



CELEBRATING PALM SUNDAY IN COMMUNITY

Operational Team InS
March, 2026

LITURGIES AND DEVOTIONALS

Palm Sunday 2026



InS

Instituto Sustentabilidade
América Latina
e Caribe

Celebrating in Community

Liturgical Guide for Palm Sunday¹

Liturgical color: purple/violet or red.

Materials: Liturgical vestments, candles, cross, Bible, elements for Holy Communion (if applicable), and green branches.

Suggestions for the Celebration: Decorate the church with some green branches and encourage community members to also decorate their home doors by hanging a green branch, symbolizing Christian unity as a beautiful testimony of faith and humility. Invite them to post a photo of the green branch on their home door on your community's social media and create a hashtag that symbolizes praise and union in Christ. Furthermore, to fully experience the community celebration, we suggest the following: the faithful are invited to bring green branches from their homes, or the community will provide branches to distribute to those arriving at the church. At the

¹ Material prepared by theology master's student Paula Maria Jonas, from Faculdades EST.

moment of the entrance procession, when the celebrant enters, the entire assembly will stand and wave their green branches, acclaiming Jesus as the humble King, just as his disciples did in Jerusalem. This liturgical act connects us with Christ's triumphal entry and reminds us that our branches are a sign of peace, humility, and commitment to the Kingdom.

Important information: This liturgical proposal for Palm Sunday does not contain the Eucharistic Liturgy. In the event that your celebration includes Holy Communion, perform the Eucharistic Liturgy as is customary in your community. When celebrating the Holy Communion, please note that the Lord's Prayer is already included after the prayer of intercession. Therefore, if your congregation celebrates Holy Communion, do not recite it at the moment indicated on page 18, but during Holy Communion, in order to avoid unnecessary repetition.

Palm Sunday Celebration

Opening Liturgy

Bells:

Prelude:

Entrance Procession: We invite the entire community to stand and, in unity, acclaim the Lord our King with our green branches, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

Apostolic Greeting and Welcome: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Welcome to this service. The Word that welcomes us today is found in John 12:23: "Jesus answered them, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.'"

On this Palm Sunday, we celebrate Christ, who enters Jerusalem humbly, coming to meet us and

save us. With joy in our hearts, let us sing our first hymn:

♪ **Hymn** ♪: *(Choose a hymn known by the community)*

Confession of Sins: Gracious God, today we remember the entry of Your Son Jesus into Jerusalem, and we confess before You that we do not always want to follow the path He shows us. We find it difficult to welcome a humble King who comes riding on a donkey and invites us to service, compassion, and love. Forgive us when we choose security over trust, silence over witness, and selfishness over solidarity. For the sake of Christ, have mercy on us and help us always to walk in Your ways. Amen.

Absolution: The word from John 3:16 tells us: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should

not perish but have everlasting life." Jesus' path does not end with the branches; it passes through the cross and leads to the resurrection. Through this path, God comes to meet us, forgives our sins, and grants us new life. Therefore, in Christ, through gracious forgiveness, you are reconciled with God. Amen.

Kyrie: In our world, there are many reasons for pain and suffering. We ask You, O Christ, have mercy on us; You who come in humility, bringing peace where there is fear and hope where there is weariness. Have mercy on us when we expect a powerful God and fail to recognize the God who serves, who walks with us, and gives Himself up for love. Receive us into Your arms, sustain us in the way of faith, and teach us to sing "Hosanna" with our whole lives. Our world cries out for mercy, for the mercy of God. Therefore, let us cry out in song:

♪ **Hymn** ♪: *(Choose a hymn known by the community)*

Gloria in Excelsis: God hears the cry of His people. God does not leave us alone with our concerns and our pains. He has such compassion for His creation that He suffered on the cross to give life and hope to those who believe in Him. Therefore, let us praise our God in song:

♪ **Hymn** ♪: *(Choose a hymn known by the community)*

Prayer of the Day: Merciful God, we give You thanks for this time of celebration and for gathering us as a community before You. We are grateful because You call us to this encounter and here You serve us with Your living Word. As we begin Passion Week, all that we hear and meditate upon touches our hearts deeply. We remember Your love revealed in the life,

suffering, and cross of Jesus Christ. Therefore, abide with us, Lord, and grant that Your Word may strengthen and guide us, so that we may remain firm even in the face of life's adversities. Sustain us on the path that passes through the cross and leads us to life. This we ask and give thanks in the name of Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Liturgy of the Word

♪ **Hymn** ♪: *(Choose a hymn known by the community)*

Scripture Reading: Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

Gospel: Matthew 21:1–11

Sermon: Brothers and sisters in Christ, today the Church gathers us to celebrate Palm Sunday, the gateway to Holy Week. This is not merely a day of

historical remembrance, but a profound invitation to walk with Jesus along the path He chose: the path of humility, service, and love given to the very end.

