

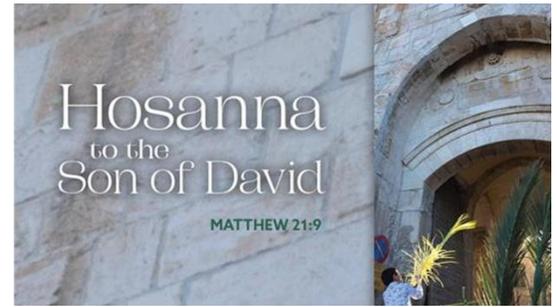
March 29th, 2026 Lectionary Notes

The Readings on This Day

****Click on the links for the Bible Verse(s)*

Sunday of the Passion / Palm Sunday

Since at least the fourth century and universally in the church since the eighth, Christians have kept the Sunday before Easter as a memorial of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, and a literal procession of palms, started in Jerusalem, has spread throughout the world. During Year A, most of the Sunday gospels are taken from Matthew, and so this year on this Sunday a reading of Matthew 21 with a palm procession marks the opening of worship. As well, the three-year lectionary restored an ancient practice of observing the Sunday before Easter as Passion Sunday, and so a longer or shorter reading from the passion in Matthew functions as the gospel of the day. Since in the three-year lectionary Lent has replaced a sustained meditation on the passion with a focus on baptism, the proclamation of the full passion on this Sunday is key. Thus the service, inaugurating the most important week of the Christian year, has a two-part focus: Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, and his passion and death. Assemblies can be helped to encounter the quite different theological emphases between Passion Sunday's proclamation from the synoptic gospel of the year and Good Friday's annual proclamation from John.



[Matthew 21:1-11](#)

Holy Week begins with a palm procession and the proclamation of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem from the gospel of Matthew. Christ enters the assembly now, just as he did then, and we praise his presence among us. "Hosanna" is now our song.

[Isaiah 50:4-9a](#)

Christians have seen in the Servant Songs descriptions of Jesus Christ. The reading imagines Jesus himself as describing his ill treatment, while affirming his innocence and his trust in God.

The Psalm for the Day

[Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29](#): The palm procession may include the singing of Psalm 118, which is a communal praise to God for victory. Verses 19-29 were perhaps sung as part of a festive temple procession at the Feast of Tabernacles. The phrase "the stone that the builders rejected" has been seen by Christians as a reference to Christ. Although this Sunday is the start of Holy Week, Sunday is always the day of Christ's resurrection: thus, "this is the day that the Lord has made," and together we rejoice.

[Psalm 31:9-16](#): Following a Christian reading of the third Servant Song, Psalm 31 functions to reiterate the suffering of the servant, to recall the passion of Christ, and to stand with Jesus in his trust of God. The words of the psalm also give assemblies language with which to hold before God all innocent victims who are suffering.

Philippians 2:5-11

We join with Christians of the first century in a creedal poem: Christ humbled himself to death, and God has raised him as Lord. The ancient song is a summary, not only of our baptismal faith, but also of the Holy Week which has begun.

Matthew 26:14— 27:66

Twice each Holy Week we hear the entire story of the betrayal, arrest, trials, abuse, and crucifixion of Jesus. Since it is Sunday, we listen to Matthew, the synoptic gospel of this year.