

From Darkness to Light

Narrators: Sr Giovanni Farquer (1) Antoinette Collins (did not arrive) (2) Sr Marianne Dacy was the substitute narrator (2)

Proclaimer of Camp names: George Sternfeld (child survivor)

Viola: David Angell

Mater Chorale, directed by Sheryl Southwood (Psalm 51 and final modern piece)

(All sit - Silence)

NARRATOR 1

All the shining lights of the heavens
 Were extinguished
 One by one
 Slowly, painfully
 A suffocating pall creeps over the land
 Spreading destruction and misery
 Insanity, cruelty
 Death.
 Thick clouds of dust,
 Black as coal
 ashes,
 greyness
 hurtling downwards into a deep pit..
 darkness
 no light
 nothingness..
 NIGHT...impenetrable blackness ...

NARRATOR 2

Judaism and Christianity do not merely tell
 Of God's love for humanity.
 They stand or fall on their fundamental claim
 That the human being is of ultimate and absolute value.

The Shoah poses the most radical counter-testimony
 To both Judaism and Christianity.
 No statement, theological or otherwise,
 Should be made that would not be credible
 In the presence of burning children.
 (Rabbi Irving Greenberg)

*(Slowly, most of the lights in the Crypt are
extinguished)*

NARRATOR 1

We are gathered here to express our deep remorse
At the vile atrocities of the Sho'ah,
The darkest stage of human history;
The opening of the way to the deliberate annihilation
of
Six million Jews
And five million others;
Causing unwanted human beings
To disappear, vanish
Obliterated from the living, breathing earth ...
Jews, gypsies, homosexuals, the mentally handicapped,
the imperfect...
The Holocaust of innocent victims
Lifeless corpses, burnt, destroyed...
The coming of stifling, asphyxiating darkness
The spiralling down into the jaws of death
Unbridled destruction,
hatred –
The attempt to wipe out a whole people from the face of the earth
The Jews
Who give so much to humanity.

The reversal of the process of creation
Destruction... darkness... lifelessness
Despair...
Where was God?

NARRATOR 2

‘And the earth was null and void
And darkness
Was over the face of the deep.’ (Gen 1: 2)

‘And God said “Let there be light”
And there was light...’ (Gen 1:3)

Then God said, "Let us make
humankind in our image, according
to our likeness; and let them have
dominion over the fish of the sea,
and over the birds of the air, and over

the cattle, and over all the wild
animals of the earth, and over every
creeping thing that creeps upon the
earth."

(Gen 1:26).

So God created humankind in God's image,
in the image of God they were created,
male and female they were created.'

(Gen 1:27) [NRSV]

NARRATOR 1

But human beings have fractured the divine image
Have shattered the sacred likeness
Murdered and mutilated in the name of religion
Used the sacred name for ignoble ends
Blotted out the face of Divine Justice
Persecuted, victimized,
Belittled and vilified the other
Killed, maimed and blasphemed
Lied and destroyed hope.
Nations continue to rise against nations
Wars rage across the earth
The blood of victims soaks into the soil.
Terrorism wreaks its cruel vengeance.
The poison of racism has not lost its potency.
The Divine Image is scratched, defaced –
Six million Jewish images of God,
Five million others,
Wiped out by the deliberate miscasting of others.
Yet, in face of all the evidence,
The innumerable witnesses who have told their story,
Evil doers still seek to deny the Holocaust -
To falsify history,
To argue it never happened
That it was merely a figment of the imagination,
a blurred view of human history.

Lord have mercy

Kyrie, Kyrie Kyrie Ele-i-son (3)
(ALL repeat after choir)

NARRATOR 1

The earth is soaked with the tears of the innocent.

The blood of victims cries out from the ground.
 The mind goes blank,
 the heart turns to stone,
 eyes grow dim with tears
 till no more can be shed
 Numbness... coldness...despair...
 The perpetrators were not content to inflict pain on Jews.
 Their hellish dream was blacker still –
 So dark it belies belief.
 They dreamed of a world without Jews
 Plotted to wipe their very name from the earth,
 To send their memory into oblivion
 And cast their bones into pits
 Their bodies into a common grave
 Their dreams into oblivion,
 To assign them to a world where individual dignity had no place.
 A place where no justice reigned.

Six million Jews died and the world in general stood in silence,
 Did nothing, remained indifferent,
 Thought Jews deserved to die.
 If Jews can be consigned to such horror,
 Neither Christian nor Muslim,
 Sikh, Buddhist, Bahai nor Hindu is safe.
 No one can feel secure.

Lord have mercy.

Kyrie, Kyrie, Kyrie Ele-i-son
(ALL REPEAT after choir)

NARRATOR 2

Let us light six candles,
 In memory of these six million Jews,
 one candle
 for each one million lives extinguished,
 burnt to ashes in the searing fires of hatred,
 racism,
 antisemitism
 and
 prejudice.

