



THE LIVING
WORD
OF
LENT

A DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

March 26 - March 29



SEASON OF LENT

The Liturgy of the Palms

When Jesus enters Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the city erupts in turmoil at the arrival of a new king (Mt 2:10). As it happens, we remember this isn't the first time Jesus has set the Holy City on edge. At the beginning of the Gospel, Magi from the East arrive inquiring about the birth of a new king. Their announcement severely troubles King Herod, "and all Jerusalem with him" (Mt 2:3). At both ends of the story, Jesus is a shock to the system.

As we enter Holy Week, the story of our salvation sweeps us into a cascade of divine love that simultaneously stirs our holy hope and shakes our holy certainty. Holy hope spills down the Mount of Olives as a flood of pilgrims surge into the city gates acclaiming a Son of David "who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Mt 21:9).

In the midst of the excitement and turmoil, Jesus does not distance himself from the crowds. He does not disdain their holy hope or reject their cries for salvation. He does the opposite. He leans into it. He stirs—even enflames—their holy hope by embracing the imagery and expectations of Psalm 118, embodying God's righteous deliverer. He is the one who will become God's salvation (v. 21).

Yet, his salvation also shakes our holy certainty. Neither the king who feared him (Mt 2:3), nor the crowds who cheered him (Mt 21:9) understood the salvation he came to achieve. We, too, enter Holy Week needing to have some of our holy certainty shaken.

As we navigate the theological and emotional highs and lows of the coming week, our most reliable guide remains the unchanging love of God. If



our holy hope is rooted in God's love, then our faith will be secure even in the wake of unexpected loss. If our holy certainty is anchored in God's love, then our faith will be secure even as our expectations are shaken or changed. With God's love as our anchor, we are well prepared to journey through any turmoil in the coming week, trusting all the while, "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes" (Ps 118:23).

FOR reflection

What holy hope do you carry into Holy Week this year?

Where do you most long for God's victory in your life? In our world?

Does any of your certainty—about God or the world—need to be shaken so that God can accomplish the salvation he longs to achieve in you?

Can you allow God to reshape your certainty in ways that may surprise you?





SCRIPTURE

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Thursday

Psalm 31:9-16; 1 Samuel 16:11-13; Philippians 1:1-11

Friday

Psalm 31:9-16; Job 13:13-19; Philippians 1:21-30

Saturday

Psalm 31:9-16; Lamentations 3:55-66; Mark 10:32-34

Sunday

Liturgy of the Palms:

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29; Matthew 21:1-11

Liturgy of the Passion:

Psalm 31:9-16; Isaiah 50:4-9a; Philippians 2:5-11;
Matthew 26:14-27:66 or Matthew 27:11-54

Why do the daily readings (usually) begin on Thursday?

The daily readings for each week begin on Thursday and end on the following Wednesday. The Thursday through Saturday readings prepare the reader for the Sunday ahead. The Monday through Wednesday readings reflect on what was presented on Sunday. This week is unique because Monday starts Holy Week.

The Morning Liturgy

Opening Scripture

I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

Luke 15:18-19

Opening Prayer (based on Psalm 51)

Open my lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Give me the joy of your saving help again and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. *Amen.*

Scripture Reading (read Psalm and Gospel text here)

Period of Silence

Confessing Our Faith (Apostles' Creed)

The Lord's Prayer

The Collect (Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday)

Almighty and everliving God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility. Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Amen.

A Midday Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles, “Peace I give to you; my own peace I leave with you.” Regard not our sins, but the faith of your Church, and give to us the peace and unity of that heavenly City, where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, now and forever. *Amen.*

An Early Evening Prayer

Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope, that we may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. *Amen.*

A Bedtime Confession and Prayer

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against thy holy laws, we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, spare thou those who confess their faults, restore thou those who are penitent, according to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of thy holy Name. *Amen.*



Visit this place, O Lord, and drive far from it all snares of the enemy; let your holy angels dwell with us to preserve us in peace; and let your blessing be upon us always; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

