

(uplifting music) (uplifting instrumental music) (instruments drowning out singers voice)

- It is a good thing to get up in the morning and wash your face and be clean and know that for a while you are clean. Every one of us knows that being humans as we are is likely that our foot shall slip or that we shall stumble, that we shall do something after today that is unworthy, it will make us unclean. We do not want to do this, but if history repeats itself and we continue to be humans in spite of our best efforts, it may happen. Today we can be clean. We can cleanse our hearts by confessing our sins to God and knowing that he will hear us and forgive us. It would be a wonderful thing to be in the presence of almighty God and know that you are accepted, that you are forgiven and that you are clean. Accordingly let us now open our hearts, our souls to all mighty God in our prayer of confession. All mighty God we do indeed have much to confess. We have been unworthy in many ways. We have complained that we are too busy, but we have been impatient when others have not given us perfect service. We are guilty and that we have tried to pretend that issues are very complicated which you have made simple. And we have declared impossible things which you have said that with your help can be done. We are guilty because we have believed that if we would only ignore our problems they would go away. We have emphasized exterior beauty, not interior beauty. We have acted as though we could repeal your ethical laws by our own vote, and that if we would only gang up together and do evil you would have to accept it. We have tried to act as though we were God. We have reserved to ourselves little precincts, little pockets that we have been unwilling to admit you to. Sometimes we have failed to love the sinner in our zeal to eradicate the sin. Sometimes we have failed to hate the sin in our emphasis upon loving the sinner and usually we have failed to keep a proper balance between the two. Some of us have believed that knowledge and wisdom consists chiefly of holding degrees and having grade marks on a card. We have sometimes behave like the lepers who were cleansed but fail to return and give thanks or like the Pharisees who built the tombs of the prophets who were safely dead, meanwhile planning to crucify the Lord of life in our own time. We have sometimes been quick to accept and profit by the fruits of Christian institutions in the past while making a very weak and timid and half-hearted and uncertain witness today. We have attempted to find plausible excuses for not doing what we knew to be right. Oh God, forgive us these and all other sins and give us grace to make a great improvement through thy grace, the grace of our savior, Jesus Christ, amen. In the beginning I said, we made our confessions of sin and made them sincerely we would be accepted and forgiven. How do we know that? In the scriptures we are told there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus who walk, not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit, so be it. (uplifting instrumental music)

- The scripture for the morning is taken from the gospel according to St. Luke, the 22nd chapter beginning at the 52nd verse. Then Jesus said to the chief priests and captain of the temple and elders who had come out against him, "Have you come out as against a robber with swords and clubs? When I was with you, day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me, but this is your hour and the power of darkness." Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house. Peter followed at a distance. And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them.

Then a maid seeing him as he sat in the light and gazing at him, said, "This man also was with him," but he denied it to saying, "Woman, I do not know him." And a little later, someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not." And after an interval of about an hour, still another insisted saying, "Certainly this man also was with him for he is a Galilean." But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying." And immediately, while he was yet still speaking, the cock crowed and the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly." (uplifting instrumental music) (instruments drowning out singers voice)

- The Lord be with you.

- And with your spirit.

- Let us pray. Almighty God, creator of life and light, we thank you for the beauty of your world, for sunshine and the dark for the storm cloud and the starry night. We are grateful for the first radiance of dawn and the last glow of sunset. We thank you for physical joy for the ecstasy of learning, for problems to solve and for hard work to do. We bless you for music that lifts our hearts and for the hand clasp of a friend. Supremely, we thank you for spiritual beauty and hope, for the truth of the prophets and of the poets, for the healing touch of the great physician, for the awareness of your presence among us and for the redemption of the world through Jesus, your son. Oh God even as we make our prayers of thanksgiving for past blessings, we are mindful of new needs which we have. We lift up before you the needs of our fellows. We are mindful of our colleague, Donald K. Adams, whose death has made us sad, whose contributions to the academic life of our university have enriched it and whose discoveries and whose teaching have made us wiser about ourselves. And we pray that the strength of your spirit may undergird his loved ones and his colleagues and grant that the good things in his life may continue to live in us. Oh God we remember before you now in a very special way, our brown house counselor, Kay Western, and ask that as she undergoes surgery she may have the touch of the great physician, the skill of human physicians and that recovery and health may return to her. We are mindful of friends at home who need you in a special way, of roommates and friends and loved ones, and each one of us in his own heart now calls those names before you asking your power and your love and your presence. Almighty God as we draw near to the end of this academic year, we pray that you will keep us from all deceit and fraud, make us humble when success comes and keep us patient and wise when disappointment comes, but grant that ill will and envy may never find any room in our hearts. Assist us to discipline ourselves inwardly and to persevere in the vocation of learning beyond this time of testing. So enable us that at the final accounting of all men before you, we may by your grace, be able to give a good return on the talents which you have given to us. We make our prayer in the name of our elder brother, who is our savior, our teacher, our great physician, our Lord Jesus Christ, remembering the words he has taught us to use in prayer, saying our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, amen.

