

## **A Monastic Mass for Seasonal Transformation:**

***You are encouraged to reflect upon  
the following words concerning silence before our mass begins***

*The silence within me opens out into the immense silence of God.  
Therefore to commune with God I may have to go through my silence.*

**-Charles Cummings, OCSO-  
-Monastic Practices-**

### **Narrator: A Seasonal Meditation**

We are now experiencing an increasing period of darkness which began this month and lasts through December. During this time, our days will grow shorter and our nights will grow longer. All around us plants and animals will go inward. Trees will store their energy reserves deep in their roots and plants will produce seeds that will remain dormant till later. Some animals will hibernate and some birds will burrow inward. They will await the reversal of longer days and shorter nights which will usher in the season of spring and new life. As we experience this increasing period of darkness, may the coming weeks of this season be a time of deep inner reflection that may later usher in new life.

### **Vespers**

Let us pray the ancient divine prayer office of Vespers which is a time when the heavens fade from light to darkness and when we transition from day to night. Our cantor will chant the antiphon which is an ancient monastic practice that emphasizes the fundamental reflection of our prayers by repeating it for emphasis.

**Celebrant:** Let Us Stand

## (Job 12)

### **Antiphon:**

**Cantor:** He reveals the deep things of / dark- \ ness  
and brings deep shadows \ in / to \ the \ light. (v. 22)

### **All:**

"Ask the animals, and they will teach you,  
or the birds of the air, and they will tell you;  
or speak to the earth, and it will teach you,  
or let the fish of the sea inform you.  
Which of all these does not know  
that the hand of the LORD has done this?  
In God's hand is the life of every creature  
and the breath of all humanity.  
(vv. 7-10)

**Cantor:** He reveals the deep things of / dark- \ ness  
and brings deep shadows \ in / to \ the \ light. (v. 22)

### **All:**

Does not the ear test words  
as the tongue tastes food?  
Is not wisdom found among the aged?  
Does not long life bring understanding?  
"To God belong wisdom and power;  
counsel and understanding are his.  
He reveals the deep things of darkness  
and brings deep shadows into the light.  
(vv. 11-13; 22)

**Cantor:** He reveals the deep things of / dark- \ ness  
and brings deep shadows \ in / to \ the \ light. (v. 22)

**Everyone sits and a period of reflective silence follows**

## Psalm 139

**Cantor:** Surely the darkness shall / co- \ ver me,  
and the light around me \ be- \ come / night (v.11)

**All:**

Surely the darkness shall cover me,  
and the light around me become night,  
even the darkness is not dark to you;  
the night is as bright as the day,  
for darkness is as light to you. (v.11-12)

**Cantor:** Surely the darkness shall / co- \ ver me,  
and the light around me \ be- \ come / night (v.11)

**All:**

For it was you who formed my inward parts;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.  
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.  
Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.  
My frame was not hidden from you,  
when I was being made in secret,  
intricately woven in the depths of the earth  
your eyes saw my unformed body. (v.13-15)

**Cantor:** Surely the darkness shall / co- \ ver me,  
and the light around me \ be- \ come / night (v.11)

**All:**

All the days ordained for me  
were written in your book  
before one of them came to be.  
How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!  
How vast is the sum of them!  
Were I to count them,  
they would outnumber the grains of sand (v.16-18).

**Cantor:** Surely the darkness shall / co- \ ver me,  
and the light around me \ be- \ come / night (v.11)

### **A period of reflective silence follows**

#### **Narrator: A Meditation on Silence**

During our service, you will continue to be silently asked to be silent between prayers, chants, readings of scripture and our other spiritual practices in order to reflect on what was just voiced. God is the friend of silence, noted a spiritual teacher, "See how nature - trees, flowers, grass - grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence... we need silence to be able to touch our souls and others."

Other spiritual teachers have noted that "you can hear the footsteps of God when silence reigns." So, let silence reign during our silent periods of time together and may you hear the footsteps of God.

### **A period of reflective silence follows**

**Celebrant:** A Reading from the Old Testament

**Celebrant:** The creation story reminds us that out of the darkness of the earth God brought forth life, change, and growth. You are invited to read one of the following passages of scripture.

