

LOVELIGHT

by Janet Litherland



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LOVELIGHT

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

MARY

Mother of Jesus, in middle age; Bible costume

NARRATOR

Modern clothing

CHOIR

Choir robes

INSTRUMENTALIST

May use piano, organ, harp, guitar, flute, oboe or whatever is available to achieve quiet beauty.

VOICE OF GOD

Unseen, preferably uses public address system

NOTE: Selected scriptures are from the King James Version. In certain instances, the usage and punctuation were updated for clarity.

SETTING AND PROPS

Sanctuary is illuminated by candlelight. In addition, two candelabra, each holding seven candles, are placed right and left on platform in chancel area. Mary stands to the right of right candelabrum; Narrator stands to the left of left candelabrum. Each has a lectern for script, matches and a candle extinguisher. All seven of Mary's candles are lighted before service begins; only the center candle of Narrator's candelabrum is lighted prior to service.

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Suggested music is found in most church hymnals; substitutions, of course, may be made. Printed programs would aid congregational understanding.

IMAGES

Dramatic art images are used as indicated in the script. Each image remains in view until succeeded by the next.

- #1 — Jesus
- #2 — Gethsemane
- #3 — Jesus Arrested
- #4 — Disciples Turn Away
- #5 — Jesus Before Pilate
- #6 — Golgotha

PRODUCTION NOTES

The hymns suggested in *Lovelight* have been chosen by the author to fit the particular mood or message. Any other suitable hymn may be substituted.

These hymns may be found on The Cyber Hymnal (www.cyberhymnal.org) as well as in most hymn books.

Hymns:

“God So Loved the World” (From Stainer’s *Crucifixion*)

“Go to Dark Gethsemane”

“What Wondrous Love Is This?”

“Into the Woods My Master Went” (A suggested substitute: “Were You There?”)

“Ah, Holy Jesus”

“Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone?”

“Depth of Mercy”

“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”

“Fairest Lord Jesus”

Lovelight
A Tenebrae Service for Holy Week
 Order of Service

Lovelight is based on the ancient Tenebrae, a service dating from the 8th century. It commemorates the suffering and death of Christ and represents the darkness that overcame the earth as God's Son was crucified. The candles symbolize Christ, the Light of the World.

PRELUDE: "God So Loved the World" from Stainer's *Crucifixion*

A TIME OF SILENCE

****HYMN:*** "Go to Dark Gethsemane"

****INVOCATION:***

Part 1. Jesus Loves in Life

"What Wondrous Love Is This" **Choir**

Part 2. He Is Betrayed

"Into the Woods My Master Went" **Instrumental**

Part 3. He Is Arrested

"Ah, Holy Jesus" **Choir**

Part 4. He Is Deserted

"Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone?" **Instrumental**

Part 5. He Is Denied

"Depth of Mercy" **Choir**

Part 6. He Is Crucified

"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" .. **Instrumental**

Part 7. Jesus Loves in Death

The Seven Last Words

The Promise

"Fairest Lord Jesus" **Choir**

****THE LORD'S PRAYER***

****BENEDICTION***

****A TIME OF SILENCE***

****Congregation Standing***

1 (MARY's seven candles and NARRATOR's center candle are
 2 glowing. MARY, NARRATOR, INSTRUMENTALIST — if
 3 other than one performing Prelude — and choir enter and take
 4 places during "A Time of Silence." Choir leads congregation in
 5 hymn.)

6 NARRATOR: (*Invocation*) We are thankful, Father, for the
 7 ultimate sacrifice, the life of your Son, that we on earth
 8 might find life eternal. We have come to this place,
 9 where our hearts beat as one, to remember and to find
 10 forgiveness, paying homage to the one True Light that
 11 glows through the darkness of our lives. Jesus said, "I
 12 am the light of the world." May he shine throughout this
 13 service. Amen.

14 (*Congregation sits.*)

15

16 PART 1 — JESUS LOVES IN LIFE

17

18 NARRATOR: Now before the feast of the passover, when
 19 Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should
 20 depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved
 21 his own, which were in the world, he loved them unto
 22 the end. (*John 13:1*)

23 MARY: Jesus loved as he entered Jerusalem amidst the
 24 waving palm branches and cries of "Hosanna." He loved
 25 as he wept for the people, as he cleansed the temple and
 26 as he taught the lessons of Good and Evil. I know Jesus
 27 loved ... He was my son. As a child he was playful and
 28 energetic, yet even at the age of twelve he knew his
 29 purpose in life and began preparing himself for his
 30 Father's business.

