

**A Monastic Mass For the Lenten Season:
In the Spiritual Tradition of Teresa of Avila**

A Centering Prayer:

*You melt my heart, which once was cold
and your beauty fills my eyes . . .*

-Teresa of Avila-

Musical Offering (Cantor):

Nothing Distress You (words: Teresa of Avila, tr. C. Thompson; tune: *Many Mansions*, P. Cutts)

*Our monastic mass will continue with 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. We will use the ancient monastic practice of the antiphon for our Vesper prayers in order to accentuate the fundamental reflection of our prayers as we repeat it for emphasis.*

Celebrant: Let Us Stand and Pray

Psalm 104

Cantor: The sun knows its time for / setting (v.19b);
You make darkness and it \ is / night (v.20a).

All (read): Bless the Lord, O my soul.
O Lord my God, you are very great.
You are clothed with honor and majesty,
wrapped in light as with a garment.
You stretch out the heavens like a tent,
you set the beams of your chambers on the waters,
you make the clouds your chariot,
you ride on the wings of the wind,
you make the winds your messengers,
fire and flame your ministers.
You set the earth on its foundations,
so that it shall never be shaken. (vv. 1-5)

Cantor: The sun knows its time for / setting (v.19b);
You make darkness and it \ is / night (v.20a).

All (read): the sun knows its time for setting;
You make darkness and it is night.

May the glory of the Lord endure forever;
may the Lord rejoice in his works—
who looks on the earth and it trembles,
who touches the mountains and they smoke.
I will sing to the Lord as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.
May my meditation be pleasing to him,
for I rejoice in the Lord.
Bless the Lord, O my soul.
Praise the Lord! (vv. 19b-20; 31-34)

Cantor: The sun knows its time for / setting (v.19b);
You make darkness and it \ is / night (v.20a).

Everyone sits

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 / co- \ ver me,
and the light around me \ be- \ come / night (v.11)

Celebrant:

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)

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

Celebrant:

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)

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

Celebrant:

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).

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

A period of reflective silence follows

The Lighting of Candles

Acolyte: lights sanctuary candles

Celebrant: (prays while the candles are lit)

Almighty God, we give you thanks for surrounding us,
as daylight fades, with the brightness of the vesper light;
and we implore you of your great mercy that,
as you enfold us with the radiance of this light,
so you would shine into our hearts
the brightness of your Holy Spirit;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Celebrant: (after the candles are lit)

Let us pray the words of the **Phos Hilaron** which is the earliest known Christian hymn recorded outside of the scriptures

All:
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.

The Lighting of the Incense

Acolyte: lights incense

Psalm 141

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

A brief period of reflective silence follows

Narrator: A Meditation on Silence

The scriptures encourage silence. "Be still and know that I am God (Ps 46.10)" is a powerful verse when we understand these words as being personally spoken to us by God. "Listen to me in silence (Isa 41.1)" is another such verse as well as "Be still before the Lord (Ps 37.7). We can respond by saying "It is good to sit alone in silence when the Lord has imposed it (Lam.3.27-28)" or by saying "For God alone my soul waits (Ps 62.1)" or "I wait for the Lord, my soul waits (Ps 130.5)" as ways of heeding to God's encouragement to be silent. During our service, you will continue to be silently asked to be silent between prayers and chants in order to reflect on what was just voiced. So, let our sounds and silence be intertwined—let our sounds bring silence and let our silence bring sounds.

A period of reflective silence follows

Centering Prayer and Silence

Celebrant:

Listen to the words of Teresa of Avila about silence:

"I would warmly recommend to all, never to finish prayer without remaining some little time afterward in a respectful silence. As soon as the soul by faith places itself in the presence of God, and becomes contemplated before our Lord, let it remain thus for a little time in respectful silence.

In forming this act of faith, (if) it feels some little pleasing sense of the Divine presence, let it remain there without being troubled for a period, and proceed no farther, but carefully cherish this sensation while it continues. When it abates, it may excite the will by some tender affection; and if, by the first moving thereof, it finds itself reinstated in sweet peace, let it there remain . . . "

Let these words serve as our centering prayer and let our following periods of silence move us beyond conversation with God and into an intimate voiceless communion.

Narrator: The Practice of Centering Prayer

Centering prayer is a method of silent contemplative prayer that places a strong emphasis on interior silence that is rooted 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.

