

Did You Know? An Anglican Glossary

Tenebrae



A monk lights the candles on the herse for the service of Tenebrae.
See: Tenebrae herse.

The services of Tenebrae consist of the Matins and Lauds (Divine Office) of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday anticipated on the afternoon of the previous day. The Gregorian chant used for the Psalms and Lessons is very beautiful.

The service dates from at least the 7th century and was part of the monastic prayer cycle. It was also observed in Cathedrals where there were canons and other clergy able to participate. The people could attend these extra-liturgical services.

Today some Anglican and Episcopal churches observe Tenebrae, but only the Wednesday (Holy Thursday) service, and must obtain permission of the bishop to do so.