



TRINITY

EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL
A house of prayer for all people

Holy Week Meditation
March 29, 2026, 4 p.m.

TROIS LEÇONS DE TÉNÈBRES — *François Couperin (1668-1733)*

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

Officiant The Lord be with you.

People **And with thy spirit.**

Officiant Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, who, of thy tender love towards humankind, hast sent thy Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all humankind should follow the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

PREMIÈRE LEÇON À UNE VOIX

Incipit Lamentatio Jeremiae prophetae.

1:1 ALEPH. *Quomodo sedet sola civitas plena populo! Facta est quasi vidua domina gentium; princeps provinciarum facta est sub tributo.*

1:2 BETH. *Plorans ploravit in nocte, et lacrima ejus in maxillis ejus: non est qui consoletur eam, ex omnibus caris ejus; omnes amici ejus spreverunt eam, et facti sunt ei inimici.*

1:3 GHIMEL. *Migravit Judas propter afflictionem, et multitudinem servitutis; habitavit inter gentes, nec invenit requiem: omnes persecutores ejus apprehenderunt eam inter angustias.*

1:4 DALETH. *Via Sion lugent, eo quod non sint qui veniant ad solemnitatem: omnes portae ejus destructae, sacerdotes ejus gementes; virgines ejus squalidae, et ipsa oppressa amaritudine.*

Here beginneth the Lamentations of the Prophet Jeremiah.

1:1 ALEPH. How lonely sits the city that was full of people! How like a widow has she become, she that was great among the nations! She that was a princess among the cities has become a vassal.

1:2 BETH. She weeps bitterly in the night, tears on her cheeks; among all her lovers she has none to comfort her; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they have become her enemies.

1:3 GHIMEL. Judah has gone into exile because of affliction and hard servitude; she dwells now among the nations, but finds no resting place; her pursuers have all overtaken her in the midst of her distress.

1:4 DALETH. The roads to Zion mourn, for none come to the appointed feasts; all her gates are desolate, her priests groan; her maidens have been dragged away, and she herself suffers bitterly.

1:5 HE. *Facti sunt hostes ejus in capite; inimici ejus locupletati sunt: quia Dominus locutus est super eam propter multitudinem iniquitatum ejus. Parvuli ejus ducti sunt in captivitatem ante faciem tribulantis.*

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.

DEUXIÈME LEÇON À UNE VOIX

1:6 VAU. *Et egressus est a filia Sion omnis decor ejus; facti sunt principes ejus velut arietes non inveniētes pascua, et abierunt absque fortitudine ante faciem subsequēntis.*

1:7 ZAIN. *Recordata est Jerusalem dierum afflictionis suæ, et prævaricationis, omnium desiderabiliū suorum, quæ habuerat a diebus antiquis, cum caderet populus ejus in manu hostili, et non esset auxiliator: viderunt eam hostes, et deriserunt sabbata ejus.*

1:8 HETH. *Peccatum peccavit Hierusalem, propterea instabilis facta est: omnes qui glorificabant eam spreverunt illam: quia viderunt ignominiam eius: ipsa autem gemens et conversa retrorsum.*

1:9 TETH. *Sordes eius in pedibus eius: nec recordata est finis sui. Deposita est vehementer: non habens consolatorem. Vide Domine afflictionem meam: quoniam erectus est inimicus.*

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.

1:5 HE. Her foes have become the head, her enemies prosper, because the Lord has made her suffer for the multitude of her transgressions; her children have gone away, captives before the foe.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord thy God.

1:6 VAU. From the daughter of Zion has departed all her majesty. Her princes have become like harts that find no pasture; they fled without strength before the pursuer.

1:7 ZAIN. Jerusalem remembers in the days of her affliction and bitterness all the precious things that were hers from days of old. When her people fell into the hand of the foe, and there was none to help her, the foe gloated over her, mocking at her downfall.

1:8 HETH. Jerusalem sinned grievously, therefore she became filthy; all who honored her despise her, for they have seen her nakedness; yea, she herself groans, and turns her face away.

1:9 TETH. Her uncleanness was in her skirts; she took no thought of her doom; therefore her fall is terrible, she has no comforter. “O Lord, behold my affliction, for the enemy has triumphed!”

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord thy God.

