for
 the beauty of your creation . . .
 for the new creation in Christ and all gifts of healing and forgiveness . . .
 for the sustaining love of family and friends . . .
 and for the fellowship of faith in your church . . .
 Lord in your mercy . . . *Hear our prayer.*

Leader Merciful God of might, renew this weary world, heal the hurts of all your
 children, and bring about your peace for all in Christ Jesus, the living Lord.
 We pray for...
 for those who govern nations of the world . . .
 for the people in countries ravaged by war . . .
 for all who work for peace and international harmony . . .
 for all who strive to save the earth from destruction . . .
 and for the church of Jesus Christ in every land. . .
 Lord in your mercy . . . *Hear our prayer.*

Leader Lord, listen as we now offer our individual prayers, in the silence of our hearts
 or in words spoken aloud . . .
 Our intercessory prayers express our love for others and for the world.
 Each individual prayer ends with, Lord in your mercy Hear our prayer.

Leader We know that you hear our prayers, Lord. Listen also as we join our voices in
 praying the prayer taught to us by your Son, Jesus, with open hearts.

**People Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy
 will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and
 forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into
 temptation, but deliver us from evil, For thine is the kingdom and the power
 and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Brief silence

CLOSING SUNG PRAYER

“Laudate omnes gentes”

Listen to the words, or hum them, or sing them quietly

**Laudate omnes gentes,
laudate Dominum.**

**Sing praises, all you peoples,
sing praises to the Lord.**

CLOSING WORDS

*All wait and watch in silence, as all of the candles,
except the Paschal Candle, are extinguished.*

Leader We are an Easter people.
Once we were no people; now we are God’s people.
Once we walked in darkness; now we walk in the light.
Let us go forth, and tell of the wonderful deeds of Christ
who brought us out of darkness into this marvelous light.

People **Thanks be to God. Amen.**

Leave when you are ready.

As you wait in anticipation during the rest of this day, you may wish to remember Thomas Merton’s Lenten thin-place experience on the corner of Fourth and Walnut in Louisville . . . an experience that allowed him to see – and which allows us to see – some of what it is to be God’s people, who walk in the light.

As Tim Hart-Andersen has reminded us in a Sunday sermon, “Thomas Merton, the Trappist monk whose life revolved around regular, quiet times of prayer in his hermitage in the hills of Kentucky, famously tells of a moment in his life when he is given the gift of seeing in new ways:

‘In Louisville,’ Merton writes, ‘at the corner of Fourth and Walnut, in the center of the shopping district, I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all those people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers... I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts... the core of their reality, the person that each one is in God’s eyes....
If only we could see each other that way all the time.’

What had been one moment an ordinary street scene becomes for him in the next a dazzling image of the human family. His eyes see for the first time what had been there all along. . . .”

We are – if we allow ourselves to be – an Easter People.

Worship Leaders
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