

Daily Prayer

Palm Sunday – Holy Week Year A
The Year of Matthew



Readings: Isaiah 50:4-7; Psalm 21: 8-9. 17-20. 23-24; Philippians 2:6-11; Matthew 27:11-54

Preparations for Daily Prayer

The following daily prayers can be used in their entirety or adapted to meet the needs of the audience. The prayers draw on the Sunday readings, so you may use any of the prayers on any day, although special focus will be given to Feast days, Solemnities and days of special cultural significance. Feel free to adapt the prayers for special occasions or specific intentions of your own class and school.

The prayers will introduce students to traditional prayer and liturgical practices and responses, as well as a variety of Christian spiritual experiences. Take the opportunity to create a **Sacred Space** for prayer as you might do in creating a protected garden. This may include a prayer cloth or placemat, a bible, a candle and flowers. Additional resources (apps, websites, music, videos) will be suggested for those wanting to enrich the prayers or to understand the readings at a deeper level.

Overview of the Week

Day and Liturgical Colour	Daily Prayer	Links to Liturgy, Traditional Prayers and Forms of Prayer
Monday – Red	<i>Palm Sunday – Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem</i>	Lenten Gospel Acclamation, Standing for the Gospel, Praying with the Gospel, Visio Divina
Tuesday – Violet	<i>The Lord has given me a disciple’s tongue.</i>	First reading, Praying with the Responsorial Psalm
Wednesday – Violet	<i>Jesus made himself lowly and was exalted</i>	
Thursday – White	<i>Holy Thursday – Jesus washes the feet of the disciples</i>	Praying with the Gospel, Prayers of the Faithful
Friday – Red	<i>Good Friday</i>	

Note that scripture quotations are from the Lectionary (*Jerusalem Bible*) or the NRSV.

Suggested Teacher Background for the Readings

- Liturgy Help: [Commentaries](#)
- Liturgy Help: [Homilies & Reflections](#)
- Sunday Connection: [Loyola Press](#)
- The Emmaus Series: [Sunday Reflections](#).



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Today's Daily Prayer – Palm Sunday

The focus for today's prayer will be to pray with the Gospel for Palm Sunday. **Preparation:** Choose voices for the parts that are written for the **Leader** and the **Reader**.

Monday

Remind those present to turn phones to silent, close computer screens, sit quietly and prepare for prayer by becoming aware of their breath. There may be special occasions or specific intentions that those gathered may wish to include in today's prayer. Sound a singing bowl, a bell or a chime to begin.

Leader: We begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross, calling to our minds and hearts the presence of our merciful and forgiving God.

All: **In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Light candle and pause.

Listen

If possible, the scripture passage is to be read from a lectionary or a bible, which could be put in an honoured place. Readers are to read slowly and clearly when proclaiming the word of God and treat the text with reverence.

Background to the Sunday Gospel

What is distinctive in the First Gospel's account is the stress – typical for Matthew – upon the way Jesus fulfils Scripture (a blend of Isa 62:11 and Zec 9:9) by riding into the city on a colt. (So anxious, actually, is Matthew to have Jesus fulfil the prophecy of Zechariah exactly that he actually has him riding both the she-ass and her colt at the same time!) What Matthew wants to bring out is the truth that, though Jesus is entering David's city as its Messianic king and is rightly acclaimed as such by his disciples, he is not doing so in the way of worldly rulers. They would enter seated on a magnificent white charger. He is coming in the way Scripture had foretold he would: riding the mount of the common people to make clear that he comes not as one who will lord it over people but, as the Son of Man who has come, 'not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many' (Matt 20:28). This agrees with the presentation of Jesus as the 'Servant' figure throughout the gospel (excerpt taken from [Commentary by Brendan Byrne SJ](#) on Liturgy Help)

Leader: In silence, let us stand mindfully and respectfully.

All stand.

Leader: Let us welcome the Gospel with the Lenten Gospel Acclamation:

All: **Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!**

Reader: Christ became obedient for us even to death
dying on the cross.
Therefore God raised him on high
and gave him a name above all other names.



All: **Glory and praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!**

Reader: The Lord be with you.

