

A VIGIL OF REMEMBERANCE

by Mary Lu Warstler



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CAST OF CHARACTERS

WOMAN

JUDAS

JESUS

PETER

PILATE

INTRODUCTION

The season of Lent in the Christian year is an important time, not only for examining our Christian walk, but also for renewing our faith. We prepare throughout the five weeks of Lent with fasting and prayer and other acts of renewal. But, in many churches, we come to Holy Week and are content to celebrate the Triumphal Entry on Palm Sunday, skip the services in between, and go directly to the Easter celebration of Resurrection the following week. The result is a “So what’s the big deal?” kind of attitude. We have missed the suffering, the rejection, the death. Oh, we know it happened — but we really don’t want to think about it. I believe it is important to understand — to reenact as far as possible — the suffering and rejection, in order to feel the triumph of Easter.

This service for Maundy Thursday, or Holy Thursday, was written to help us put ourselves there. The shadows created by candlelight remind us of the shadows surrounding Jesus because of the light he brought to the world. As we extinguish the candles one by one we are reminded of several things: Slowly but surely, the Scribes and Pharisees sought to extinguish the Light of the world. One by one the disciples deserted and withdrew to darkness, in order not to be seen and recognized. By the time the last candle is extinguished and the lights are all out, we not only see nothing, we feel the total darkness — however minutely — that Jesus must have felt on the cross when the land was lost in darkness. Having felt the sorrow, the rejection, and lostness once again, we are ready to celebrate the Resurrection and new birth. Easter has meaning only if we have some understanding of the previous few days.

This service is based on the Gospel of Mark. While I have paraphrased at times in order for each of the speakers to express themselves, I have tried very hard to stay as close to the text as possible.

The benediction is given in total darkness. A few seconds of silence should follow the benediction. Lights need to be returned for people to leave quietly during the postlude. (Or you can leave in silence with no postlude.)

May God bless each one who participates in this service, as he has blessed me in the writing of it.

Mary Lu Warstler
Bucyrus First United Methodist Church

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PRODUCTION NOTES

- The approximate playing time of this service is one hour.
- Most of the hymns are found in either *The Book of Hymns* (The United Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, TN, 1964) or *The United Methodist Hymnal* (The United Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, TN 1989)

- The hymns are as follows:

	<u><i>Book of Hymns</i></u>	<u><i>UM Hymnal</i></u>
“Man of Sorrows”	----	165
“Lord Jesus, I Love Thee”	166	172
“Ah, Holy Jesus”	412	289
“Here, O My Lord, I See Thee”	327	623
“’Tis Midnight and on Olive’s Brow”	431	----
“O Love Divine, What Hast Thou Done”	420	287

- Specials:

“In the Upper Room” found in *The Third Day*, an Easter musical by Michael Parks. Copyright © 1981 by Stamps-Baxter Music of the Zondervan Corporation.

“What Will You Do With Jesus?” (Author Unknown) found in *Favorite Hymns of Praise*, p. 304. Copyright © 1967 by Tabernacle Publishing Company, Wheaton, IL.

(These are merely suggestions. Please substitute appropriate songs as you wish.)

- I like to use seven candles on the altar — two can be the regular altar candles. We used candles of various sizes and colors, but this is optional. Be creative and use your own judgment and availability of resources. The candles are all lit before the service — usually during the prelude by the acolyte, if you use acolytes. If not, anyone can light them. If you do have acolytes, they may extinguish each candle at the appropriate time. If not, a lay person or the pastor may do so.
- The monologists may wear biblical costumes. Simple long robes will suffice. Pilate’s may be a bit more ornate to show that he is a high-ranking official. They should wear sandals

and headpieces. Take a length of material and secure it with a piece of cord around the head for the men and leave it hanging loosely for the woman.

- The Scripture can be read from any version of the Bible.
- The following pages are for a worship bulletin.

**A Vigil of Remembrance:
A Tenebrae Service for Maundy Thursday**

by Mary Lu Warstler

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Responsively

Liturgist: He was hated and rejected by all people;

People: He was a man of sorrows and knew all about grief.

Liturgist: He carried our grief and sorrows;

People: Yet, we thought he was stricken by God,

Liturgist: He was wounded for our wrongdoing.

People: With his wounds we are healed.

