

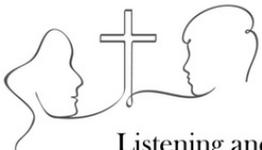
PALM
SUNDAY

Pastoral kit

LENT

March 29th

2026



Listening and Fasting
LENT AS A TIME OF CONVERSION

Message of Pope Leo XIV • Lent 2026

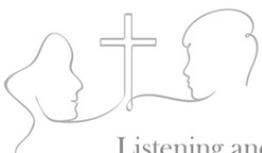
POINTS FOR REFLECTION FOR THE CELEBRATION OF HOLY MASS

Introduction

Today's liturgy has a "dual nature": we welcome the Messiah with olive and palm branches, yet we immediately enter into the silence of the Passion. It is the final step on the Lenten journey towards the garden of Easter. In this "week of weeks," we are invited to listen to the voice of the Lord who strips himself of everything out of love, teaching us the true path to freedom.

Suggested songs

- All Glory, Laud and Honour
- Hail Redeemer King Divine
- Crown Him with Many Crowns
- From the Depths of Sin and Sadness
- My Song Is Love Unknown
- At the Name of Jesus
- Loving and Forgiving
- Were You There

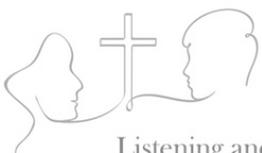


Prayer of the Faithful

1. **For the Church:** That during this Holy Week she may know how to ‘move the chairs’ to make room for everyone, becoming a community that reaches out, seeking those who are far away with humility. We pray to the Lord.
2. **For government leaders and for peace:** That those who govern nations and those in power may have the courage to choose the path of service and reconciliation. We pray to the Lord.
3. **For those who suffer and are marginalized:** For those who experience the extreme loneliness of prisons or the “peripheries of death”; that they may find in us credible witnesses who offer closeness and hope. We pray to the Lord.
4. **For young people:** That they may seek God’s will and fulfil it, discovering the joy that comes from self-giving. We pray to the Lord.
5. **For our community:** That this season of the Passion may teach us to choose our words carefully and to cultivate kindness, making our love “boundless” like that of Jesus. We pray to the Lord.

PRAYER ON THE THEME OF THE DAY

Lord Jesus, meek and humble King, come and dwell in our home during this Holy Week. Draw us close to You and remove all that distances us from You, so that, following in Your footsteps on the way of the cross, we may reach the joy of the Resurrection in the garden of daily life.



IDEAS FOR THE HOMILY

Pastoral approach

Today's liturgy is marked by a stark contrast: from cries of joy to the stark shout, "Crucify him!" It is easy to identify with the enthusiastic crowd; it is harder to remain when the enthusiasm fades.

Amidst this clamour, Jesus chooses a surprising path: silence. He does not respond to the provocations, he does not defend himself, he does not use words to hurt.

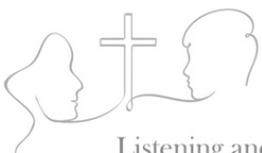
This is where Lent leads us: to the most difficult fast, that of the tongue and of judgement. Following Jesus means learning the 'almsgiving of listening': remaining close to suffering without justifications, without condemnation. True love does not shout; it remains present and steadfast.



Biblical approach

Paul's hymn in the Letter to the Philippians reveals the logic of God: victory does not come through possession, but through self-emptying. Adam had sought to be like God; Christ chooses to descend to become like us, to become a servant. The cross is the place where humiliation becomes exaltation and apparent defeat becomes salvation.

Following Jesus in his Passion means accepting vulnerability, trusting even when everything seems to be failing. It is believing that God grasps us precisely in those moments when we feel lost.



RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN

Reflection

Today we celebrate Jesus as a great friend arriving in town! But Jesus is a special King: he has no swords, he rides a donkey and comes to serve. He is like a tiny seed (a grain of wheat): he knows he must 'break open' and give himself entirely so that a beautiful plant of love for us may spring forth. We too can be his little helpers by bringing peace to our homes and schools.

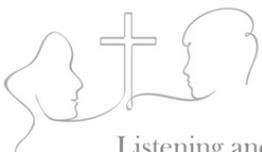
Activities

- **The path of branches:** Draw a road and stick small paper branches onto it. On each branch, write down an act of kindness done during the week.
- **The “good friend” prayer:** Ask the children to repeat: “Jesus, make me a good friend to everyone.”

RESOURCES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Reflection

Today we begin Holy Week with a stark contrast. The very same people who shout “*Hosanna*” just a few days later shout “*Crucify him!*” It is not simply a page in the Gospel: it speaks to us personally.