All: **And with your spirit.**

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

All: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Mindfully trace the Sign of the Cross on the forehead, the lips and the heart.

Reader: When they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find an ass tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, "The Lord has need of them," and he will send them immediately'.

This took place to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet, saying, 'Tell the daughter of Zion, Behold, your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on an ass, and on a colt, the foal of an ass'.

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the ass and the colt, and put their garments on them, and he sat thereon. Most of the crowd spread their garments on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. And the crowds that went before him and that followed him shouted, 'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!'

And when he entered Jerusalem all the city was stirred, saying, 'Who is this?' And the crowds said, "This is Jesus the prophet, from Nazareth in Galilee."

Pause for silence

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

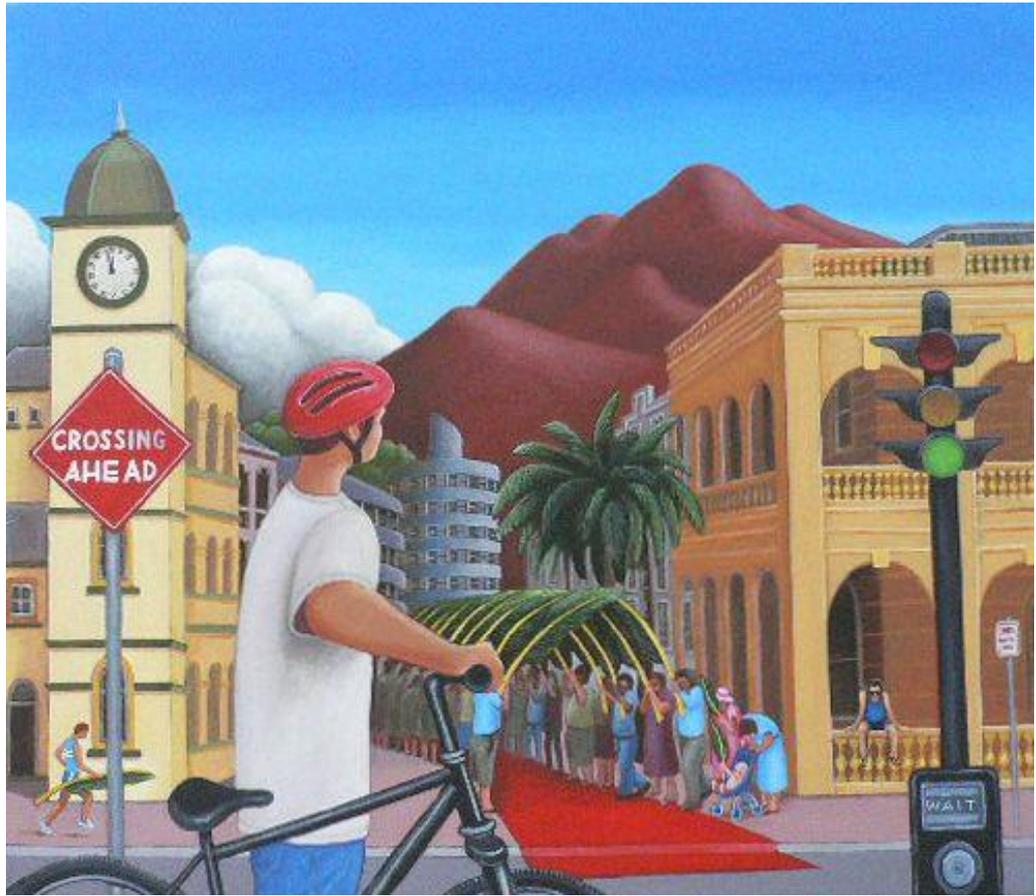
All be seated.

Respond

Visio Divina

Leader: We respond by praying with the image *Entering the City* by artist Jan Hynes.





Leader: As we gaze upon this image let us ask ourselves the following questions:
What do I think about this?
What questions does this raise for me?
What do others say and why? (Invite those gathered to share responses)
What does the wider community say and why?
What does the Catholic Church teach and why?
How is this Scripture connected to our identity?
Allow time for discussion of these questions as a group.