(Isaiah 53:2-5, paraphrased)

PRAYER

We don't understand fully why Jesus suffered, our Father, but we believe that he did so for our sake. As once again we remember his love for us, may we turn our hearts to follow more closely his steps through life. Amen.

HYMN

"Man of Sorrows"

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND WELCOME

CALL TO STEWARDSHIP

Liturgist

OFFERTORY

GIVING OF OUR GIFTS AND OFFERINGS

DOXOLOGY

In Unison

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Liturgist

THE VIGIL OF CANDLES

Mark 14:3-15:39

I. MISUNDERSTANDING

First candle extinguished

Monolog: “A Woman Speaks”

Hymn: “Lord Jesus, I Love Thee” (verses 1 and 2)

II. BETRAYAL

Second candle extinguished

Monolog: “Judas Speaks”

Hymn: “Ah, Holy Jesus” (verses 1 and 2)

III. THE HOLY MEAL

Reading: Mark 14:12-16

Liturgist

Anthem: “In the Upper Room”

Choir

Monolog: “Jesus Speaks”

Third candle extinguished

LITANY OF CONFESSION

Responsively

Pastor: Eternal God, hear our prayer as we come to this
Sacrament confessing our faults before you. For the times
when we ignored the need around us,

People: Have mercy upon us, O God, we humbly pray.

Pastor: For the times we turned our hearts from you,

People: Have mercy upon us, O God, we humbly pray.

Pastor: For the times when you showed us the way and we did
not follow.

People: Have mercy upon us, O God, we humbly pray.

Pastor: For the gospel of your Word made flesh, which we have
heard and believed, and yet not obeyed,

People: Have mercy upon us, O God, we humbly pray.

Pastor: For the apathy of our hearts and the slowness of our
steps,

People: Have mercy upon us, O God, we humbly pray.

**All: In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy
Spirit, Amen.**

COMMUNION HYMN**“Here, O My Lord, I See Thee” (verses 1-3)****PRAYER OF CONSECRATION****Pastor****DISTRIBUTION OF ELEMENTS****PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION****Pastor****IV. DESERTION***Fourth candle extinguished***Monolog: “Peter Speaks”****Hymn: “’Tis Midnight, and on Olive’s Brow” (verses 1 and 2)****V. AGONY OF SPIRIT***Fifth candle extinguished***Monolog: “Jesus Speaks”****VI. POLITICAL PRESSURE***Sixth candle extinguished***Monolog: “Pilate Speaks”****Solo: “What Will You Do With Jesus?”****VII. THE CROSS***Seventh candle extinguished***Reading: Mark 15:15-25 (paraphrased)** **Pastor****Hymn: “O Love Divine, What Hast Thou Done” (verse 1)****Reading: Mark 15:26-32 (paraphrased)** **Liturgist****Hymn: “O Love Divine, What Hast Thou Done” (verse 2)****Reading: Mark 15:33-39 (paraphrased)** **Pastor****Hymn: “O Love Divine, What Hast Thou Done” (verse 3)***All lights extinguished***BENEDICTION****Pastor****POSTLUDE**

1 **PRELUDE**

3 **CALL TO WORSHIP**

4 **LITURGIST:** He was hated and rejected by all people;

5 **PEOPLE:** He was a man of sorrows and knew all about grief.

6 **LITURGIST:** He carried our grief and sorrows;

7 **PEOPLE:** Yet, we thought he was stricken by God,

8 **LITURGIST:** He was wounded for our wrongdoing.

9 **PEOPLE:** With his wounds we are healed.

10 (Isaiah 53:2-5, paraphrased)

12 **PRAYER**

13 **LITURGIST and PEOPLE:** *(In unison)* We don't fully
 14 understand why Jesus suffered, our Father, but we
 15 believe that he did so for our sake. As once again we
 16 remember his love for us, may we turn our hearts to
 17 follow more closely his steps through life. Amen.

19 **HYMN:** "Man of Sorrows"

21 **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND WELCOME**

23 **CALL TO STEWARDSHIP**

24 **LITURGIST:** Tonight as we remember our Lord's last meal
 25 with his disciples, let us remember our covenant to help
 26 keep the church alive. Come, bring your tithes and
 27 offering for the building of God's kingdom.

28 **OFFERTORY**

29 **GIVING OF OUR GIFTS AND OFFERINGS**

31 **DOXOLOGY** *(Sung in unison)*

33 **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

34 **LITURGIST:** Bless these gifts and givers alike, our God, that
 35 all may be used for your kingdom. Amen.