TROISIÈME LEÇON À DEUX VOIX

1:10 JOD. *Manum suam misit hostis ad omnia desiderabilia ejus, quia vidit gentes ingressas sanctuarium suum, de quibus præceperas ne intrarent in ecclesiam tuam.*

1:11 CAPH. *Omnis populus ejus gemens, et quærens panem; dederunt pretiosa quæque pro cibo ad refocillandam animam. Vide, Domine, et considera quoniam facta sum vilis!*

1:12 LAMED. *O vos omnes qui transitis per viam, attendite, et videte si est dolor sicut dolor meus! quoniam vindemiavit me, ut locutus est Dominus, in die iræ furoris sui.*

1:13 MEM. *De excelso misit ignem in ossibus meis et erudivit me: expandit rete pedibus meis: convertit me retrorsum: posuit me desolatam tota die maerore confectam.*

1:14 NUN. *Vigilavit jugum iniquitatum mearum; in manu ejus convolutae sunt, et impositae collo meo. Infirmata est virtus mea: dedit me Dominus in manu de qua non potero surgere.*

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, convertere ad Dominum Deum tuum.

Text: Lamentations of Jeremiah 1:1-5, 6-9, & 10-14

THE SOLEMN PRAYER OVER THE PEOPLE

Almighty God, we pray thee graciously to behold this thy family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross; who liveth and reigneth for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Sopranos: Paige Cullins & Anna Squire

Organ: Dr. Colin MacKnight

Theorbo: Carey Morrow

Viola da gamba: Cheyenne McCoy

1:10 IOD. The enemy has stretched out his hands over all her precious things; yea, she has seen the nations invade her sanctuary, those whom thou didst forbid to enter thy congregation.

1:11 CAPH. All her people groan as they search for bread; they trade their treasures for food to revive their strength. "Look, O Lord, and behold, for I am despised."

1:12 LAMED. "Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow which was brought upon me, which the Lord inflicted on the day of his fierce anger."

1:13 MEM. "From on high he sent fire; into my bones he made it descend; he spread a net for my feet; he turned me back; he has left me stunned, faint all the day long.

1:14 NUN. "My transgressions were bound into a yoke; by his hand they were fastened together; they were set upon my neck; he caused my strength to fail; the Lord gave me into the hands of those whom I cannot withstand." Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return to the Lord thy God.

Notes on the Notes: The Lamentations of Jeremiah are the central texts used in Tenebrae liturgies during Holy Week. In the Lamentations, Jeremiah mourns the Babylonians' destruction of Jerusalem. During Holy Week, this Old Testament story is understood as a parallel to Christ's suffering during the Passion.

During the Renaissance, it was common for composers to set the Lamentations to music (the most famous probably being Thomas Tallis' setting). The *Leçons de Ténèbres* are a French Baroque subgenre which was prominent during the reign of King Louis XIV, in whose employ Couperin wrote his own *Leçons de Ténèbres*.

One of the unusual features of the Lamentations is its acrostic form. Chapters 1, 2, and 4 each have 22 verses – one for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Each verse begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet; the first verse begins with the first letter, the second verse with the second letter, etc. The symbolism of the acrostics is twofold: first, to impose order on the disorder of grief, and second, to represent a comprehensive lament from A to Z. These letters receive the most ornate musical treatment in Couperin's composition.

Couperin's *Leçons* are scored for one or two sopranos and basso continuo. Continuo is a Baroque term for an instrument or group of instruments that play the bass line and provide harmonic support. Continuo groups can include organ, harpsichord, cello, viola da gamba, theorbo, bassoon, etc. depending on the forces one has available. For today's performance, the continuo group will include three unusual Baroque instruments: portative organ, viola da gamba, and theorbo.

UPCOMING SERVICES

Wednesday, April 1 at 7 pm

The Office of Tenebrae

Sung by the Trinity Schola

Music by Rubbra, Willan, Victoria, and Anerio

Thursday, April 2 at 7 pm

The Liturgy for Maundy Thursday

Sung by the Women of the Trinity Choir

Britten *Missa brevis* and Eucharistic motets by Fauré

Friday, April 3 at 12 p.m.

The Liturgy for Good Friday

Sung by the Trinity Choir

Schütz *Passion According to St. John* and Sanders *Reproaches*

Saturday, April 4 at 7 pm

The Great Vigil of Easter

Sung by the Trinity Choir and Choristers

Music by Harris and Hurford

Sunday, April 5 at 8 and 10:30 am

Holy Eucharist for Easter Day

Sung by the Trinity Choir, with strings

Schubert *Mass in G* and Bairstow *Sing ye to the Lord*