Let us
 Jews and non-Jews
 commit ourselves

to responsibility for one another,
 that together we may build a world
 that has no room for hatred
 or revenge
 but only for love and respect for the other.

*(The lights in the crypt are illuminated.
 One by one, six members of the assembly come forward
 to light the memorial candles on the altar.
 [starting from left centre outwards])*

RECITATION of the SHEMA

*The Shema, proclaiming the oneness of
 God,
 said at daybreak and at fall of night has
 been
 on the lips of Jews for thousands of years.
 These words came to be the last words
 recited by many going to their death.
 (All stand)*

**ALL: Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the
 Lord is One: and you
 shall love the Lord your God with all your
 heart, and with all your
 soul and with all your might. And these words
 which I command
 you this day shall be upon your heart: and you
 shall teach them diligently to your children and
 you shall talk of them when you sit
 in your house, and when you walk by the way,
 and when you lie
 down, and when you rise up. (Deut 6: 4-7).**

NARRATOR 2

Thus says the Lord:
 ‘A voice is heard in Ramah,
 lamentation and bitter weeping.
 Rachel is weeping for her children;
 She refuses to be comforted for her children,
 Because they are not.’ (Jeremiah 31:15)

(All sit)

NARRATOR 1

The savage, fiendish breath of the Holocaust
 was felt also by those
 who risked their lives
 to give a helping hand to their neighbours
 in their hour of darkness;
 and by those others
 who died for the crime of being different
 in a time of madness and of terror.
 We remember also all those who have died and are dying
 In wars, racial genocide and ethnic cleansings to this day.
 We light these candles
 In their memory.

*(Two members of the assembly come forward and light the
 seventh and eighth candles)*

PSALM 51

1. Have mercy on me, O God, in your enduring goodness:
 according to the fullness of your compassion blot out my offences.
2. Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness:
 and cleanse me from my sin.
3. For I acknowledge my rebellion:
 and my sin is ever before me.
4. Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your
 eyes:
 so you will be just in your sentence and blameless in your judging.
5. Surely in wickedness I was brought to birth:
 and in sin my mother conceived me.
6. You that desire truth in the inward parts:
 O teach me wisdom in the secret places of the heart.
7. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean:
 wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.
8. Make me hear of joy and gladness:
 let the bones which you have broken rejoice.
9. Hide your face from my sins:
 and blot out all my iniquities.

10. Create in me a clean heart, O God:
and renew a right spirit within me.
11. Do not cast me out from your presence:
do not take your holy spirit from me.
12. O give me the gladness of your help again:
and support me with a willing spirit.
13. Then will I teach transgressors your ways:
and sinners shall turn to you again.
14. O LORD God of my salvation, deliver me from bloodshed:
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.
15. O LORD open my lips:
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
16. You take no pleasure in sacrifice, or I would give it:
burnt-offerings you do not want.
17. The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit:
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.
18. In your graciousness do good to Zion:
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
19. Then you will delight in right sacrifices, in burnt-offerings and
oblations: then they will offer young bulls upon your altar.

NARRATOR 1

The horror of the Sho'ah cannot be taught:
only experienced.
The Holocaust cannot be explained:
Just faced with silence.
And we, who were not its victims
can only try to touch
and feel and taste
the dark and burning nights,
the freezing dawns,
the hunger,
the terror...
as we listen to the witnesses...

NARRATOR 2

Darkness...

Fire...

Exodus...

Exile...

Return...

Liberation.

For generations Jews have lived these experiences,

THE WITNESS OF THE VOICES**NARRATOR 2**

Voices of children speak out of the Holocaust
to bear witness...

to courage

to faith,

to hope.

VOICE 1

Read by Sarah Weaver

Still

In sealed box cars travel
names across the land,
and how far they will travel so,
and will they ever get out,
don't ask, I won't say, I don't know.

The name Nathan strikes fist against wall,
the name Isaac, demented, sings,
the name Sarah calls out for water

Wisława Szymborska

NARRATOR 2

Voices speak out of the Holocaust
to bear witness...

The voices of the wheat of Israel
grown to maturity,

and mown down in smoke and ashes.

VOICE 2

Read by Rev Paul Weaver

‘If in my life I was to write only one book,
this would be the one.

Just as the past lingers in the present,
all my writings after *Night* including those that deal with biblical,
Talmudic, or Hasidic themes,
profoundly bear its stamp,
and cannot be understood
if one has not read this very first of my works.’

**E Wiesel, ‘Preface to the New Translation’, in *Night*, M. Wiesel
(trans.), (London: Penguin Books, 2006), p. vii**

‘I believed that, having survived by chance,
I was duty bound to give meaning to my survival,
to justify each moment of my life.

