I resented it; for I admired my father intensely—he was a man of standing—and dimly I sensed that he must be in some way the cause. Sometimes in the evenings my mother used to steal off with me as companion to the Catholic church on a distant street, where I knew she wept quietly all during the strange and to me incomprehensible service. Even then I could understand why she yearned for her own church—it was so peaceful and soothing, and the bowed heads at the last always filled me with a sense of awe. But there was a dread in it too, especially after mother had told me about her wish for me . . . Ah, well! There came other sorrows," the speaker went on with a sigh. "Two of my brothers were injured in an accident and both died later. That was before I was married. Then a year afterward the oldest one died in California, where he had gone for his health; and my mother's heart seemed to break, when death finally claimed my two sisters also—all within a period of less than ten years. And here I am," she broke out in a passion of despair, "only thirty eight, and all alone in the world—all alone! Isn't it terrible, Miss Dorgan?"

"Yes, it is sad," Miss Dorgan agreed gravely, looking at her patient with a new sympathy. Poor little lonely soul! Life had indeed walked roughshod over her hopes and dreams, crushed her and cast her aside like a broken, useless reed. Still, it was not sorrow altogether that had wrecked her nerves and set in the sweet eyes, so like her mother's, a troubled, piteous light. So the nurse conjectured as she went on speaking in her full quiet tones that Mrs. Elliot found so soothing. "But I have come to know, dear Mrs. Elliot, that there are worse things than loneliness, though, indeed, it is bad enough. I know, for I, too, am alone in the world—"

"You?" her patient broke in incredulously. "You, so bright, so cheerful, so happy!"

"Even so," smilingly. "And so will you be some day, I hope."

"Never!" hopelessly. "Unless—" Her dreary glance sought the park again and Miss Dorgan gave her a keen look.

"You will be," she stated decidedly, "unless you have something on your conscience that stands between you and happiness."

"Oh, I don't ask happiness," Mrs. Elliot replied dully, with a weary gesture. "All I want is peace—peace! And you are right of course," turning fretfully to the nurse. "There is something . . . On her deathbed my mother made me promise to become a Catholic in reparation for her great sin, as she called it, in giving up her religion!" She looked at Miss Dorgan as though she had thrown down a gauntlet, but the nurse returned her look quite undisturbed.

"Yes?" she said. "And then?"

"And then I didn't," sullenly.

"Ah! You made the promise, then, without intending to keep it?"

There was silence for a moment while the patient clasped and unclasped her hands nervously. "You despise me for it, don't you?" humbly. "But I wanted to ease her mind, don't you see? She said, she couldn't die happy—I would have done anything—promised anything, Miss Dorgan, to give her the happiness she craved in her last hours!" Her voice broke and tears came to her eyes, fastened so piteously on the nurse's face.

"I understand." Miss Dorgan's tone was very kind. It was queer the things people did; but then the world was full of queer people. "Well, it seems to me," she went on cheerfully, "that you have no cause to worry about it. If you did not intend to keep the promise, it was, in effect, no promise at all."

"Do you think so?" But the patient's face did not clear. "I wish I could think that way about it . . . but I can't!" impatiently, despairingly.

Julia was beginning to be puzzled. "But if you have an aversion to the Catholic religion—" she began.

"Oh, but I haven't!" eagerly. "Not an aversion—Oh no! but a dread—a great dread!"

Miss Dorgan smiled. "But that's foolish. Why should you dread it?"

"I don't know—I wish I did. But it was always with me—the dread—even as a child, especially after mother told me I had been baptised a Catholic and that some day I must be one in earnest. I—I don't know, if I can explain it clearly," she faltered; "but it was like a little ghost hidden away in the back of my mind—a ghost of something left undone,—though understand me, I had no thought that I *ought* to become a Catholic—it was never that. Only like a voice calling that I did not want to hear . . . a voice calling me to do something that I not only did not want to do, but that I dreaded with a strange and horrible dread. When I married I lost it for awhile, and I was happy—so happy! But when my children died . . . and my husband . . . it was there again—the secret dread, the fear, the restlessness. And then when mother . . . when I promised . . . it seemed such a little thing," faintly,—"to make her happy. But afterward, I would not—I would not! And now—" she broke into a wailing cry—"I have been brought to this!—to this!" She held out both weak, trembling, transparent hands.