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 a place related to the Lenten season such as desert, wilderness, or wasteland, your sacred word could be a name for God such as Mother, Father, Abba, Yahweh, or Adonai – your sacred word could also be a spiritual state or condition such as silence, stillness, peace, calm, or patience;
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

Celebrant:

Let us pray the following prayers of Teresa of Avila whose writings convey an intimacy with God that few others have expressed. After each prayer let us remain "some little time in respectful silence" that we may feel "some little pleasing sense of the Divine presence" that "may excite the will by some tender affection."

You are invited to read one of her following prayers and the rest of us will pray silently with you and rest in silence with you before someone else reads the next prayer.

Reader 1:

- A Love Song by Saint Teresa of Avila -

Majestic sovereign, timeless wisdom,
You melt my heart, which once was cold
and your beauty fills my eyes
I am yours, you made me.
I am yours, you called me.
I am yours, you saved me.
I am yours, you loved me.
I will never leave your presence.
Give me death, give me life.
Give me sickness, give me health.
Give me honor, give me shame.
Give me weakness, give me strength.
I will have whatever you give.

A brief period of reflective silence follows

Reader 2:

(from the Interior Castle by Teresa of Avila)

My God, because you are so good,
I love you with all my heart,
and for your sake I love my neighbor as myself.
If I love you,
it is not just because of heaven which you promised;
if I fear to offend you,
it is not because hell threatens me.
What draws me to you, O Lord,
is yourself alone,
it is the sight of you, nailed to the cross for me,

your body bruised in the pains of death.
Your love so holds my heart that,
if there were no heaven,
I would love you still.
If there were no hell
I would even still fear to offend you.
I do not need your gifts to make me love you,
for even if I should have no hope
of all the things I do hope for,
I would still love you
with that very same love. Amen.

A brief period of reflective silence follows

Reader 3:

- from The Way of Perfection by Teresa of Avila -

Lord, grant that I may always allow myself to be guided by You,
always follow Your plans,
and perfectly accomplish Your Holy Will.
Grant that in all things, great and small,
today and all the days of my life,
I may do whatever You require of me.
Help me respond to the slightest prompting of Your Grace,
so that I may be Your trustworthy instrument for Your honor.
May Your Will be done in time and in eternity
by me, in me, and through me. Amen.

A brief period of reflective silence follows

Celebrant: Let us pray

-You are Christ's Hands by Teresa of Avila-

Christ has no other hands but [our] hands to do his work today.
No other feet but [our] feet to guide folk on his way;
No other lips but [our] lips to tell them why he died;
No other love but [our] love to win them to his side.

A brief period of reflective silence follows

A Reading from the Scriptures

Celebrant:

Let us hear and reflect on the words of the Prophet Isaiah as recorded in the scriptures (Isa 32. 15-17):

the Spirit is poured upon us from on high,
and the desert becomes a fertile field,
and the fertile field seems like a forest.
Justice will dwell in the desert
and righteousness live in the fertile field.
The fruit of righteousness will be peace;
the effect of righteousness will be
quietness and confidence forever.

A brief period of reflective silence follows

Homilist:

We are in the middle of Lent. This 40 day season began a little more than three weeks ago and will end in three weeks on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter Sunday. Since the earliest days of the Church, Lent has been associated with the 40 days that Christ spent in the desert before the beginning of his public ministry. Also, since the earliest days of the Church, Lent has been a time when Christians are called to go into the desert with Jesus for a time of soul searching and self-examination for further preparation for public ministry. Throughout the remainder of Lent, may we imitate the withdrawal of Jesus into the desert by taking time for "inner retreats" within our own "inner desert."

And while you are in your inner desert, may the Spirit be poured upon you from on high, and may your inner desert become a fertile field, and may it seem like a forest. And may justice dwell in your inner desert and righteousness live in your fertile field. And may the fruit of righteousness be peace and the effects of righteousness bring about an inner quietness and confidence forever.

Cantor: Sings once then everyone joins in the meditative petition

My spirit is longing for you, my God;
My spirit is waiting in hope.
My spirit is longing for you, my God;
My spirit is waiting in hope.

