

Holy Week, March 29 – April 5, 2026

For Christians, Holy Week, beginning with Palm Sunday and culminating on Easter Sunday, is a holy time in the faith journey. The year Holy Week coincides with Passover (Pesach) of our Jewish neighbours (Passover began on sundown, April 1st).

Palm Sunday commemorates the biblical story of Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey (a symbol of peace and humility), in contrast to that of Roman warriors, dressed in military splendor, demanding allegiance. Particular stories continue throughout the week and, then, on “Maundy” Thursday, Jesus ate his last meal with his disciples, assumed to be a Passover meal, ending with a washing of the disciples feet and the ‘commandment’ (Maundy, from Latin, ‘mandatum’, command) to follow his example of ‘hospitality’ and ‘humble service’ to others. From this ‘event’, the early Church instituted the Eucharist or the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Thursday evening and Friday contain the story of betrayal by one of Jesus’ followers, Judas, the arrest by soldiers, and the public spectacle of crucifixion by the Romans. The early Christian Church named the day as “Good” Friday, not because of the horrific act of crucifixion, rather because of the outcome, the Resurrection on Sunday. Numerous themes are highlighted by different Christian denominations: three primary messages are emphasized: our calling to end ‘crucifixions’ (violence and suffering) wherever they are found; our hope-in-action that love has victory over violence and hate, and that, from the pain and sorrow of death, new life can rise; a sense of the Divine Presence being with us in life, in death and in life beyond death.

It remains a powerful message in the midst of our personal struggles, the destructive wars and other forms of violence in our world and the on-going Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and other religious prejudices and hatred. The Christian story and all other faith stories call us to ‘hope-in-action’ or, as one person shares, “hope needs help”