#### **Genesis 1 – 2.3**

**Reader 1:**

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and He separated the light from the

darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

### **Reader 2:**

And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water." So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. God called the expanse "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

### **Reader 3:**

And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

### **Reader 4:**

And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

## **Reader 5:**

And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

## **Reader 6:**

And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw all that he had

made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

### **Reader 7:**

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

## **A period of reflective silence follows**

**Celebrant:** Readings from the New Testament

Parables are a favored expression of spiritual teaching by Jesus. His parables are filled with elements of nature such as birds, seeds, and trees that often express experiences of inner growth, challenges, and change. You are invited to read one of the following passages of scripture.

### **Reader 8:**

Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? (Matthew 6.26)

### **Reader 9:**

I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." (Matthew 17.20)

### **Reader 10:**

He told them this parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know

that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near. (Lk 21. 29-31)

## **A period of reflective silence follows**

### **Centering Prayer**

**Narrator:** The Practice of Centering Prayer

Centering prayer is a popular method of silent contemplative prayer that places a strong emphasis on interior silence. Modern authors of books about centering prayer note that its roots are in the contemplative prayers of the Desert Fathers and Mothers. Guidelines for centering prayer have evolved and focus on four primary activities that you are now encouraged to practice. While centering prayer is encouraged to be a spiritual practice of more than just a few minutes at a time, let us take a few minutes to practice this ancient spiritual tradition.

1. Sit comfortably with your eyes closed, relax, and quiet yourself;
2. Choose and focus on a sacred word that best supports your desire to be in God's presence – your sacred word could be Creator, Father, Mother, Jesus, Christ, Savior, Abba, Spirit, Yahweh, Jehovah, Adonai, Shepherd, Lover, Wisdom, . . . ;
3. Let your sacred word be gently present as your symbol of your desire to be in God's presence and open to God's presence within you;
4. Whenever you become aware of anything (thoughts, noise, feelings, perceptions, images, etc.) do not engage them and simply return to your sacred word.

## **A period of reflective silence follows**

### **The Lighting of the Candles**

**Acolyte:** lights candles

**Celebrant:** The **Phos Hilaron** (Φῶς Ἰλαρόν) is the earliest known Christian hymn recorded outside of the scriptures. Let us pray this ancient prayer together.

O Radiant Light,  
O Holy Glory of God  
the immortal blessed Father in heaven,  
O Christ Jesus!  
Now as the sunset comes upon us  
and we see the evening lights,  
we praise God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit!  
It is right at all times to sing your praise  
with all the universe,  
O Son of God:  
You are the life of the world.

**A period of reflective silence follows**

**The Lighting of the Incense**

**Acolyte:** lights the incense

### **Psalm 141**

**Cantor:** Like incense, may our prayers rise before you O God,  
the lifting of our hands like an evening oblation. (Ps  
141.2)

**All:** Like incense, may our prayers rise before you O God,  
the lifting of our hands like an evening oblation.

**Cantor:** O LORD, I call to you; come quickly to me.  
Hear my voice when I call to you. (v.1)  
Like incense, may my prayer rise before you O God,  
the lifting of my hands like an evening oblation. (v. 2)  
But my eyes are fixed on you, O Sovereign LORD;  
in you I take refuge. (v.8)

**All:** Like incense, may our prayers rise before you O God,  
the lifting of our hands like an evening oblation.

### **Lectio Divina: A Dialogue with God**

**Narrator:** The practice of Lectio Divina involves dialoguing with God in prayer by hearing scripture as God speaking and responding with related thoughts and words to what God said. Let us hear the following scriptures as God speaking to us and let us respond with related thoughts and words.

**Celebrant:**

“This is what the LORD says to his anointed,  
I will give you the treasures of darkness,  
riches stored in inner places,  
so that you may know that I am the LORD,  
. . . , who summons you by name.

(Isa 45. 1a; 2 - 3)

**All:** Dear Lord, we want the treasures of darkness and the riches stored in inner places so that we may know that you are our God who has called us by name.