Homily (continues)

May the longing of your God bring about an outer justice in the places in which you live, work, worship, and serve. For when God calls for justice in your communities someone must respond. Listen to the following words of the Prophet Isaiah:

Cantor:

So justice is driven back,
and righteousness stands at a distance;
truth has stumbled in the streets,
honesty cannot enter.
Truth is nowhere to be found,
and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey.
The LORD looked and was displeased
that there was no justice.
God saw that there was no one,
and was appalled that there was no one to intervene.
(Isaiah 59.14-16)

In our communities, may justice not be driven back and righteousness not stand at a distance. May truth not stumble in the streets. And if God looks and sees no justice, and there is no one to intervene, may you become so displeased and appalled that you stand before God ready to intervene.

The Prophet Ezekiel once quoted God as saying that "The people of the land . . . oppress the poor and needy and mistreat the stranger, denying them justice." And (God also said) "I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land . . . but I found no one." (Ezekiel 22. 28b) – 30

May you be ready to stand before God in the gap on behalf of the land so that the poor and the needy are no longer oppressed and the stranger no longer mistreated.

A brief period of reflective silence follows

Lectio Divina

The practice of Lectio Divina includes dialoguing with God in prayer by hearing scripture as God speaking and responding in similar thoughts and words to what God said.

Celebrant:

Let us hear what God has to say to us and let us respond in prayer.

Cantor: You are my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon (you); . . . bring forth justice to the nations. (Isaiah 42.1)

All: Dear God, I am your servant whom you uphold and your chosen in whom your soul delights. You have put your spirit upon me to bring forth justice to the nations.

Cantor: Give liberally and be ungrudging when you do so, for on this account the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, "Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land." (Deut 15. 10-11)

All: O Lord, we will give liberally and ungrudgingly and open our hands to those of us who are poor and needy.

Cantor: You will hear the desire of the meek; you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear to do justice for the orphan, and the oppressed (Ps 10.17-18).

All: Dear God, when we hear the desire of the meek, we will strengthen their heart. We will also incline our ear so that we may bring justice to the orphan and the oppressed.

Cantor: the LORD your God is commanding you to observe these statutes and ordinances; so observe them diligently with all your heart and with all your soul. (Deut 16.16)

All: O Lord, we will diligently observe your statutes and ordinances and observe them with all our heart and all our soul.

A period of reflective silence follows

The Nicene Creed

Celebrant: Let us stand and profess our faith together

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.

Everyone sits

Eucharist Begins

An Examination of Conscience

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.

Cantor:

"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'"¹

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.

Acolyte: 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 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."

¹ Matthew 22.37-39

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.

Everyone is invited to take communion.

Cantor: Sings once then everyone joins in the meditative petition

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.

Narrator: Let us reflect upon the following words of Teresa concerning her experience of Holy Communion

Acolyte:

(taken for the Way of Perfection by Teresa of Avila)

*When I approached the altar
to receive you in the blessed sacrament
my hair stood on end. Then my legs went weak,
and I felt as if I were about to collapse
under the weight of your majesty.
In the tiny piece of bread you revealed to me
your grandeur and your purity.
I should have felt terrified of your presence,
But instead I felt comforted and reassured
by the knowledge that you, the King of kings
were about to give yourself in love to me.*

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

Celebrant: Let us stand and pray

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.

Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Celebrant:

Let us continue to retreat each day during Lent into our inner "desert" as a place of rededication and further preparation for community service. And may we emerge as our savior did on Easter morning, so that we may further minister to God and others unlike ever before.

Let us pray the following Psalm² which was composed in the desert of Judah:

¹O God, you are my God,
earnestly I seek you;
my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you,
in a dry and weary land where there is no water.
² I have seen you in the sanctuary
and beheld your power and your glory.
³ Because your love is better than life,
my lips will glorify you.
⁴ I will praise you as long as I live,
and in your name I will lift up my hands.
⁵ My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods;
with singing lips my mouth will praise you.
⁶ On my bed I remember you;
I think of you through the watches of the night.
⁷ Because you are my help,
I sing in the shadow of your wings.
⁸ My soul clings to you;
your right hand upholds me.

Celebrant: Benediction

During your Lenten “inner desert” experience may your soul thirst for your God and your body long for your Lord each night while on your bed. And on Easter morning may your soul rise and be satisfied with the richest of foods and may your lips sing glory while in the shadow of the wings of your Risen Savior. **All:** Amen

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Everyone is Invited for Light Refreshments Next Door
Afterwards Everyone is Invited to a No-host Dinner at a Local Restaurant

Our last Monastic Mass for the Lenten Season will be
on Saturday, April 15 at 5:00 pm and will be in the spiritual tradition
of the Stations of the Cross.

² Psalm 63