- In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, amen. We are strangers, you and I to

ourselves and to each other. Our generation is born out of season wandering in places that we do not know. All day we move like puppets in a dumb show yet night will find us, strangers still in a strange land. We cannot see through the masks which hide the souls of those about us and so we label and dismiss them. These are young we say, or old, or clever, or stupid or charming or tedious and that is that. We label and dismiss them and for their part they pass us by. We dare not contemplate the labels that they put upon us. It would be too painful. Yes, we are isolated from our generation, cut off because we cannot abandon or penetrate the masks or speak the word which would arouse resonance in the heart of another, nor can our alienated fellow speak to us, no matter how swiftly we run, we do not reach that place at which we are at home. And no matter how deep our dreams, there is in due course the hour of instalest daylight, when we must face the truth and ourselves and admit that we are alone and terrified. No one speaks to us, not really, or seems even to know our name. Yet if the gospel is good news, audit not to cite something to lonely and frightened folk like us. Does it indeed, because the question is as involved as it is inevitable, let us start early and go slowly in an effort to discover what the Christian tradition holds out to start long of this. As you might expect, the point at which we begin is with the man, Jesus. A man so like ourselves that he used to spend his holiday with friends, that he had watched to borrow money to pay this tax. A man so like ourselves, that he grew hungry and thirsty and tired and lonely. Let us begin by considering the circumstances surrounding what a lonely Jesus once said to another lonely man, and so to begin. Whether Jesus of Nazareth was a mad man or Messiah is with many still an open question. Of course he may have been neither. Do you remember the outrageous daring of his scathing the enunciation of the members of the establishment, a generation of vipers he called them. And yet he had such touch upon your faith that the meek would inherit the earth. He had such confidence that one had only to ask in order to receive. It is indeed difficult to decide whether he is a dangerous rebel or a misguided dreamer. But however one assesses this person there is little quarrel about what happened to his body. At least in that hour, when hanging naked upon a tree between heaven and earth, he cried out with a loud voice and he gave up his spirit. A crucifixion was a mean and ugly thing. Where it happened was not as the sentimental him would have it a green hill, it was a place of the skull, the air was feted with the stench of stale blood and heavy with the ghost of those whose sorry lives had dropped out there, hen to Rome's rude crosses. The very thought is enough to take the breath away. Crucifixion did not simply mean death. It meant that in screaming agony, there was no grandeur really, and no incidental music. Now it is important to our purpose to remember how unlike our art, the actual event was. Only an acknowledging how sour the crucifixion was do we begin to comprehend the reaction of Jesus' friends when they learn the fate which awaited him. Whatever hostility the disciples had sensed in Galilee there is small doubt that when Jesus set his space purposely to go to Jerusalem, they accompanied him up that grave and steep ascent with solemn anxiety. Even if the city should prove friendly and what city ever does, it would still strange. Not Thomas who always borrowed trouble nor John who measured matters with the practiced eye, not even these two could have guessed exactly what lay ahead for Jesus yet little by little the disciples discovered the shape of the future. Like man, moving in the darkness over unfamiliar ground, their eyes became accustomed to the shadows and they were in time able to discern the true dimension of agony. Words which they had not understood when they were first spoken, odd scraps and pieces of experience began now to fall into a frightening pattern. When they had gathered with him and the upper room, Jesus had arranged the meeting secretly and once there more cryptic than usual, he had spoken of a broken body and of blood that was spilled. There was talk of betrayal. Also he advised those who had no weapons to sell their possessions and to go out and buy swords. Still when they showed him the sword that