As she listened to the halting words and broken sentences a great light had burst upon Julia Dorgan, and she stood transfixed as though in the presence of something sacred. Fugitive lines from a noble poem that she loved were striking on her consciousness:

"And is thy earth so marred,
Shattered in shard on shard?
Lo, all things fly thee for thou fliest Me!"

She went swiftly to her patient's side. "Dear Mrs. Elliot," she said in a trembling voice, "will you let me read to you a poem that I love? It will tell you better than I can where to go for the comfort that you need. May I read it?"

"Surely, Miss Dorgan," Mrs. Elliot answered apathetically, concealing her surprise and disappointment. She did not know what it was she had been hoping for from the confidence she had given her nurse, but certainly it was not this. A poem! . . . She shrugged her shoulders frowningly. Oh, well! . . . She saw that Miss Dorgan was moved, however, and she watched her curiously as she began to read.

"I fled Him down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him down the arches of the years;—"

The very first words caught her attention and Mrs. Elliot listened closely until Miss Dorgan had finished. Then, quietly, she requested a second reading. She sat quite still after the last words had died on the air, but Julia saw that there were tears on her cheeks, as she stared steadily out of the window. The short winter afternoon was closing down and gray shadows were creeping across the park, shrouding the bare trees in a soft mist and lending a floating mantle to the clustering bushes and low shrubbery. Mrs. Elliot's heart swelled with a new strange joy as she caught the eerie loveliness and knew that once again she could see the beauty of God's universe. She turned to the anxious nurse, lips trembling, eyes aglow.

"Is that it?" she asked in an awed whisper. "Is that it, Miss Dorgan? I—so weak, so unworthy—O how unworthy I have been!—has His love—been pursuing me?"

Miss Dorgan tried to smile, but it was a poor attempt, for she was shaken and near to tears.

"Yes," she answered simply. "I think that is it. Can't you see—don't you feel it yourself?"

"Oh, yes, I do see it!" a wonderful dazzled light in her eyes. "For now I am happy and at peace . . . Thank God for me, dear, until I am worthy to thank Him myself!" She hid her happy tears in the nurse's warm embrace. — Helen Moriarty in St. Anthony Messenger.

THE OFFICE OF THE TENEBRAE

The average Catholic knows very little about the Tenebrae. In fact often he does not know there is such a thing. He has heard of Holy Week and the services of Holy Week. For these he has great reverence. They are to him a revival of the most solemn week in all history. They reenact for him the most thrilling drama of all time. They tell him of Our Lord's seizure, judgment, conviction and death. These things he loves to hear because they are so intimately bound up with his own salvation. The story never loses its charm. And year after year as Holy Week again takes its place in the circle of affairs, he follows these ceremonies with rapt attention. And then if ever, does the Church seem to outdo itself. At other times there is a grandeur and magnificence in her ceremonial. But they seem to take a minor role in comparison with her present action. Her artists, her musicians, her rubricists appear to have risen to the apex of human perfection. Her ceremonial has a depth, a solemnity, truly befitting the occasion. In almost a Divine way she tells the story of the death of God. It is the saddest and yet the most joyous story ever heard. To the Catholic, whether devout or casual, her manner of narration never palls. Its vividness brings home to him his own position in the great mystery. He is interested, indeed at times thrilled at the evidence of God's unfathomable love for His creatures.

But of the Tenebrae he has scarcely heard. It is not his fault. Were he to hear it chanted and realize its meaning he would never again be absent. Rarely, if ever, does he get an opportunity. And often when he does happen to witness its recitation, it is done in such a manner as to be robbed of more than half its charm. He does not know what he is missing. To him it is an enigma, something strange and impressive, yet offered in such a manner as to be monotonous. He remains for the whole ceremony and leaves the church with a hazy recollection of the whole affair.

The Office of the Tenebrae expresses the theme of Holy Week. It is as it were the melody running through all its ceremonies. It is a cry of sorrow by the Church expressed in the language of the Prophets, of the Psalmist, and chanted in liturgical fashion to music which according to a leading authority who by the way, is a Protestant, Ernest Oldmeadow, surpasses in beauty and simplicity anything which the world has ever heard. Without the Tenebrae, Holy Week loses a great deal of its charm. With the Tenebrae the services take on a life and an inspiration that illumine all the ceremonial with a meaning and significance needing no interpretation.