31 NARRATOR: Which was proclaiming the kingdom of God.
 32 And for that he got into trouble. A lot of trouble.

33 MARY: He was a good man. He healed the sick; he gave life
 34 to the dead and sight to the blind; he fed the hungry and
 35 blessed the little children; he offered comfort and

1 friendship. And at the end, knowing what was to come,
 2 he still had compassion for those whom he knew would
 3 betray and desert him. He washed their feet ... Yes, even
 4 the feet of Judas Iscariot.

5 NARRATOR: For God so loved the world, that he gave his
 6 only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him
 7 should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God
 8 sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world;
 9 but that the world, through him, might be saved. (*John*
 10 *3:16-17*)

11

12 IMAGE #1 — JESUS

13

14 MARY: He was my son. (*She extinguishes end candle.*)

15 NARRATOR: He is my heavenly Father. (NARRATOR *lights*
 16 *the corresponding candle on his candelabrum.*)

17

18 CHOIR SINGS: "What Wondrous Love Is This?"

19

20 PART 2 — HE IS BETRAYED

21

22 NARRATOR: Thirty pieces of silver. Thirty pieces of silver!
 23 —a small sum, which the chief priests and scribes were
 24 delighted to pay. Jesus of Nazareth had too much
 25 influence, too much power. Something had to be done.
 26 (*Speaks out Right, over heads of congregation.*) Judas
 27 Iscariot! You're a sensible man. Can't you see the ship is
 28 sinking? Why go down with it, when you can save
 29 yourself and earn a little cash at the same time?

30 MARY: Judas was a close friend. Jesus believed in him,
 31 trusted him, chose him to be a disciple. And he was a
 32 good disciple. What happened? Was he impatient?
 33 Afraid? Selfish? ... Are we sometimes impatient, afraid
 34 and selfish?

35 VOICE OF GOD: Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe

in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also ... I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me ... I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me. Because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you ... These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I give unto you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you ... And now I have told you before it comes to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. *(John 14:1-3, 6, 18-20, 25-27, 29)*

IMAGE #2 — GETHSEMANE

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC: "Into the Woods My Master Went" *(Plays under following dialog to end of Part 2.)*

MARY: Jesus entered then the Garden of Gethsemane. With him were Peter, James and John, his friends. Yet even they would not accompany him all the way into his final agony over accepting the will of God. He had to go on alone. "Sit here," he said, "while I pray."

NARRATOR: And he went forward a little and fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said:

VOICE OF GOD: Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me. Nevertheless, not what I

1 will, but what thou wilt.

2 NARRATOR: And he cometh and findeth them sleeping, and
3 saith unto Peter.

4 VOICE OF GOD: Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst not thou
5 watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into
6 temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is
7 weak.

8 NARRATOR: And again he went away and prayed and spake
9 the same words. And when he returned he found them
10 asleep again, for their eyes were heavy, and they knew
11 not what to answer him. And he cometh the third time
12 and saith unto them.

13 VOICE OF GOD: Sleep on now, and take your rest. It is
14 enough; the hour is come. Behold, the Son of man is
15 betrayed into the hands of sinners. (*Mark 14:35-41*)

16 MARY: Then Judas came with the soldiers and offered his
17 kiss of death ... Dear Jesus ... He was my son. (*She*
18 *extinguishes second candle.*)

19 NARRATOR: He is my heavenly Father. (*NARRATOR lights*
20 *corresponding candle.*)

21

22 *PART 3 — HE IS ARRESTED*

23

24 IMAGE #3 — JESUS ARRESTED

25

26 MARY: Before Caiaphas, the high priest, my son stood tall,
27 gathering strength from submission to God's will. He
28 was open and honest, without guilt; he was patient. And
29 he never once spouted shallow words of self-defense.
30 Throughout his ordeal, Jesus remained a shining light
31 against the encroaching darkness.

32 NARRATOR: Will anyone here stand as a witness against
33 this Jesus of Nazareth? Are there reasons for putting
34 him to death? ... Come now, there must be someone!

35 CHOIR: We heard him say, "I will destroy this temple that is

1 made with hands, and within three days I will build
2 another temple made without hands.” (*Mark 14:58*)

3 MARY: Jesus was silent.

4 NARRATOR: Answerest thou nothing? What is it which
5 these witness against thee?

6 MARY: But he held his peace and answered nothing.

7 NARRATOR: Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?

8 VOICE OF GOD: I am; and ye shall see the Son of man sitting
9 on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of
10 heaven.