Leader: As we begin this Holy Week, bringing our Lenten journey to a close, let us be grateful for God's grace throughout this term.

Allow time for silent prayer

Leader: Lord, we lay our prayers at the foot of your cross and ask that in your mercy you will hear and answer them.

All: **Amen.**

Go Forth

Leader: May God continue to lead us,

All: **As our lives are formed in faith, hope and love in the light of Christ.**

All: **In the name of the Father, and of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen**



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Today's Daily Prayer –

In today's prayer we will be listening to the First Reading and praying the Responsorial Psalm.
Preparation: Pens or pencils and strips of paper or coloured card for writing or drawing an image, word or phrase from the psalm. Choose voices for the parts that are written for the **Leader** and the **Reader**.

Tuesday

Gather

Leader: We begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross, calling to our minds and hearts the presence of our merciful and forgiving God.

All: **In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Light candle and pause.

Listen

Background to the Reading

The loyal servant is one who is willing to learn from God (the mark of a true preacher/teacher) and who is willing to suffer for the truth learned and not resort to violence despite rejection. True discipleship is about the fulfilment of God's purpose, not personal satisfaction such as may be gained by military or legal victory over one's enemies. True discipleship is, however, not weakness or capitulation in the face of evil. The final verses of the third song portray the servant defending the message in a court setting and challenging accusers: the truth must be proclaimed equally to those who are hostile as to those who are receptive. (excerpt from [Scripture Commentary by Mark O'Brien](#))

Reader: A reading from the prophet Isaiah
The Lord has given me
a disciple's tongue.
So that I may know how to reply to the wearied
he provides me with speech.
Each morning he wakes me to hear,
to listen like a disciple.
The Lord has opened my ear.
For my part, I made no resistance,
neither did I turn away.
I offered my back to those who struck me,
my cheeks to those who tore at my beard;
I did not cover my face
against insult and spittle.
The Lord comes to my help,
so that I am untouched by the insults.
So, too, I set my face like flint;
I know I shall not be shamed.
(Pause)
The Word of the Lord.



All: **Thanks be to God.**

Respond

Responsorial Psalm

Leader: The response is: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

All: **My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?**

Reader: All who see me deride me.
They curl their lips, they toss their heads.
'He trusted in the Lord, let him save him;
let him release him if this is his friend.' (Response)

Reader: Many dogs have surrounded me,
a band of the wicked beset me.
They tear holes in my hands and my feet.
I can count every one of my bones. (Response)

Reader: They divide my clothing among them.
They cast lots for my robe.
O Lord, do not leave me alone,
my strength, make haste to help me! (Response)

Reader: I will tell of your name to my brethren
and praise you where they are assembled.
'You who fear the Lord give him praise;
all sons of Jacob, give him glory.
Revere him, Israel's sons.'

(Response.)

Leader: Lord, you promised a Messiah and he came, just as you said. We trust that we can count on His promised return when we will join him forever. Make us people whose word can be trusted and who are faithful in love to you, to our families and to our neighbours. Increase our faith and boldness to proclaim the truth of Jesus to the world.

Time for silent prayer

Leader: In Jesus' name we pray.

All: **Amen**

Go Forth

Leader: May God continue to lead us,

All: **As our lives are formed in faith, hope and love in the light of Christ.**

All: **In the name of the Father, and of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen**

Extinguish candle.



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Readings: Isaiah 50:4-7; Psalm 21: 8-9. 17-20. 23-24; Philippians 2:6-11; Matthew 27:11-54

Today's Daily Prayer

Today we will pray with the second reading from last Sunday **Preparation:** Choose voices for the parts that are written for the **Leader** and the **Reader**.

Wednesday

Gather

Remind those present to turn phones to silent, close computer screens, sit quietly and prepare for prayer by becoming aware of their breath. There may be special occasions or specific intentions that those gathered may wish to include in today's prayer. Sound a singing bowl, a bell or a chime to begin.

Leader: We begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross, calling to our minds and hearts the presence of our merciful and forgiving God.

All: **In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Light candle and pause.