ITS HISTORY

The Tenebrae is that portion of the Divine Office called Matins and Lauds which is chanted publicly and with great solemnity on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of Holy Week. The name itself is derived from the Latin word "darkness." It is a matter of history that nearly all the ceremonies of the early Christians were celebrated when the sun had flung its shadows over the earth and night had come, clothing in darkness their meeting places and their altars. It was then they could with less danger practice their faith and its ceremonials. At all events we know that the Tenebrae derives its name from the literal meaning attached to the word.

The origin of the Tenebrae is lost in antiquity. It carries us back to the earliest days of the Church, when the Bishop would gather his Priests and Deacons together with the faithful and chant the Psalms and Lamentations that today form what is known as Matins and Lauds. The lessons from Jeremias in the first nocturn, from the Commentaries of St. Augustine upon the Psalms in the second, and from the Epistles of St. Paul in the third, remain now as when we first heard of them in the Eighth Century. Liturgical reformers throughout the ages have always treated them with scrupulous respect.

And today in a simple way one might describe it thus: Each of the divisions of the Office of the Tenebrae is styled a nocturn or night prayer. From these everything not expressive of the grief of Mother Church is eliminated. Each canonical hour ends with the Psalm *Miserere* and with the commemoration of the Passion and Death of Our Saviour. No blessing is asked on the Lessons about to be read in the choir. Towards the ending the last prayers of each nocturn or hour, the reader lowers his voice, and no "Amen" is said by the people. The *Gloria Patri*, the *Te Deum* and all other evidences of joy and happiness is expunged. The whole effect is one of mourning, to mark, as it were, the Church's desolation.

THE TRIANGULAR CANDLESTICK

The most unique outward feature of the Tenebrae, the feature that catches the eye of every witness, whether he remain for a moment or an hour, is the large triangular candlestick placed at the Epistle side of the altar. On each of the two opposite sides of the triangle are seven yellow candles. Surmounting these in a striking and significant way is a white candle. In all there are fifteen candles on the triangle. At the end of each Psalm or Canticle one of these yellow candles is extinguished by a cleric who stands at the base of the candlestick with eyes on the master of the ceremonies ready to move at his behest. During the Benedictus the six candles on the altar are also extinguished. Finally the sole remaining white candle which has retained its place at the apex of the triangle, is removed and hidden behind the altar during the recitation of the *Miserere* and the prayer uttered so silently by the Bishop or other dignitary of the occasion. The prayer being ended, and the whole church still in darkness, the white candle is brought forward again to the sound of clapping and beating of books, and resumes its place at the top of the triangle.

The origin of this triangular candlestick is hidden in obscurity. In the early days of the Church, when the ceremonies were carried on after dark, as a matter of safety, the use of lights was not only a thing of choice, but of necessity. The clergy arranged them so as to create an effect bearing some meaning strikingly significant. The triangular candlestick is the result of one of these efforts and it is the only one which has come down to us through the centuries.

Many interpretations are offered in explanation of this arrangement of lights on the triangle. Some writers inform us that all the lower lights were emblematic of the Apostles and other Disciples of the Saviour, who for a period when His sufferings approached a crisis, became terrified at His arrest, His humiliations, His condemnation and Crucifixion, as well as by the supernatural exhibitions upon Calvary and Jerusalem. They hold that the extinction of the lights shows the terror and doubts by which they were overwhelmed. The white candle, which is never extinguished, but which only disappears for a time, represents the Blessed Virgin, who alone retains her confidence unshaken, and with a clear and perfect expectation of His resurrection, while plunged in grief, beholds the appalling spectres that came as from another world to give testimony to a deicide.