11 NARRATOR: He hath spoken blasphemy! What further need
12 have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard his
13 blasphemy, what think ye? (*Mark 14:60-64, some*
14 *omissions*)

15 CHOIR: Death! He deserves to die!

16 MARY: And some began to spit on him, others to slap and
17 mock. Some covered his face and tugged at his
18 garments. Still others joined, and the temperament of
19 the crowd rose high — as a fever!

20 NARRATOR: (*Pause*) ... Mob psychology ... How many of us
21 have been swept along by a mob, doing things we later
22 regretted? — things we would never have done alone ...
23 shameful things.

24 MARY: He was my son. (*She extinguishes third candle.*)

25 NARRATOR: He is my heavenly Father. (*Lights corresponding*
26 *candle.*)

27

28 CHOIR SINGS: “Ah, Holy Jesus”

29

30 *PART 4 — HE IS DESERTED*

31

32 NARRATOR: Judas hanged himself. But what of the
33 others — Jesus’ friends? Where were they when he
34 needed them?

35 MARY: Peter, a good-hearted fisherman with outstanding

1 leadership ability. Jesus called him “The Rock.”
2 NARRATOR: Peter stepped aside.
3 MARY: Andrew, Peter’s brother, a helpful man of quiet
4 strength. His name means “manly.”
5 NARRATOR: Andrew turned his back.
6 MARY: James, the son of Zebedee, a fiery-tempered, zealous
7 disciple.
8 NARRATOR: James was silent.
9 MARY: John, James’ brother. Charitable and unselfish, the
10 disciple whom Jesus loved.
11 NARRATOR: John closed his eyes.
12 MARY: Philip, a practical man, yet timid and retiring.
13 NARRATOR: Philip ran.
14 MARY: Bartholomew, a dedicated disciple, ready to make
15 sacrifices.
16 NARRATOR: Bartholomew disappeared.
17 MARY: Thomas: faithful, trustworthy, courageous.
18 NARRATOR: Thomas fled.
19 MARY: Matthew, a tax collector, responsible and responsive
20 to the call of discipleship.
21 NARRATOR: Matthew withdrew.
22 MARY: James, the son of Alphaeus, a righteous man, a
23 spiritual hero.
24 NARRATOR: James quietly slipped away.
25 MARY: Thaddaeus, “One who praises.” Eager to prove his
26 love for Jesus.
27 NARRATOR: Thaddaeus abandoned Jesus.
28 MARY: Simon, a zealous, yet prudent, disciple. One who
29 sought justice.
30 NARRATOR: Simon, like the others, was nowhere to be
31 found.
32 MARY: All twelve disciples deserted Jesus. Why did they
33 flee? Why did they leave him alone and unloved?
34
35 IMAGE #4 — DISCIPLES TURN AWAY

NARRATOR: All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. (*Isaiah 53:6*)

MARY: He was my son. (*She extinguishes candle on opposite end.*)

NARRATOR: He is my heavenly Father. (*Lights corresponding candle.*)

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC: "Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone?"

PART 5 — HE IS DENIED

MARY: (*Over heads of congregation*) Look — there in the distance is Peter, mingling with the servants of the high priest. (*With hope*) Could it be that Peter has not deserted?

NARRATOR: And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest. And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him and said, "And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth."

But he denied, saying, "I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest." And he went out into the porch; and the cock crowed.

And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, "This is one of them." And he denied it again.

And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, "Surely thou art one of them; for thou art a Galilean and thy speech agreeth thereto."

But he began to curse and swear, saying, "I know not this man of whom ye speak." And for the second time the cock crowed. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, "Before the cock crows twice, thou shalt deny me thrice." And when he thought thereon, he wept. (*Mark 14:66-72*)

MARY: Judas felt remorse and hung himself. Peter felt remorse and wept. Will the others, too, feel remorse? ... Perhaps this is not the end, after all, but the beginning. He was my son. *(She extinguishes fifth candle.)*

NARRATOR: He is my heavenly Father. *(Lights corresponding candle.)*

CHOIR SINGS: "Depth of Mercy"

PART 6 — HE IS CRUCIFIED

IMAGE #5 – JESUS BEFORE PILATE

NARRATOR: When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. And when they had bound him, they led him away and delivered him to Pontius Pilate, the governor. And Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, saying, "Art thou the King of the Jews?"

And Jesus said unto him, "Thou sayest." And when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.

Then said Pilate unto him, "Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?" And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marveled greatly. *(Matthew 27:1-2, 11-14)*

MARY: Now at that feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner called Barabbas. Therefore, when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, "Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?" For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.

They said, "Barabbas."

Pilate saith unto them, "What shall I do then with



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