

THE WITNESS of the LIGHT

By the Rev. John C. Park

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This drama service was originally designed for an Easter Sunrise Service. With minor changes it could also be used at other times to celebrate the Easter season. It runs from 45 to 60 minutes.

It is written to use 14 voices, eight male, four female, and two flexible parts. If done as part of a worship service, it would be very appropriate if the narrator were also the worship leader.

Fourteen candles are needed. Two standard (*Seven-candle*.) candelabras are ideal, but 14 candles in any type of holders will do. They should, however, be separated into two distinct groups of seven, and should remain unlit until the appropriate part of the service.

Also, a larger "Christ Candle" should be used. This candle should be carried into the staging area, already lit, during either the Prelude, or the opening hymn. It should be placed half-way between the two sets of candles mentioned previously. If possible in a worship setting, the candle should be set on the communion table.

At the appropriate part of the service, each reader comes forward and reads his or her part. When finished, the Narrator (*Who should be somewhere to the side.*) reads the accompanying scripture passage. All scripture readings are taken from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

While this is occurring, the reader should: light a small taper from the Christ Candle, light the appropriate candle, extinguish the taper, wait for the narrator to finish the scripture, then sit down again. All readers simply sit in the audience or congregation, and then return to their places when finished.

A typical order of worship for such a service might include the following:

WELCOME

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

OPENING HYMN

(As "Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed")

I. THE WITNESSES TO HIS DEATH

A Friend from Galilee

A Roman Soldier

Joseph of Arimathea

SECOND HYMN

("Were You There When They Crucified My Lord")

The Woman

One of the Pharisees

Mary Magdalene *(Or Mary or Salome.)*

THE OFFERTORY SERVICE

II. THE WITNESSES TO THE RESURRECTION

A Disciple

A Woman

A Guard

Mary

EASTER HYMN

(As "I Know That My Redeemer Lives")

Disciple on the Road

A Disciple

The Great Commission

EASTER ANTHEM *(If choir is present.)*

The Narrator's Candle

CLOSING HYMN

(As "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today")

BENEDICTION

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

The candles should be lit in the following order:

(14) (10)
(3) (4) (9) (11)
(2) (5) CHRIST (8) (12)
(1) (13)
(6) CANDLE (7)

(Please note that the center candle of the left set is skipped by the READERS, to be lit later by the NARRATOR.)

THE WITNESS TO THE LIGHT

NARRATOR:

Welcome. We bid you welcome this morning, to our Easter Sunrise Service. I think also that a little explanation is in order.

Any of you who have ever attended a Tenebrae service will remember the drama of the dimming lights, as those present remembered our Lord's crucifixion and death.

This morning we celebrate the sunrise, and remember the day when our Lord rose from His tomb. And what better symbol to remember Him who was called "The Light of the World," than through the lighting of candles.

So as we celebrate the resurrection this day, let us remember also the people and events which it involved.

But first let us pause for prayer.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION:

O God, we remember this day, how You sent Your Son to die in our place. Yet we also celebrate the fact that His death was not an end, but a new beginning. Be with us this day, as we lift our hearts and minds in remembrance and praise. As we remember the events around that first Easter, may your Son also rise again in our hearts. Amen.

Opening Hymn (*Lenten*) as "*Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed*"

I. THE WITNESSES TO HIS DEATH

CANDLE #1 - A FRIEND FROM GALILEE

(Flexible part)

It was such a strange day. A day of darkness - in our hearts and on the land. As though the sun itself did not want to see what was being done.

But we saw. We gathered at a distance, because we were afraid to come too close, afraid to be recognized with a man convicted of treason. But we were close enough to see.

Our beloved teacher, hanging on a cross. He hung there for hours, though it seemed like years for us. He hung there, taunted by the crowd, and writhing in his pain.

Then he suddenly arched his back and shouted something to the heavens - and went suddenly limp. We were too far away to hear his words, but we saw it all, and we knew now that it was finally over.

Jesus was dead.

(HE or SHE LIGHTS candle as NARRATOR reads scripture.)

Luke 23 : 44, 46, 48, 49

It was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. And all the multitudes who assembled to see the sight, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts. And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance and saw these things.

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