RESOURCES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Following Jesus is easy when he inspires, when he seems to be winning, when it does not cost too much. It is harder to stay when he is silent, when he does not defend himself, when he does not respond to provocation. In the Passion, Jesus no longer shouts. He chooses silence. Not out of weakness, but out of love.

This Sunday does not ask us to be consistent in our words, but to look within ourselves: in which moments do we say “Hosanna” and in which, instead, do we turn away?

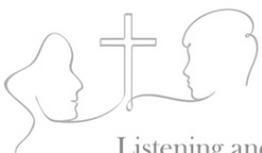
Let us not seek the right answers. Let us seek the truth. And let us learn, step by step, to remain steadfast.

Activities

- **“Hosanna... Crucify him!”**: on two large posters, write the following:
 - Times when it is easy to follow Jesus (on the poster marked “Hosanna”)
 - Times when it is difficult to follow Jesus (on the poster marked “Crucify him!”)

Then take a brief moment of silence in front of the two posters. We can then ask: Where am I at risk today of shifting from “Hosanna” to “Crucify him”?

- **Discussion activity** “*Who am I in the story of the Passion?*”: Choose the character of the Passion (Peter, Pilate, a fleeing disciple, the centurion, Mary at the foot of the cross) with whom you identify most closely and answer the following questions:
 - Why do I see myself in him or her?
 - What prevents or enables me to remain steadfast?



MATERIAL FOR ADULTS

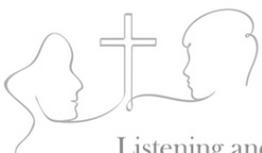


Reflection

Holy Week is not a re-enactment, but a call to *true conversion*. We are called to let the pain of the world enter our very being. The true worship that God desires is knowing how to spend time gratuitously. Are we ready to offer our lives (and our time) to bring forth a Church that is truly the “Father’s house”?

Activities

- **Week of Listening:** Throughout our journey, we have tried to “train our ears” and to “give” of our time. During this Holy Week, we are called to continue (and “intensify”) the *almsgiving of listening*.
- **Lectio Divina on the Passion:** Dedicate a prolonged period of silence to reading the Gospel of Matthew (chapters 26-27), asking yourself: which character of the Passion do I identify with most closely today? Why?



EASTER TRIDUUM

“FROM THE CROSS TO THE GARDEN”

Lent ends in silence. Not with an explanation, but with a gift. Jesus enters the Triduum not by speaking, but by giving himself.

On Holy Thursday, he kneels and washes feet: love takes the form of service.

On Good Friday, he is silent on the cross: love accepts not being understood.

On Holy Saturday, he descends into the darkness of the earth: love waits, without fleeing.

The cross is not God's defeat, but the place where God trusts in humanity to the very end. It is there that Jesus gives up his spirit, not as a surrender, but as an act of entrusting himself totally to the Father.

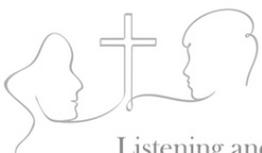
And then, in the dead of night, the unexpected happens. The stone is not merely moved aside: it is rolled away. The tomb is not just decorated: it is emptied. The place of death becomes a garden.

Easter does not erase the wounds, but transfigures them. The Risen One still bears the marks of the nails, but now they are wounds that speak of life.

From the cross to the garden there is no sudden leap, but a faithfulness of love. It is the path of those who dared to remain, of those who remained silent rather than to hurt, of those who continued to hope even when all seemed lost.

This is the Easter message: we are not saved because we are strong, but because we are loved to the very end.

And the garden of the Resurrection begins every time, in our lives, we choose to stay, to listen, to trust, and to love without measure.



SUMMARY OF OUR LENTEN JOURNEY

	<i>First Sunday of Lent</i>	<i>Second Sunday of Lent</i>	<i>Third Sunday of Lent</i>	<i>Fourth Sunday of Lent</i>	<i>Fifth Sunday of Lent</i>	<i>Palm Sunday</i>
Keyword	Listening	Trust	Thirst	Sight	Life	Silence
Image	<i>Desert</i>	<i>Mountain</i>	<i>Well</i>	<i>Light</i>	<i>Tomb</i>	<i>Palms – Passion</i>
Main idea	God speaks when we stop defending ourselves.	I do not know where I am going, but I know with Whom I am walking.	Jesus does not condemn thirst; He engages with it.	Faith is learning to see with God's eyes.	Jesus does not avoid death; He takes away its finality.	True love does not shout; it remains steadfast.
Question for Reflection	Which voices am I listening to in order to define who I am?	What sense of security is preventing me from climbing higher?	Where do I keep returning, knowing it does not quench my thirst?	Who do I look at with eyes clouded by judgement?	Which tomb is the Lord calling me out of today?	When is it time to be silent in order to love?

