

Sunday of the Passion / Palm Sunday

Sunday, March 29, 2026

Introduction to the day

Today, we encounter the paradox that defines our faith: Jesus Christ is glorified king and humiliated servant. We too are full of paradox: like Peter, we fervently desire to follow Christ, but find ourselves afraid, denying God. We wave palms in celebration today as Christ comes into our midst, and we follow with trepidation as his path leads to death on the cross. Amid it all we are invited into this paradoxical promise of life through Christ's broken body and outpoured love in a meal of bread and wine. We begin this week that stands at the center of the church year, anticipating the completion of God's astounding work.

ACCLAMATION

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

Hosanna in the highest.

PROCESSIONAL GOSPEL: Matthew 21:1-11

¹ When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." ⁴ This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet:

⁵ "Tell the daughter of Zion,
Look, your king is coming to you,
humble and mounted on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; ⁷ they brought the donkey and the colt and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. ⁸ A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

"Hosanna to the Son of David!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

¹⁰ When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?" ¹¹ The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

BLESSING OF PALMS

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

We praise you, O God, for redeeming the world through our Savior Jesus Christ.

Today he entered the holy city in triumph and was proclaimed messiah and king by those who spread garments and branches along his way. Bless these branches and those who carry them.

Grant us grace to follow our Lord in the way of the cross, so that, joined to his death and resurrection, we enter into life with you; through the same Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

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

The servant of the Lord expresses absolute confidence in his final vindication, despite the fact that he has been struck and spit upon. This characteristic of the servant played an important role in the early church's understanding of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

PSALM: Psalm 31:9-16

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

SECOND READING: Philippians 2:5-11

Paul uses an early Christian hymn to help us comprehend Jesus' obedient selflessness on the cross and how God has made Christ lord over all reality. The perspective of the cross becomes the way we rightly understand God, Christ, our own lives, and fellowship within the community of Christ.

GOSPEL: Matthew 26:14—27:66

In fulfillment of scripture and obedience to God's will, Jesus goes to the cross so that a new covenant in his blood may bring forgiveness of sins. Even the soldiers who crucify him recognize him to be the Son of God.

GOSPEL MESSAGE - PALM SUNDAY - His Blood Be on Us

Today we begin Holy Week, a week filled with paradoxes, reversals, and ironic twists. The story moves inevitably toward death, yet it brings the promise of life. Jesus appears to be the victim, but he chooses this path, humbling himself, confident that God will exalt him in victory. Pilate embodies the full might of the Roman Empire but is powerless before the crowd's demands. The chief priests and elders, perhaps more than anyone else, should recognize the long-hoped-for Messiah, but their jealousy prevents this.

Perhaps the greatest irony in today's Passion reading is found in the crowd's exclamation, "His blood be on us and on our children!" (Matthew 27:25). These words have been misused to slander the Jewish people, claiming they bear the guilt of Christ's blood. Superficially, that is what the crowd means: Pilate refuses responsibility, so the people take it upon themselves. Theologically, though, the crowd speaks a universal truth. Far from justifying anti-Jewish scapegoating, these words apply to all humanity. Somehow we are all implicated in the death of Jesus. Our rebellion, our sin, places him on the cross.

Paradoxically, however, the crowd's words also reveal a deeper truth. The blood of Christ does not mark with condemnation; it promises forgiveness. It does not stain with guilt; it washes sin away. By accepting suffering and death at the hands of sinners, Jesus wins the victory of love. His blood be on us, indeed! Just as we all share guilt in the crucifixion of Jesus, so too are we all granted mercy by his self-giving death. United in baptism to his death and resurrection, receiving his body and blood in communion, we receive grace, freedom, and life.

In the days to come, do not look at these contradictions as puzzles to be solved. They are mysteries beyond full understanding. But as you contemplate the events of Holy Week, you will discover new depths of God's love for you. May his blood be upon us all, with mercy and salvation.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

O God, you announce words of grace and truth. Give wisdom to all preachers in your church both globally and locally. Open our hearts to encounter the infinite life you offer in Jesus. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You hold the whole universe. Gather sun and moon, clouds and stars, land and sea, and plants and animals around the cross, so that all creation bears witness to your saving love. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Your power is sure. Destroy inequity and division in every place, and build your beloved community among all people. Guide judges, attorneys, and juries so that they act with justice and fairness. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Your heart breaks open at our pain. Send healing and vindication to all who, like Jesus, know the sting of betrayal, denial, abuse, or false accusations. Be with those experiencing pain or loss this day especially Chris Burchat, Natasha Gagnon-Burchat, Shirley Glickman, Donna L. Hoffman, Glenda Panke, Marilyn Schneider, Doug Sell 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. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Your ways show compassion. Let this same mind be in us as we enter Holy Week. Bless those here who will lead worship and tell the story of Jesus' death and resurrection. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

O God, your embrace is eternal. Praise and thanks to you for all the faithful departed who rest in your mercy. Today we remember our sister Karen O'Day. Deliver us all from death's power and raise us to life in you. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

BLESSING

Almighty God, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.
Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the good news.
Thanks be to God.

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Announcements:

Sunday, March 29th – Palm Sunday

10:30 AM – Grace – Holy Communion

Sunday School

Fellowship following worship

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Monday, March 30th

9:00 to 3:00 – Grace Quilters

4:00 PM –Confirmation

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Tuesday, March 31st

10:00 AM – Grace Bible Study

Thursday April 2nd – Maundy Thursday

9:00 AM – 11:30 AM – Toy Bus

9:30 – Grace Choir

7:00 PM at Grace – Worship with Holy Communion

Friday, April 3rd – Good Friday

9:00 AM - – Bonnechere

12:30 PM – Walk of the Cross starting at St. James and ending at Grace with refreshments

Sunday, April 5th – Easter Sunday

8:15 to 10:15 AM – Easter Breakfast

10:30 AM – Grace – Holy Communion

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Lend A Lily

If you would like to lend an Easter Lily or other spring flowers for our service on Easter Sunday, April 5th, please bring it sometime before Easter.

Easter Breakfast:

Please join us for breakfast from 8:15 AM to 10:15 AM on Easter Sunday in the Fellowship Hall. Everyone is welcome to join us for breakfast and fellowship on this special day. A freewill offering.

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Coins for Lent: The Sunday School will be collecting the monies from the **Coins For Lent** outreach for the Eganville Foodbank on Easter Sunday. If you are able, please transfer your donation into bills, and add your name and/or envelope number to the jar or envelope in order to have the amount added to your contribution statement. Thank you so much for helping us support the great need of the community Foodbank!