Listen

Leader: Today we will pray with the second reading from Palm Sunday.

Reader: A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians

His state was divine, yet Christ Jesus did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave, and became as men are, and being as all men are, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross.

But God raised him high and gave him the name which is above all other names so that all beings in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld, should bend the knee at the name of Jesus and that every tongue should acclaim Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The Word of the Lord

All: **Thanks be to God**

Respond

Leader: Today we will listen to the song, [Jerusalem, My Destiny](#) by Rory Cooney.

After listening to the song invite those gathered to reflect on the following questions:

Are we willing to follow Jesus, not just to Church but in our daily life?

Are we willing to entrust ourselves to Him even when the future is frightening or confusing, believing God has a plan?

Are we willing to serve Him until that day when His plan for us on earth is fulfilled?



Time for silent prayer

Leader: We make these prayers in the name of Christ, our Lord.

All: **Amen**

Go Forth

Leader: May God continue to lead us,

All: **As our lives are formed in faith, hope and love in the light of Christ.**

All: **In the name of the Father, and of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen**

Extinguish candle.

Additional Resources:

Song: [Cloaks and Branches](#) by Richard Cootes

[Palm Sunday Reflections – Vatican News](#)



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Today's Daily Prayer – Holy Thursday

Today we celebrate Holy Thursday and will listen to the Gospel of John.

Preparation: Choose voices for the parts that are written for the **Leader** and the **Reader**.

Thursday

Gather

Remind those present to turn phones to silent, close computer screens, sit quietly and prepare for prayer by becoming aware of their breath. There may be special occasions or specific intentions that those gathered may wish to include in today's prayer. Sound a singing bowl, a bell or a chime to begin.

Leader: We begin our prayer with the Sign of the Cross, calling to our minds and hearts the presence of our merciful and forgiving God.

All: **In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Light candle and pause.

Listen

Leader: Let us listen to God's word.

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

All: Glory to you O Lord

It was before the festival of the Passover, and Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to pass from this world to the Father. He had always loved those who were his in the world, but now he showed how perfect his love was.

They were at supper, and the devil had already put it into the mind of Judas Iscariot son of Simon, to betray him. Jesus knew that the Father had put everything into his hands, and that he had come from God and was returning to God, and he got up from table, removed his outer garment and, taking a towel, wrapped it round his waist; he then poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel he was wearing.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus answered, 'At the moment you do not know what I am doing, but later you will understand.' 'Never!' said Peter. 'You shall never wash my feet.' Jesus replied, 'If I do not wash you, you can have nothing in common with me.' 'Then, Lord,' said Simon Peter, 'not only my feet, but my hands and my head as well!' Jesus said, 'No one who has taken a bath needs washing, he is clean all over. You too are clean, though not all of you are.' He knew who was going to betray him, that was why he said, 'though not all of you are.'



When he had washed their feet and put on his clothes again he went back to the table. 'Do you understand' he said 'what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord, and rightly; so I am. If I, then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet. I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you.'

(Pause)

The Gospel of Lord

All: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Respond

Prayers of the Faithful

Leader: We are called to a life of service. Let us bring before God those who are in need.

Reader: That the celebration of the Eucharist will be the center of all the Church's activity on earth. *Lord hear us*

All: Lord, hear our prayer

Reader: That leaders and governments will be strengthened in their resolve to serve with justice and integrity. *Lord hear us*

All: Lord, hear our prayer

Reader: That families who live in poverty will be aided by those who live in comfort. *Lord hear us*

All: Lord, hear our prayer

Reader: That those who are absent from the table of the Lord will be sought out with hospitality and care. *Lord hear us*

All: Lord, hear our prayer

Reader: That the victorious Christ will lead this community through death to new life in these three holy days. *Lord hear us*

All: Lord, hear our prayer

Leader: God of love, your Son ate and drank with sinners and washed the feet of his disciples. Hear our prayers and help us to follow Christ's example by serving others. We ask this in Jesus' name.

All: Amen

Go Forth

Leader: May God continue to lead us,

All: As our lives are formed in faith, hope and love in the light of Christ.

All: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen

Extinguish candle.