by had, he refused them and went out the big whack among the olive trees. It was there that he was arrested. A band of armed ropeans came for him, they were Jews and Romans all brought by Judas. Judas, who hailed him as master but sold him to the enemy. All at once the disciples understood Jesus was doomed. It was plain to the dullystotale. Jesus was in the hands of his enemies and whatever the end it would not be good. The legions of his father's angels for which he had spoken were not there. Looking wonder that his friends or most of them fled into the night he was forsaken and alone. So it is therefore no mean thing that Peter followed, but far off surely, but he did follow because he was desperate. He too stood alone and forsaken. He had believed that in this man, Jesus, that was foundation for hope and now hope was gone, faith was impossible and that was left only long enough to wait. They brought Jesus to the house of the high priest. By now, it was certain that there was no escape. Peter knew it when some of the curious recognized the fisherman, he denied that he had ever known Jesus. They pressed it, Peter swore never, never had he known the man. Still almost the whole night through Peter waited. One lonely man watching far another morning was near, the cock began to crow. And then, and then found and guarded, Jesus appeared. He turned and looked at Peter and in their exchange, there was recognition and identity. In a flare of contrition Peter recalled that Jesus had said that he would deny his master. Peter went out and wept bitterly. Now here was communication. Jesus turned and looked at Peter and Peter understood. No word was spoken. That was no need for words, we do not bridge gaps with speech. Words only acknowledge, express or sustain that which already exists. The problem finally is not one of syntax, but one of community and community is not achieved by words, let alone by structures anymore than it is safe guarded by them. We can destroy and preclude community without a single syllable through our wordless language because some of us by our very presence say no to others. The tower of Babel is indeed an appropriate symbol for our current state. Like the confused people of that episode, we say much and communicate very little. Those who milled about the tower of Babel with darkness were marvelously sincere and beyond all cavel they were endeavoring to tell it whatever it may be as it was each in his own language, of course, but there was no communication because there was no community words just do not make it. No, not even sincere, well-meaning or accurate words. For communication is born of a deeper level. The bearer who comes to us with ill tidings does not break his news with kind word, the eye, the bearing, the breath, these things communicate tragedy to us and our hearts despair before our ears hear. It is the same with joy instinctively, we recognize those who accept us without the need of labels. And so we may very well reject the man of fair words and accept his grub brother as a true friend. Now it was this kind of wordless radical communication which passed between Jesus and Peter. The understanding arose spontaneously from a community, which is finally the only kind that is real namely the community of spirit. What was it that found Jesus and Peter together. I can tell you community arises between men when they share a common experience, which they interpret in a common way because they acknowledge the same values. It does not need to be sophisticated or spoken to operate. Consider prisoners of war held in a concentration camp might be from a dozen different nations, but they are bound together in strong community by the captor who's heel is upon the neck of all. Instinctively they communicate with each other and each has community with the other because they interpret a common experience with reference to shared values. Even if sadly, they have no more in common than a burning hatred and an undying hope, but they understand each other, never doubt it. Though one may speak only Polish and the other only Urdu, they look into their eyes and they understand, or again, watchers in the waiting rooms of hospital wards find that their common confrontation with that last rubber death then makes them however, briefly members of a single community with each