I knew the story had to be told.
Not to transmit an experience is to betray it;
this is what Jewish tradition teaches us.
But how to do this?

... All words seemed inadequate,
worn, foolish, lifeless,
whereas I wanted them to be searing.
Where was I to discover a fresh vocabulary,
a primeval language?’

**E Wiesel, ‘Why I Write’, in *Confronting the Holocaust: The
Impact of Elie Wiesel, A Rosenberg and I Greenberg* (eds.),
(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), p. 200.**

***translated from Yiddish by Shaun Sidsky, a Sydney
University student.**

NARRATOR 1

Voices speak out of the Holocaust
to bear witness
to question,
to remember...

The voices of the survivors,
those who passed through death to life.
And, in a sense, the voices of us all

for whom the Holocaust has put an end
to a certain kind of innocence;
all of us carry the responsibility of
'NEVER AGAIN.'

VOICE 3

Read by Wilma Visawanathan

Unanswered....?

FIVE TIMES

Who is more important a heavy sack
or seven year old Shmuel ?

The sack is more important,
because one can shove into it enough potatoes
for the entire family for a whole week.

You can not see Shmuel
behind his heavy sack,
thinks Shmuel's mother,
if they shoot, they will shoot into the sack.

It is a fifth time
that little Shmuel squeezes through
the small hole in the wall.
What does Shmuel think about his sack
when they shoot...

Yvonne Opoczynska-Goldberg

(Pause for silent reflection)

Viola solo: Kol Nidrei

(played by David Angell)

A short period of silence

NARRATOR 2

Voices cry out,
The voices of those who for years
could not speak
now make themselves to be heard
because for so long
their lips had been sealed

and their voices mute
 with suffering
 with the memories
 and the miseries
 and the silences...

(Pause for silent reflection)

SPEAKER

*Speaker: Irving Wallach
 Child of Holocaust survivors. Barrister.*

PART TWO

(All stand)

RECITATION OF MOURNERS' KADDISH

NARRATOR 2

The Kaddish, is an affirmation of God's presence and dominion, a prayer that God's Kingdom may come. We pray it for the victims of the Sho'ah and also for the survivors who rose up again and gathered together their strength to rebuild their shattered lives.

(Prior to the prayer being said, the names of some of the more well-known death camps and ghettos will be proclaimed by George Sternfeld, a child survivor of the Shoah)

TREBLINKA

BERGEN-BELSEN

MAJDANEK

SOBIBOR

CHELMNO

BELZEC

THE WARSAW GHETTO

STUTTHOF

DACHAU

SACHSENHAUSEN

THE VILNA GHETTO

RAVENSBRUCK

MAUTHAUSEN – GUSEN

THE KOVNO GHETTO

FLOSSENBERG

AUSCHWITZ - BIRKENAU

BUCHENWALD

THE LODZ GHETTO

MOURNERS' KADDISH
(recited by Rabbi Jeffrey Cohen)

Yitgadal v'yitkadash sh'mei rabba

CONGREGATION: Amen

b'alma di v'ra khir'utei, vyamlikh malkhutei

b'chayeikhon u-v'yomeikhon u-v'chayei d'khol
beit

Yisrael ba-agala u-vi-z'man kariv v'imru Amen.

CONGREGATION: Amen

CONGREGATION

**Let God's name be made great and holy in
the world that was created as God willed.
May God complete the holy realm in your
own lifetime, in your days, and in the days of
all the house of Israel,
quickly and soon. And let us say: Amen.**

READER

Y'hei sh'mei raba m'varakh l'alam u-l'aimei almaya.

CONGREGATION

**May God's great name be blessed, forever and
as long as worlds endure.**

READER (Rabbi Jeffrey Cohen)

Yitbarakh v'yishtabach v'yitpa'ar v'yitromam
v'yitnasei, v'yit-hadar v'yit'aleh v'yit-halal
sh'mei

d'ku-d'sha B'rikh Hu

CONGREGATION: B'rikh Hu

leila min kol birkhata v'shirata, tush-b'chata
v'nechemata da-amiran b'alma, v'imru Amen.

