



Brief History of Tenebrae Carmel of Reno

Prior to the 1950s, most religious communities (and some parishes as well) kept the custom of praying Tenebrae at night on Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. The extinguishing of lights during this service dates from the fifth century and led to the name “Tenebrae,” meaning shadows.

Today it is rare to find a place where Tenebrae continues to be prayed together. We believe there is richness in the Tenebrae tradition and so have adapted it for our community and times. It has become our morning prayer during the Sacred Triduum: Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

This ancient prayer service originally consisted of:

- First Nocturn: Chanting of Lamentations of Jeremiah
- Second Nocturn: Psalms and commentary from St. Augustine
- Third Nocturn: Epistles from St. Paul

Whereas Jeremiah’s lamentations revealed the realities of his time and place, our lamentations reflect our contemporary concerns and the circumstances of people throughout our world today. The readings we have chosen are based on Scripture, early Christian writings, or more contemporary authors.

We are especially grateful to our Sister Lauren Grady (RIP) who did the original updating of the lamentations and translated the psalms from the Hebrew.