other and with all who mourn, experience unites them, they have not suffered indistinguishable blows of misfortune, nor do they react to them in identical ways, but at a radical level, they know themselves to be in the grip of forces, which they do not control. And this experience makes them bound in a common destiny. Each cries out for someone else to notice when the last calls to be, there is community, there is communication. Do not ask me but it's more often true how grief than happiness that such spontaneous community arises only ponder in sobriety that it is so and take heart that man pleading the city where the plague has struck, 10 communicate with each other and be glad that man trapped in the city where the enemy besieges can speak without words. In such an hour it matters very little if the salt is still than the sauce, or if the theater tickets are poor, or if the coat is badly cut, all that matters is our own vulnerability and someone else's awareness. Return now to the character of the apostle Peter standing in the courtyard of the high priest. Only he had followed to the house of his accusers. Once, twice, three times, he had denied even knowing the man. It is just possible, but he never had nodded. In any case the cock crows and Peter remembers that Jesus had said that he would do exactly what he has done, deny him. Jesus turns and looks at Peter, they communicate. Overwhelmed with fear and memory, Peter remembers not only what has happened in the last evening, he remembers who he is. Remembers and accepts for memory knows but before knowing it remembers. But when knowing has remembered, then remembrance maybe wisdom. Peter's plight describes us all. He is lonely and forsaken. The one in whom he trusted for deliverance has been set upon like a common felon and he is destined for worse. The arrest and lead only to execution and now deserted even by the one in whom he believed, Peter cries out. Someone, anyone must take notice of him. What remains is not a case history, but a conclusion. He is desolate. Won't someone notice me? Won't someone speak to me? You understand Peter's condition and so do I. When your happiness is multiplied, would you not for a brief instant remember that I too would like to be happy, that I might just not be quite as tranquil as I pretend, or when you search me out in private agony and tell me your grief, would you not stop even for an instant and consider that perhaps there is a stake in my heart, not all the crosses are on hills. Pierced hands do not always bleed and ribbon hearts do not always die. Men can come down from that calvaries with hands unscarred and white. Won't someone speak to me before I dissolve in madness? I am lonely and afraid Are you not indeed, are not we all? It is the toad beneath the hour knows exactly where each tooth part goes and in the end you are alone and I am alone. You are unique, but so is your neighbor. Won't someone speak to me, but how can he? How can anybody who knows you, not I, not I. Then Jesus turned and looked at Peter and that was communication, ah what did he say? It must have been significant. Peter became the rock man. You remember in during prevailing, brave and quenching before the council's courageous at the hour of his death, Jesus communicated something to him and it was not the first time that this miracle occurred. Discounting all the myth and legend and making allowances for all the era which retelling entails the figure of Jesus stands in the gospel as one who man could not resist. "Follow," he said, and they did. A woman whose lips had caressed the flesh of a dozen nations, a learned doctor of the law, a fisherman, downright and earthy, a little child he communicated with them, what did he say? Not, I think what the sentimentalist would like to have us believe nor yet what Peter had earlier thought he heard him say. Let us presume to explain. I have said that communication is possible only out of common experience. Peter was earthy and human and weak. Jesus, whether mad man or dreamer, was idealistic, compromising and strong. What have they in common, these two. You know, loneliness. For Peter had set himself outside the bounds by his own action, he had failed, but he was his own judge and executioner. He was desolate and alone like us and Jesus was betrayed, forsaken and denied but lonely too like us. Peter had renounced the

community, the community had renounced Jesus and so at this radical level, the very isolation of these two lonely ones established their community. Out of this bond then what did Peter hear Jesus say, the church has often been represented as offering indiscriminate fraternity to men like Peter, or you or me and it simply does not work. In our loneliness we beg for someone to notice, is it nothing to you all you that passed by yet when we have sought the church in the mistaken hope that our loneliness would disappear, we have found ourselves twice down. We are more lonely within than without. Our complaints translate into disenchantment and to more terrible isolation. No Jesus can speak to Peter, not because he promises to take away the loneliness, but because he promises always to remember Peter's loneliness, always to respect it. You see the church has talked taught us this truth by its very iconography could we but learn the lesson. The fathers had their special burdens, the prophets saw their special visions and every marketer met his unique destiny in so singular a way that there are several stories locked in the stained glass of these windows which enclose us are all different. Each from the other, men arguably, we are in the individuals all of us and lonely individuals and this is what Jesus communicates to Peter. He will remember this, he will remember it and he will never insist that Peter be anything otherwise. I know who you are, he says, you are a lonely one. I know your fears and hopes, of what you might possibly say or be, or do or become, but there is a place for you. This is the meaning of grace. A place for you as you are. The bidding is not to come and loose yourself in the throng, it is to come and join with others in the knowledge that they are lonely too. You might spend here with them, they will always be lonely and so will you. Fear and doubt and anxiety may well follow you all your days but within the company of Christ friends, you will walk with others who also know loneliness and longing, they will speak to you and you will hear them, for they will speak from their own yearning and you will speak to them and they will listen in such compassion there is strength. I give you a newbie attitude beloved. Blessed are they that comfort, consolation maybe beyond you, but compassion is yours. Won't someone speak to us the word for which we all listen when we hear it is but an echo of our own compassion and the recognition of how long, how long is the road that we walk. Arm's length in undiluted friendship. All of us brief links ourselves in the eternal pity, amen and amen. Incline thine ear unto us, hear the prayers of our hearts and heal our loneliness for our name sake, amen. (uplifting instrumental music) (uplifting choir music) (uplifting instrumental music) (choir music) (uplifting music)