CONGREGATION: Amen

Y'hei sh'lama raba min sh'maya v'chayim
aleinu v'al

kol Yisrael, v'imru amen

CONGREGATION: Amen

Oseh shalom bi-m'romav, hu ya'aseh shalom
aleinu

v'al kol Yisrael, v'imru Amen

CONGREGATION: Amen

CONGREGATION:

**May it be blessed, and praised, and
glorified, and held in honour, viewed
with awe, embellished, and revered; and
may the blessed name of holiness be
hailed, though it be higher than all the
blessings, songs, praises, and
consolations that we utter in this world.
And let us say: Amen.**

**Let there be abundant peace from
Heaven, with life's goodness for us and
for all the people Israel. And let us say:
Amen,**

**May the One who brings peace to the
universe bring peace to us and to the
people Israel. And let us say: Amen.**

(All sit)

NARRATOR 2

So, from the Shoah we learn that when we deny humanity in others, we destroy humanity within ourselves; when we reject the human, and the holy, in any neighbour's soul, then we unleash the beast and the barbaric in our own heart. And since the Shoah, we pray that if the time has not yet dawned when we can all proclaim our faith in God, then let us all admit, at least, that we are not all powerful in ourselves. If we cannot yet see the face of God in others, then let us see, at least, a face as human as our own. Down the generations, the Holy Scriptures teach that life might be a blessing or a curse. The choice is in our hands.

(Based on a 1987 benediction by US Navy Chaplain Arnold E. Resnicoff, at the National Civic Commemoration for the Days of Remembrance).

NARRATOR 1

But the Shoah cannot be forgotten
So long as there are righteous among the nations
Who will stand up and be counted
Who will stand up for Jews
For oppressed minorities
For the rights of indigenous peoples
For those suffering poverty and oppression.

May all of humanity
Despite human failings
Strive continually to learn
To be generous to the other
To learn the language of peace
Of compromise
The sharing of resources and land

Giving space to the other
 Allowing for differences
 Of race, religion and outlook
 So that all will live together in harmony
 In peace
 In Shalom.

NARRATOR 2

Let us pray:

God of peace, steadfast love and loving kindness, deliver
 all nations from war, persecution and violence, racial
 discrimination, ethnic cleansing and exile.

God of justice and compassion, we pray for all refugees,
 for the lost and stolen generations, for those who have
 had to flee their homes, their places of birth; whose
 families have been killed and murdered, who have
 witnessed unspeakable horrors.

We remember the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, seventy
 years ago...

We ask forgiveness for the sin of silence, for
 indifference, for the two millennia of antisemitism and
 prejudice
 that made possible the unleashing of the Shoah.

NARRATOR 1

We pray for healing, for a new spirit of hope, for a spirit
 of reconciliation.

We remember the victims of the numerous genocides,
 The Armenians, those of Africa, Ethiopia, Somalia,
 Those being killed by oppressive regimes
 that tragically continue to afflict and maim:

We pray for peace in the Middle East, the troubled
 nations of that region and the people of the Land of Israel.

(Pause for a moment of silence)

O God, heal us. Make us people of hope and peace.

We pray that we will continue to extend a hand
 to those who are suffering,
 and who are refugees from their homes and countries of
 origin.

ALL: Lord hear us.

We pray that those who deny the Holocaust ever
 happened
 Will be impelled to acknowledge their error.

We pray that never again will there be a Shoah.

We pray that human beings will learn to live together
 in peace, freedom and harmony..
 And will learn to respect each other.
 We pray that oppression of others will end
 That racism will become a thing of the past
 That we will remember
 That we are all children of the one God.

ALL: Lord hear us.

NARRATOR 2

Prayer:

O God, who sees the innermost heart, instil in
 us,
 Your people, a sense of deep compassion for
 the other. Heal the hate and racism within each
 of us.
 Purify our hearts and minds. Open our eyes
 to your light. Liberate us from prejudice.

NARRATOR 1

Let us bring forward a candle
 As a symbol of hope
 That human beings will learn to live together in harmony
 That light will overcome the darkness
 Of war and hatred.
 And the goal will be that
 NEVER AGAIN will there be a Shoah!

*A representative of the community walks up to the altar, lights the
 last candle, faces the assembly, holds up the candle high and
 proclaims*

NEVER AGAIN!

ALL: NEVER AGAIN!

*The candle, a symbol of hope (carried by William
 Szekely, President of the Australian Council of*

Christians and Jews) will be placed in a central position between the other eight candles.

Choir: The words for "Inscription of Hope" were inscribed on the walls of a cellar in Cologne, Germany, where Jews were hiding from the Nazis during World War II. Hope was all they had on which to hold. Hope was their only bridge to a brighter tomorrow. The organist was

After the service, light refreshments will be served in the Cathedral School Hall.

*The NSW Council of Christians and Jews
wishes to thank
all who attended and took part in this memorial
service,
and Cardinal George Pell,
Fr Paul Hilder, the Cathedral administrator,
the sacristans,
and the St Mary's Cathedral staff
who welcomed our use of the Cathedral crypt.*

**This Memorial Service
held in
ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL CRYPT
at 6.00 p.m.
on
17 April 2013
is an initiative of
THE COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS
(New South Wales) Inc.**



