

Sunday of the Passion / Palm Sunday
Sunday, April 13, 2025

Introduction to the day

Today we follow Christ from triumphal entry to the cross, each waypoint of the journey marked by Jesus' compassion for those who would betray, mock, accuse, or do violence to him. Though persecuted and beaten, Jesus the Son of God is not disgraced; instead, he asks forgiveness for those who put him to death. We have walked the Lenten pathway these forty days, each of us invited through baptism to "let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus." We enter this holy week accompanying Jesus to the cross with both grief and thanksgiving in our hearts, trusting in God's redeeming love.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

PROCESSIONAL GOSPEL: Luke 19:28-40

BLESSING OF PALMS

PRAYER OF THE DAY

As we now enter into the contemplation of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ and meditate on the salvation of the world through his sufferings, death, burial, and resurrection, let us pray.

Everlasting God, in your endless love for the human race you sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take on our nature and to suffer death on the cross. In your mercy enable us to share in his obedience to your will and in the glorious victory of his resurrection, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 50:4-9a

A reading from Isaiah.

This text, the third of the four Servant Songs in Isaiah, speaks of the servant's obedience amid persecution. Though the servant has been variously understood as the prophet himself or a remnant of faithful Israel, Christians have often recognized the figure of Christ in these poems.

PSALM: Psalm 31:9-16

Into your hands, O LORD, I commend my spirit. (Ps. 31:5)

SECOND READING: Philippians 2:5-11

A reading from Philippians.

Paul quotes from an early Christian hymn that describes Jesus' humble obedience in his incarnation as a human being, even to death, and his exaltation and glory as Lord of all.

GOSPEL: Luke 22:14—23:56

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Through the teachings and events of the passion story we see and hear the great contradictions that characterize the coming of God's reign. The leader serves the followers, proud Peter is revealed in his cowardice, and Jesus—the innocent bringer of life—is arrested, beaten, executed, and buried.

SUNDAY OF THE PASSION / PALM SUNDAY - Remember Us

On this Sunday of the Passion, the gathered church remembers the final days of Jesus' life. Once the celebratory palm branches are set down, the mood shifts as the somber tones of betrayal and crucifixion take over. The Lukan narrative draws us into the details, and we remember the extent of God's passion for us as Jesus enters into the depths of suffering through divine selfless love poured out for the sake of the world.

There is power in remembering. To be sure, this is an exercise of memory and recall for us. Yet Holy Week is much more than that. In our remembering of Jesus' passion, our reality is re-membered with God's reality. Like members of a body, we are re-membered onto Christ, formed into one through the Spirit, and drawn into the reality of God's saving love. Through scripture, song, and prayer, the liturgy of this day re-members us as God's people as we bear witness to Jesus' remembrance of us.

In the culminating moment of the crucifixion, only Luke's gospel reports the exchange between the two criminals and Jesus. The one criminal chastises the other before he addresses the crucified Jesus, saying, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom" (Luke 23:42). The request is for more than an act of recall; the criminal is seeking to be re-membered in the dominion of God, seeking a fusion of realities—his with Jesus'. Without hesitation, Jesus responds, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (v. 43). The criminal will be *with* Jesus, re-membered to Jesus.

This Sunday we remember Jesus' passion as together we are joined to God's loving action for the world. Jesus' last breath on the cross is the moment when our reality is re-membered with God's, for Jesus remembers us, and paradise's reign is realized.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need.

Guide your church this Holy Week as we follow in the servant way of Jesus. Protect those who face hostility or oppression for their faith. Humble those who would use faith to dominate others and reinforce their own power. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Make your creation a living witness to Christ's passion and resurrection: in waving palms, shouting stones, fragrant vineyards, murmuring wheat, and revealing fire. Make us attentive to your holy presence in the world, that we may care for the earth you love. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Let your face shine upon the leaders of nations and let the same mind be in them as was in Christ Jesus, so that those with the most power may humble themselves to serve the most vulnerable. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Sustain the weary with a word. Grant perseverance to political prisoners and to any who are exploited, unjustly accused, or wrongly convicted. Abide with all who are in jails, detention centers, or prisons. Console all who experience times of trial or suffering especially Linda Boland, Shirley Glickman, Donna L. Hoffman, Cassie Jessup, Bill Lorbetskie, Glenda Panke, Barry Rogers, Marilyn Schneider, Danny Schultz, Doug Sell, Debbie Thom, Keith Weckwerth, Elaine Yourth, Stephanie Yourth, and those in long term care facilities and senior residences.. In this moment of silence, we name out loud or in the quiet of our hearts, those who need your healing touch. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Give strength to those who will lead worship during Holy Week: pastors and deacons, altar guilds and sacristans, musicians and assisting ministers, ushers, and office staff. Instill in them awe and joy, that their service may reflect the love of Jesus. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

We give thanks to you for our beloved dead, trusting that as the cross of Jesus led to the empty tomb, so you welcome those who have died into the paradise of your presence. God, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Remember the poor.

Thanks be to God.

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