**Contemplative Service for Wednesday**

**April 5, 2023**

**A Tenebrae Service**

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*painting by Marc Chagall*

**First reading**: John 19:29-30

So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. 30When Jesus had received the wine, he said, “It is finished.” Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

**Music**: “The Lamb” by John Tavener, conducted by Nigel Short

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HRjeC31edk0

**Second reading**: “Cyclic Journey Thru Cross Roads” by Norman Weinstein

In a dark church all senses shed

an impulse to get to a destination

blinded directionally in silence, as if

entering a garden where olive trees

whisper braille. We go among their gnarled

branching arms where they wish to go,

not simply to go with God but God goes

on a journey our own. Somewhere

in this poem a compass needle becomes

an arm holding a chalice. Of blood merging

with blood to create a church where

silence, roughly sanded, polishes into Psalm.

Olive tree branches like usher arms push

us forward into a black we’ve not left

In our rush to get anywhere but this

remaining Cross roads.

**Music**: “Miserere mei, Deus” by Allegri, conducted by Nigel Short

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3v9unphfi0

**Time of Silent Contemplation:**

*Save me, O God,
      for the waters have risen up to my neck,*

*and there is no firm ground for my feet.*

*My eyes have failed from looking for my God.*

*O God, you know my foolishness,
     and my faults are not hidden from you.*

*In your great mercy, O God,
      answer me with your unfailing help.*

*Save me from the mire; do not let me sink;
     let me be rescued.*

*Answer me, O LORD, for your love is kind.*

*—from Psalm 69*

**Communal Blessing**

Bless the dark.

Bless the absence.

Bless this irremediable.

Bless the groping toward.

Here in this blessing we wait.

Bless us, bowed and bound in misgiving.

Bless the sheen of tears in no light.

**Music**: “If Ye Love Me,” by Tallis, conducted by Nigel Short

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HI5Y9l2NHIo

*May you feel the divine presence even in the deepest shadow.*

*Go in peace.*