THE VIGIL OF CANDLES

Mark 14:3-15:39

I. MISUNDERSTANDING

(Extinguish first candle.)

Monolog: “A Woman Speaks” (*WOMAN enters and stands at Center Stage.*)

WOMAN: It was only two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. I had heard rumors of how the chief priests and the scribes were trying to find cause to arrest Jesus. I never really thought they would. How could they? He had done no wrong.

Then one night we were all gathered at the home of Simon, who had been a leper until Jesus healed him. The men were all gathered around the table, waiting for the food. Jesus looked so tired — like the weight of the whole world was on his shoulders. I felt that someone should do something to relieve his tiredness. Simon was too busy. I guess he just didn’t notice. No one else seemed to notice either — at least I didn’t see anyone trying to do something.

Anyway, I had this beautiful alabaster jar of ointment that I carried with me — to keep it safe, I guess. It was pure nard — very costly. I had saved a long time to buy it for my own burial someday. It can also be so soothing for tired, aching muscles. How could I keep it for myself when Jesus looked like he really needed it? So, I opened the jar and began to pour it over his head, rubbing it into his temples and neck muscles. I thought I was helping him, but the disciples really became angry with me, especially Judas.

“Why did you waste all that expensive oil?” they asked. “Don’t you realize how much it could have been sold for? All the poor that could have been fed and clothed!”

1 They were right, I suppose. I began to feel like I had
2 done something really awful. I only wanted to make
3 him feel welcome and take away the tired look on his
4 face. And after all, it was my perfume. I could use it as I
5 chose, couldn't I?

6 Then Jesus spoke. "Leave her alone," he said. "She
7 has done a beautiful thing for me. You have the poor
8 with you always, but you will not always have me. She
9 has done what she could. She has anointed my body
10 beforehand for burying."

11 I did not understand what he meant then, but now I
12 know. The scribes and chief priests knew. They were
13 already plotting his death. They just did not
14 understand Jesus at all. They only sought to kill him.

15 (WOMAN *exits.*)

17 **HYMN:** "Lord Jesus, I Love Thee" (verses 1 and 2)

19 **II. BETRAYAL**

20 (*Extinguish second candle.*)

21 **Monolog:** "Judas Speaks" (*JUDAS enters and stands at Center*
22 *Stage.*)

23 **JUDAS:** I just could not understand that woman. Why would
24 she waste all that expensive oil on one person — even if
25 it was Jesus? She could have given it to me, and I
26 would've sold it — for the group treasury of course.

27 I had to get out of there. The whole room smelled like
28 nard. I needed some fresh air to clear my head, so I
29 went for a walk in the cool night air. Wandering
30 aimlessly, I realized I just happened to be near the
31 meeting place of the chief priests. As I drew closer, I
32 could hear them talking about Jesus. They didn't seem
33 to know for sure how to pick him out in a crowd, or
34 where they might find him alone.

35 This seemed a perfect opportunity to make Jesus

play his hand. He was the Messiah. I was pretty sure of that. But he was so slow about doing anything. Maybe if he were pushed into a corner, he would come out fighting.

So I offered to take them to him when he went to pray. That would be the easiest. Only a few disciples would be with him. There wouldn't be much of a fight. Once he opened his power, it would be all over in a matter of minutes.

And to think they promised me money for something so easy!

Jesus seemed to know what I had done. He didn't say anything to me, but later, at the Passover meal, he said something that made me think he knew. He talked about going quickly and betraying him. But I thought if he knew, then he must be ready to act, and everything would work out the way it should.

I didn't know it would end like it did. I really did betray him! I only meant to help progress. Why didn't he use all his magnificent power? He could have set up his kingdom and had so many followers. But he just let them take him away with no fight at all. (*JUDAS exits, shaking his head.*)

HYMN: "Ah, Holy Jesus" (verses 1 and 2)

III. THE HOLY MEAL

SCRIPTURE LESSON

LITURGIST: (*Reads Mark 14:12-16.*)

ANTHEM: "In the Upper Room" (*or some other appropriate anthem*)

Monolog: "Jesus Speaks" (*JESUS enters and stands at Center Stage.*)

1 JESUS: The disciples prepared the place just the way I
2 asked them to. The twelve of them gathered with me,
3 and we ate the Passover meal together. I knew what
4 Judas had done. If only he had talked to me first! But I
5 had to warn the rest so it would not be too great a
6 shock. I had tried to tell them before, but they just
7 could not seem to understand.