### **A period of reflective silence follows**

**Celebrant:**

I love those who love me,  
and those who seek me find me.  
With me are riches and honor,  
enduring wealth and prosperity.  
My fruit is better than fine gold;  
what I yield surpasses choice silver.  
I walk in the way of righteousness,  
along the paths of justice,  
bestowing wealth on those who love me  
and making their treasuries full.

(Proverbs 8. 17-21)

**All:** We love you O Lord and we ask for your fruit which is better than gold and silver so that we may walk in the way of righteousness and along the paths of justice.

### **A period of reflective silence follows**

**Celebrant:**

For I know the plans I have for you,"  
"plans to prosper you and . . . plans to give you hope . . .  
You will call upon me and I will listen to you.  
You will seek me and find me.  
I will be found by you . . .  
(Jeremiah 29. 11 - 14)

**All:** We will call upon you O Lord and seek you so that we may learn more about the plans that you have for us.

### **A period of reflective silence follows**

**Cantor:** sings once before everyone joins in the meditation

O Lord Hear My Prayer  
O Lord Hear My Prayer  
When I Call Answer Me  
O Lord Hear My Prayer  
O Lord Hear My Prayer  
Come and Listen to Me.  
-Psalm 143.1ff-

### **The Nicene Creed**

**Celebrant:** Let us stand and profess our faith together by reciting the Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, light from light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary  
and was made man.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**Cantor:** sings once before everyone joins in the meditation

Bless the Lord, my soul  
And bless God's holy name.  
Bless the Lord, my soul  
Who leads me into life.

-taken from Psalm 103-

**Everyone sits and a period of reflective silence follows**

**Eucharist Begins**

**An Examination of Conscience:  
How Do Things Stand Between Me and God?**

**Narrator:**

The Examination of Conscience is an ancient spiritual practice that was promoted by St. Ignatius of Loyola in order to help us discern and reflect on God's daily activity in our life including today. For St. Ignatius, discernment is rooted in the understanding that God is ever at work in our lives – inviting, directing, guiding and drawing us into the fullness of life – and we need to take time to respond.

**Celebrant:**

Let us ask God to help us examine ourselves by silently asking, reflecting on, and waiting for God to answer our following questions:

**Celebrant:** God, what are you saying to me that I am not hearing?

**A period of reflective silence follows**

**Celebrant:** God, what are you telling me to do that I am not doing?

**A period of reflective silence follows**

**Celebrant:** God, is there anything that I did that I should not have done?

**A period of reflective silence follows**

**Celebrant:** The scriptures encourage us to examine ourselves before Holy Communion. Let us reflect upon the following words of Christ and our desire to fulfill these words

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'"<sup>1</sup>

### **A brief period of reflective silence.**

**Celebrant:** Let us pray

**All:** Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent, for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

**Cantor:** sings once then everyone joins in the following meditative petition Kyrie eleison/Christe eleison (Lord have mercy/Christ mercy)

Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison  
Christe eleison, Christe eleison, Christe eleison, Christe eleison  
Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison.

**Celebrant:**

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 22.37-39

is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**All:** Christ has died.  
Christ is risen.  
Christ will come again.

**Celebrant:**

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ: By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. Amen.

### **The Breaking of the Bread**

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread.

A period of silence is kept.

**Celebrant:** Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

**All:** Therefore let us keep the feast

**Celebrant:** The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

***NOTE: Everyone is invited to take communion.***

**Cantor:** sings once before everyone joins in the meditation

Eat this bread, drink this cup,  
Come to me and never be hungry.  
Eat this bread, drink this cup,  
Trust in me and you will not thirst.

## **The Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**Celebrant:** Let us stand and pray

**All:**

Holy, gracious and loving God, you have drawn us to your heart, and nourished us at your table with holy food and drink, the body and Blood of Christ. Now send us forth to be your people in the world, and to proclaim your truth, this day and evermore. Amen.

**Celebrant:**

May the coming weeks be a time of deep inner reflection. May you take time out for periods of silence and listen to the silence. And may you hear the footsteps of God when your silence reigns.

**Celebrant:** Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**Everyone is Invited  
for Light Refreshments Next Door.**

**Afterwards, Everyone is Invited  
to a No-Host Dinner at a Local Restaurant**

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