

# Shadows of the Cross

## *Tenebrae Reader's Theater*

*The task of turning off lights is critical in achieving the mood of progressive shadows enveloping the sanctuary. The lights should be turned off following the music and candle snuffing in each segment of the program.*

### **I. Shadow of Betrayal (Matt. 26:20-25)**

**Evangelist:** Now when evening had come, He was reclining at the table with the twelve disciples. And as they were eating, he said:

**Jesus:** "Truly I say to you that one of you will betray me."

**Evangelist:** And being deeply grieved, they each one began to say to Him:

**1st Disciple:** "Lord, is it I?"

**2nd Disciple:** "Surely not I, Lord?"

**Evangelist:** And He answered and said:

**Jesus:** "He who dipped his hand with me in the bowl is the one who will betray me."

**Evangelist:** And Judas, who was betraying Him answered and said:

**Judas:** "Surely it is not I, Rabbi?"

**Evangelist:** He said to him:

**Jesus:** "You have said it yourself."

### **Hymn: HWB 240 - Go to Dark Gethsemane**

*Candle 1 is extinguished. First set of sanctuary lights are turned off.*

### **II. Shadow of Desertion (Matt. 26:30-38)**

**Evangelist:** And after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them:

**Jesus:** “You will all fall away because of me this night, for it is written, ‘I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered.’ But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.

**Evangelist:** But Peter answered and said:

**Peter:** “Even though all may fall away because of you, I will never fall away.”

**Evangelist:** Jesus said to him:

**Jesus:** “Truly I say to you that this very night, before a cock crows, you shall deny me three times.”

**Evangelist:** Peter said to him:

**Peter:** “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you.”

**Evangelist:** All the disciples said the same thing too.”

### **Choir: 2nd Moment of Concerto, by JC Bach**

*Candle 2 is extinguished. Second set of sanctuary lights are turned off.*

### **III. Shadow of an Unshared Vigil (Luke 22:39-46)**

**Evangelist:** And he came out and proceeded as was his custom to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples also followed him. And when He arrived at the place, he said to them:

**Jesus:** “Pray that you may not enter into temptation”

**Evangelist:** And He withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and began to pray saying:

**Jesus:** “Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from me, yet not my will but Thine be done.”

**Evangelist:** Now an angel from heaven appeared to him, strengthening Him. And being in agony he was praying very fervently; and his sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground. And when he rose up from prayer, he came to his disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow, and said to them:

**Jesus:** “Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.”

**Hymn: HWB 241 - Tis Midnight, and on Olive’s Brow**

*Candle 3 is extinguished. Third set of sanctuary lights are turned off.*

#### **IV. Shadow of Accusation (Mark 14)**

**Evangelist:** And they led Jesus away to the High Priest, and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes gathered together. And the chief priest and all the council kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus to put him to death, and they were finding none. Many were giving false testimony against him, but their testimony was not consistent. And the High Priest came forward and questioned Jesus saying:

**High Priest:** “Do you make no answer to what these men are testifying against you?”

**Evangelist:** But he kept silent and made no answer. Again the high Priest questioned him:

**High Priest:** “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?”

**Evangelist:** And Jesus said:

**Jesus:** “I am, and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

**Evangelist:** And tearing his clothes, the High Priest said:

**High Priest:** “What further need do we have of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?”

**Evangelist:** And they all condemned him to be deserving of death. And some began to spit at him, and to beat him with their fists and say to him, ‘Prophecy’ and the officers slapped him in His face.

**Solo: HWB 258 - Man of Sorrows**

*Candle 4 is extinguished. Fourth set of sanctuary lights are turned off.*

#### **V. Shadow of Crucifixion (Matt. 27:27-38)**

**Evangelist:** Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole Roman cohort around Him. And they stripped Him, and put a scarlet robe on Him. And after weaving a crown of thorns, they put it on his head, and a reed in his right hand; and they kneeled down before Him and mocked Him saying:

**Soldiers:** "Hail, King of the Jews!"

**Evangelist:** And they spat on Him and took the reed and began to beat Him on the head. And after they had mocked Him, they took His robe off and put his garments on Him and let Him away to crucify him. And when they had come to a place called Golgatha, which means place of a skull, they gave him wine drink mingled with gall, and after tasting it, he was unwilling to drink. And when they had crucified Him, they divided up his garments among themselves, casting lots and sitting down, they began to keep watch over him there.

**Hymn: HWB 259 - When I Survey the Wondrous Cross**

*Candle 5 is extinguished. Fifth set of sanctuary lights are turned off.*

## **VI. Shadow of Death (Luke 23:44-49)**

**Evangelist:** And it was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, the sun being obscured, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said:

**Jesus:** "Into Thy hands I commit my spirit"

**Evangelist:** and having said this, He breathed his last.

**Hymn: HWB 250 - Beneath the Cross of Jesus**

*Candle 6 is extinguished. Sixth set of sanctuary lights are turned off.*

## **VII. Shadow of the Tomb**

**Evangelist:** And after these things, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. He came therefore and took away his body. And Nicodemus came also, who had first come to him by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weigh. And so they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where he

was crucified there was a garden and in the garden, a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. Therefore on account of the Jewish day of Preparation, because the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

**Solo: HWB 257 - Were you there? (vv. 1-4)**

*Candle 7 is extinguished. Seventh (final) set of sanctuary lights are turned off.*

*Congregation is dismissed in silence, in the dark.*

Anonymous, 2021.

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