8 “One of you will betray me,” I said. “One who is
9 eating bread with me.”

10 They looked so sad — so sorrowful. I tried to reassure
11 them, but I couldn’t come right out and say, “Judas is
12 the one.” They would’ve tried to stop him. It had to
13 happen.

14 “It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread in
15 the same dish with me,” I said.

16 And then I tried to comfort them — to let them know
17 I would still be present; that even though I would die, I
18 would return. I tried to give them a sign to keep with
19 them as long as they needed it — to help them
20 remember all that I had taught them about love and life
21 with God, our Father.

22 While they were eating, I recognized this was
23 something they did every day. Bread and drink are
24 necessary to life. Body and blood are necessary to life.
25 So, I took the bread and broke it. I gave it to them and
26 said, “Take this bread. It is my body.” Then I picked up
27 the cup and gave it to them. “This is my blood of the
28 covenant, which is poured out for many,” I said. “Truly,
29 I say to you, I shall not drink again of the fruit of the
30 vine until the day I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

31 I had prepared them as well as I could. I had warned
32 them and I had given them a means of remembering.
33 Now all must partake and remember. (*JESUS exits.*
34 *Extinguish third candle.*)
35

1 LITANY OF CONFESSION

2 PASTOR: Eternal God, hear our prayer as we come to this
 3 Sacrament confessing our faults before you. For the
 4 times when we ignored the need around us,

5 PEOPLE: Have mercy upon us, O God, we humbly pray.

6 PASTOR: For the times we turned our hearts from you,

7 PEOPLE: Have mercy upon us, O God, we humbly pray.

8 PASTOR: For the times when you showed us the way and we
 9 did not follow.

10 PEOPLE: Have mercy upon us, O God, we humbly pray.

11 PASTOR: For the gospel of your Word made flesh, which we
 12 have heard and believed, and yet not obeyed,

13 PEOPLE: Have mercy upon us, O God, we humbly pray.

14 PASTOR: For the apathy of our hearts and the slowness of
 15 our steps,

16 PEOPLE: Have mercy upon us, O God, we humbly pray.

17 ALL: In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
 18 Amen.

19

20 COMMUNION HYMN: "Here, O My Lord, I See Thee"

21 (verses 1-3)

22

23 PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

24 PASTOR: Jesus gave us this holy meal as a way to remember
 25 his death and resurrection, our Father. Now once again
 26 placed before us are the bread and wine for our
 27 remembrance. Bless these elements, that they may be
 28 for us once again the body broken and the blood poured
 29 out, not only for us, but for all who would come. Amen.

30

31 DISTRIBUTION OF ELEMENTS

32 LITURGIST: We have prepared our hearts. Come now to the
 33 table of the Lord and feast on his goodness.

34

35 PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

PASTOR: Lord, you have touched us; you have fed our spirits; you have turned us once again to your way. we thank you. Bless us now in the name of Jesus. Amen.

IV. DESERTION

(Extinguish fourth candle.)

Monolog: “Peter Speaks” *(PETER enters and stands at Center Stage.)*

PETER: They always called me the impetuous one. Jesus called me the “Rock,” and indeed, I believed it myself. I could handle anything or anybody. I just knew I would always be by his side. I even told him so, when he would talk about having to die and everyone deserting him.

That night in the upper room, when he broke the bread and offered his cup to us, saying they were his body and blood, I knew it was only a matter of time, but still, I was not prepared for what followed. We sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives to pray like we had done so many times before. And then he said, “You will all fall away.”

I could not believe I had heard him correctly, so I said to him, “Even if everyone else falls away, I will not!” And I truly meant it. I thought I was the bravest of men. After all, I was the “Rock”!

But he shook his head sadly and answered me, “Truly, Peter, I say to you, this very night, before the cock crows twice tomorrow morning, you will deny me three times.”

Oh, how adamant I was! I was shocked. I could not even imagine such a thing. Surely this time our Lord was mistaken! So I said, a little sharply, “If I must die with you, I will not deny you.” And all the rest agreed. We would stand firm. And yet ... and yet, when we went to pray ... it was so late, we couldn’t even stay awake. They came. They took him away. Most ran. I followed —



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