The Gospel according to Matthew presents us with a familiar yet always challenging scene. Jesus enters Jerusalem riding on a young donkey. He does not enter as a powerful king according to the standards of this world; He does not come on war horses, He brings no armies or symbols of domination, as many people expected. He enters in simplicity, fulfilling the prophecy: “Behold, your King comes to you, humble and mounted on a donkey.” From the very beginning, Jesus makes it clear that the Kingdom of God is not built by force, violence, or display, but by meekness and faithfulness to the Father’s will.

The crowd spreads cloaks on the road, cuts branches from the trees, and cries out: “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the

name of the Lord!” “Hosanna” is a shout of praise, but also a cry for salvation. It is the voice of a people longing for liberation, justice, and a dignified life. Yet this same crowd that acclaims Him in this passage will, as the week unfolds, become confused, frustrated, and in many cases fall silent in the face of the injustice that will come upon Jesus.

This scene confronts us with an essential question: what kind of Messiah are we expecting? Many times, we too want a Christ who solves our problems quickly, who removes our suffering, who enforces justice according to our own criteria. And it is not difficult to find false promises of such a “messiah” around us, almost like a product for sale in the religious marketplace. But the true Messiah enters Jerusalem showing that salvation passes through the cross, through love that does not give up, and through total self-giving.

Matthew tells us that the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?” That question still echoes today. Who is Jesus for us? A religious figure? A cultural symbol? Or the Lord of our lives, the one who guides our choices, our relationships, and our way of seeing the world?

Palm Sunday carries an important tension within it: it unites praise with the announcement of the passion. The branches we raise with joy today remind us that following Jesus is not only about singing “Hosanna,” but about being willing to walk with Him as well when the path becomes narrow, when it demands renunciation, faithfulness, and commitment to the Kingdom.

The branches in our hands are not empty religious decorations. They are signs of commitment. By lifting them, we publicly affirm that we recognize Jesus as our King, not a distant king, but a King who draws near, who enters the city, who walks among

the poor, who stands in solidarity with those who suffer, and who confronts structures of death with the power of love.

To enter Jerusalem with Jesus today means allowing Him to enter our lives, our homes, and our history. It means letting Him challenge our false securities, our desire for power, and our indifference to the suffering of our neighbors. It means choosing the path of peace amid violence, justice amid inequality, hope amid fear, and transformation through diaconal service.

As we begin this Holy Week, the Church invites us not to be mere spectators of these events, but disciples who accompany Jesus step by step. May we not flee when the cross appears; may we not replace “Hosanna” with indifference or complicit silence; but may we remain steadfast in faith, love, and hope.

May this Palm Sunday help us to answer, with our lives and not only with our words, the question

that echoes through Jerusalem and through our own history: who is this Jesus? And may we answer not only today, but every day, by following Him on the path that leads from the cross to the resurrection. Amen.

The Apostles' Creed: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father Almighty, from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Intercessory Prayer: God of compassion and hope, we place before You this wounded world, marked by violence, injustice, and many forms of suffering.

Just as Your Son entered Jerusalem in humility and meekness, where there is war, pour out Your desire for peace; where there is hatred, bring forth paths of reconciliation; where lives are wounded, welcome, heal, and restore.

We remember before You those who live without hope, those who carry fear, loneliness, and weariness, and those who have lost their way. Be a light in dark nights, strength for those who can no longer walk, and comfort for afflicted hearts.

We intercede for all peoples and nations, for leaders and authorities. Grant them wisdom, responsibility, and a commitment to justice and life, that they may serve the common good and promote peace among nations.

We pray for Your Church, the body of Christ scattered throughout the world. Strengthen her in the proclamation of the Gospel, in the practice of love, and in service to our neighbor, that she may be a sign of Your Kingdom.

We also place before You all that each person carries in their heart and mind: joys and anxieties, silent requests, and unspoken pains. Receive, Lord, what we do not know how to express, and enfold us in Your grace and protection.

Trusting in Your love, we commend all these intercessions into Your merciful hands, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

(If Holy Communion is celebrated, omit the Lord's Prayer here and reserve it for the Eucharistic Liturgy.)

The Lord's Prayer: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done,

on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

♪ **Hymn** ♪: *(Choose a hymn known by the community)*

Eucharistic Liturgy

(If the celebration includes Holy Communion, follow the usual Eucharistic Liturgy. If there is no Communion, proceed to the Sending Liturgy.)

Sending Liturgy

Announcements: Community announcement time.

Blessing: The Lord bless you and keep you on the path that begins with palms and follows through the surrender of love. The Lord make His face shine upon

you in the face of Christ, the humble King who enters Jerusalem to serve and save. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace, that you may walk with faith, bringing hope where there is pain, mercy where there are wounds, and love where the world cries out for life.

Dismissal: Go in peace, follow Christ on the way of the cross, and live by the grace that leads to resurrection. Amen.



Postlude:



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