There is another interpretation more interesting because it more closely expresses the very theme which runs through the whole of the Office of the Tenebrae. This interpretation informs us that the candles which are arranged along the sides of the triangle represent the Patriarchs and Prophets who gave to the world the revelation which they had received. This revelation was imperfect, but as time went on each Prophet approached nearer the truth, making more perfect their revelation, and tending toward one point, which was Christ the Messias. He, as the Orient on High, was to shed the beams of His Knowledge upon those minds which had been so long shrouded in darkness. Just as these lower candles were extinguished, one at the end of each Psalm, so were these chosen ones, after having proclaimed the truth about the Redeemer, consigned to death, hidden by the very people whom they had instructed. The white candle at the summit of the triangle is never extinguished. It represents Christ, the Messias, the Light of the World. At His death the world was darkened, but only for a time. Just as the white candle returned from behind the altar, shedding its brilliant light in the vast darkness of the church, so Christ by His Resurrection returned to a world grown dark by His absence. His return illumined it. Unlike the Prophets and the Patriarchs, He triumphed over the forces of death. In this He showed His supremacy over them. He showed that he was their God.

THE TENEBRAE AT RHEIMS

To obtain a proper idea of the Office of the Tenebrae one has to have the right setting. The ordinary church that we meet in our modern cities of America, both because of the busy life that our priests and people lead, and the lack of tradition which is an invaluable aid in setting forth in the proper manner the ceremonial of the Church, does not lend itself so aptly to our quest.

Imagine, if you will, then, one of the old cathedrals of Europe. Assume that you are kneeling in that grand and glorious house of God that is now but a memory. Picture to yourself Rheims. It is a cathedral built by a people of a solid, sincere faith, who lived about the Twelfth Century. Expressing as it does, the devotion and hope of these folk in the beliefs that constituted their religion, it is a structure to conjure with. The arches and walls, the parapets and spires, the very gargoyles on the outer front seem to speak of a spirit that is eternal. The whole edifice is full of the soul of the people who built and worshipped in it. Their children and their children's children at one time thronged its interior. Today, were it still standing, instead of having fallen under the fiendish hand of the Hun, their progeny would soon be gathering beneath its portals to participate in the coming ceremonial of Holy Week. Let us, then, imagine that you are among them, kneeling in meditation awaiting the opening of the Tenebrae. The organ is silent. The cathedral echoes with the tread of a thousand feet. There is an air of solemnity over all things. The people are tense in expectation of the ceremony about to begin.

Suddenly there is a stir. Clerics are filing out, two by two, into the stalls allotted to them. The triangular candlestick with its fifteen candles is lighted and the six candles on the high altar are aflame. A great book has been brought forward and placed on a stand ready for the reading of the Lessons and the chanting of the Lamentations. Out of the depths of the silences that seem to crowd the vast edifice, arises the sweet notes of the first antiphon, sung by the leader of those stalls on the further side of the altar. The Psalms are then chanted in that sweetly solemn tone that a great number of male voices can produce. It is now time for the first Lamentations. They are taken from the Prophet Jeremias and under the name of the Daughter of Sion they bewail the desolation of Jerusalem over which Jesus went. The first Lamentation usually offered on Wednesday and Friday evenings are those harmonized by Palestrina and that of Thursday by Allegri. Their weird cadences flinging out over the congregation, sound like a great human sob, a cry full of the tears of the centuries wrung from the Church over the persecution that has ever followed Christ and His children. They tug at the heart-strings; unconsciously a lump arises in one's throat. Perhaps in the silence and darkness a tear does wet the cheek. And then there is again the chanting of the Psalms and the reading of the Lessons in that same tone of sorrow over the destruction of one so good as Christ.

It is when we come to Lauds that we are privileged to hear two of the most musical compositions of the whole Tenebrae. They are the *Miserere* and the *Benedictus*. The grandest of these are sung on Good Friday, when the *Benedictus* from the Sixtine Chapel collection and the *Miserere* by Allegri are generally performed.

One listens enchanted by these recitals. Different feelings surge over the mind. Now one is in suspense; now in full contentment as the voices harmonize in one grand note. Kneeling there in the darkness, relieved only by the lights glimmering on the triangular candlestick and the high altar, keeping repressed every sense except that of hearing, one is borne unresisting by the uniformly directed tide of the harmonies. The voices come like trailing clouds of glory down past the nave to where you are wrapt in silence and they appear to be weaving among themselves a rich texture of harmonious combinations. There is a resistance, a struggle against the general purpose. There seems to be an effort to have nothing more than a momentary contact with each other. They are continually approaching and dissolving into appealing dissonances till the whole volume as it reaches you meets in full harmony upon a suspended cadence. Again and again they divide and separate. It is delightful in the silence to analyze and follow the various tones as they float through the edifice. Here you trace one winding and creeping by soft and subdued steps through the labyrinth of sounds. Another appears dropping with delicate falls from one level to a lower. Then finally one appears to extricate itself; then another, in imitative successive cadence. As Cardinal Wiseman once wrote: "They seem as silver threads that gradually unwind themselves and then wind around the fine deep toned bass which has scarcely swerved from its steady dignity during all their modulations, and filling up with a magnificent diapason, burst into a swelling final cadence which has no name on earth."

"LOOK DOWN, O LORD, UPON THIS, THY FAMILY"

There are no embellishments or artifice to mar the beauty of the human voice expressing such exquisite harmony. No organ is sounded. No instrument used, except the human voice which God gave to man. Its simplicity is thrilling. And when at length the white candle is borne away from its place of honor at the summit of the triangle, and there in the utter darkness that touching prayer, "Look down, Oh, Lord, upon this, Thy family," has been recited in soft and gentle speech, one's mind remains in a state of subdued tenderness. One's heart is full to the brim with feeling. One's eyes are wet with the tears that must have streamed down Mary's face as she saw her Son crucified. There is the usual clapping of the books, a relic of the signal of the master of ceremonies for the return to the sacristy. Two by two the clerics file back whence they came.

It is over. The Tenebrae has been sung. The Church has mourned over her sorrows. She has wept over the suffering Christ. She has painted in musical tones a picture of her desolation. The good people are leaving the cathedral. Even the ordinary rush to get into the open air is absent this night. There is still a solemn cast to their countenances. And you depart with them. You walk under the open sky with its twinkling stars and its fleecy clouds, silver-touched in the moonlight. You are full of the emotion of the evening. You have finally heard the Tenebrae as it should be sung. You have seen it in its proper setting. You have heard voices, uninjured by the rush and toil of the busy world make articulate the master genius of those artists who fabricated the wonderful tones of the whole Office. You can henceforth understand with a real understanding the greatness, the sublimity, the almost essential part that the Office of the Tenebrae has in the Ceremonial of Holy Week.—Rev. James J. McDonnell in The Tablet.

ON MAKING HOME HAPPY

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of making home happy. Not only the sweetness of this life, but the salvation of immortal souls is at stake. And after all it is so easily done! A little unselfishness, a little thoughtfulness, and a frank display of the affection that is too often undemonstrative or even silent.

It would not be easy to find a more practical lesson on the subject than is furnished by the newly published, and very attractive book, "Roosevelt's Letters to His Children." These humorous, affectionate, intimate letters show the great American at his best—a man whom all must love whatever their opinions regarding his politics and his policies; a loving husband and a tender father, interested in all that concerned his children. He wrote with equal zest of Teddy Junior's trials on entering college, of studious Kermit's struggle with Latin, of little Quentin's mischievous pranks, and of the almost innumerable and often peculiar family pets.

These letters give glimpses of the strenuous president romping in the hayloft at Sagamore Hill, engaging in pillow fights against his little boys in the stately halls of the White House, playing 'tickley" with Archie and Quentin after they had gone to bed, or hearing their night prayers and rewarding them with nickles, "as Mother directed," when they knew their hymns by heart. The letters prove that his boys and girls were in his mind and heart every hour of the day when he made speaking tours or took hunting trips. He tells that he felt home-sick for them whenever he passed children while parading in the cities that he visited. In short Roosevelt was not only the adviser and discipliner of his children but also their playmate and best friend.

If every father was so close to his sons few boys would seek all their amusement away from home, and fewer fathers and mothers would carry aching hearts.—St. Anthony Messenger.

A SPLENDOR TO YOUR SOUL

Let us often visit Jesus in the Sacrament of His love. If prevented by distance or occupation from being present in body, we can at least be there before Him in spirit. At the hour of death we shall then be able to say: "My Jesus, I paid You ever so many little visits during life: do not abandon me now, O Jesus my love!"

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