

**29 March 2026**  
**PALM SUNDAY, YEAR A**



**ALEXANDRA  
 CATHOLIC  
 PASTORAL AREA**  
**[St John the Baptist**  
 (1924) Alexandra;  
**St Peter's**  
 (1928) Omakau;  
**St Dunstan's**  
 (1903) Clyde;  
**St Patrick's**  
 (1892) St Bathans;  
**Our Lady of Peace**  
 (1910) Roxburgh]

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**THIS SUNDAY'S READINGS**

(1) **Matthew 21:1-11** (at entrances of churches); *This reading describes the royal reception Jesus received from his admirers, who paraded with him for the distance of the three kilometers between the Mount of Olives and the city of Jerusalem.*

(2) **Isaiah 50:4-7**: *This passage sings of the suffering accepted by 'the Servant for the Lord', that is, humiliation, insult and spitting. Who, then, is this Servant? In its primary meaning it has been understood as the prophet Isaiah himself, reflecting on his own experiences as God's messenger to Israel around 700BC. But subsequently, Christianity sees the prophecies to be fulfilled in the mission and sufferings of Jesus.*

(3) **Philippians 2:6-11**: *Paul's letter to the Philippians is an ancient Christian hymn representing a very early Christian understanding of who Jesus IS, and of how his mission delivers humanity from sin and death.*



(4) **Matthew 27:11-54**: *The accounts of the Passion given by the four evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are not identical. Their task as gospel-writers is not to relay to us the raw facts, but to help us understand their significance. Each stresses a particular aspect. For instance, John underlines that the triumph of Jesus is that he ultimately shows his divinity. Matthew's preoccupation with Judaism dictates that he show in detail how the events accord with God's plan revealed in the scriptures. Though Pilate the governor must bear the final responsibility, Matthew also stresses the pressure put on him by the crowd manipulated by the politically adept Jewish authorities. We are challenged to examine our own lives in the light of some of the characters in the Passion story – like Peter who denied Jesus, Judas who betrayed Jesus, Herod who ridiculed Jesus, Pilate who acted against his conscience as he condemned Jesus to death on the cross, and the leaders of the people who thought to preserve their position by getting rid of Jesus. (Adapted commentaries from Universalis, et.al.)*

**NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS (Easter Sunday)**

(1) **Acts 10:34,37-43**; (2) **Colossians 3:1-4**; (3) **John 20:1-9**

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**Died Recently:** Colin Bellett.

**Anniversaries about now:** Michael Wilson, Patrick Collett, Fr Dan Cummings, Rose Patterson, Ivan Van de Water, Eileen Gale, Val Waldron, Patricia Hagman, and John Land. **'May they rest in peace.'**

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**HOLY WEEK & EASTER SERVICE TIMES**

**\*Palm Sunday:** 6pm vigil Mass at Omakau; 9am Mass Alexandra; 11am Mass at Roxburgh

**\*Reconciliation (Rite I):** Tuesday 31 March, Alexandra church, 7-8pm. Frs' Pat McGettigan & Brendan Ward, plus another if possible. (See examens of conscience in church foyers for help.)

**\*Chrism Mass:** St Joseph's Cathedral, Dunedin, Wednesday 01 April, 11am.

**\*Holy Thursday Mass of the Last Supper:** Thursday 02 April, Alexandra church, 7pm. **NB:** No 9am Mass.

**\*Good Friday (The Passion of the Lord):** 3pm at both Alexandra and Roxburgh churches.

**\*Easter Vigil (The Service of Light):** Saturday 04 April, **8pm** at Omakau, and **8pm** at Roxburgh.

**\*Easter Sunday:** 9am Alexandra. (**NB:** No 11am Mass at Roxburgh)

**COMBINED INTER-CHURCHES SERVICES:**

**\*Good Friday Walk:** A self-guided contemplative prayer walk (booklet provided) around stations of the cross at the Salvation Army centre, 37 Royal Terrace, Alexandra, any time from 9am to 1pm.

**\*Easter Sunday Sunrise Service:** 7am, Alexandra lookout, Little Valley Road.

**HOLY WEEK**

'Holy Week' is the most important week of the Christian faith, second to no other. It extends from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, and includes the core period called the 'Easter Tridium', meaning 'a space of three days', from Holy Thursday evening to Easter Sunday.

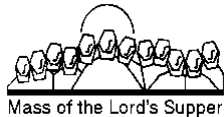
**Palm Sunday** is also called 'Passion Sunday', because the Gospel of the day is an entire account of Christ's suffering and death ('Passion'), as a way of preparing for the events commemorated over the coming week. Palm Sunday specifically commemorates Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem where he was initially welcomed enthusiastically by the people.



**The Mass of Oils (Chrism Mass):** The bishop blesses the oils of the Infirm, Catechumens, and Chrism for use in anointing of the Sick, Baptism, Confirmation, and Ordination over the coming year throughout all parishes of the diocese.

**Holy Thursday - Mass of the Lord's Supper:**

Christ allies the Last Supper ('This is my body given for you, this is my blood poured out for you') with a life of service, as conveyed by his washing of the disciples feet. ('If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet.' John 13:14).



Mass of the Lord's Supper

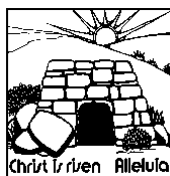
**Good Friday - Commemoration of the Passion (i.e. suffering and death) of Jesus.** The first Christians understood Jesus to be the great high priest and victim whose unique self-sacrifice had once and for all atoned for the sins of humanity and brought a new relationship between God and human beings. Good Friday is dedicated as a day of fasting (only two small meals for healthy adults aged 18-59) and abstinence (no meat for persons aged 14 and over), as a way to honour Christ's self-sacrifice for all. Also, annually during the Good Friday service, a collection is taken up for support of the peoples and sites of the Holy Lands.

**Holy Saturday - The Church is in mourning:**

Out of respect for the significance of Good Friday and Holy Saturday the sacraments are not celebrated on these two days of the year (including weddings and funerals), except in cases of grave necessity (e.g. anointing of the dying).

**Easter Sunday:** According to the

Hebrew calendar the Jewish day extended from nightfall to nightfall (not midnight to midnight). Hence, the 'third day', Easter Sunday, begins after dark of Saturday evening. **The celebration of this vigil 'Service of Light' after Saturday nightfall is the most important liturgical event of the Christian year.**



Christ is risen Alleluia

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**RECENT SOLEMNITY – The Annunciation (Luke**

**1:26-38) 25 March:** This celebrates the Archangel Gabriel announcing to the Virgin Mary (9 months before Christmas) that she will conceive and bear a son, Jesus, by the Holy Spirit. Being a single woman betrothed to Joseph but not already living together, this pivotal event in the history of salvation is extraordinary, to say the least. On the one hand, if we see God as made in our image, limited to being as we are, then it is an irrational story, silly. On the other hand, if we see ourselves as made in God's image, then God can do what God may choose, unconstrained by the limitations of human nature. But not without Mary's consent. God chooses to need her cooperation, as God does ours in our own lives, which is indeed extraordinary.

**VATICAN NEWS (www.vaticannews.va):**

- \* **Pope Leo: Amid madness of war, we must defend life at every stage.**
- \* **Pope writes to French Bishops on education, abuse, and liturgy.**
- \* **Singapore: Largest number of new Catholics this Easter.** After a decade, more than 1,200 catechumens and candidates prepare to enter the Church, as the Archdiocese of Singapore highlights growing interest in the faith.
- \* **New Nuncio to Syria hopes Christians can remain as a bridge for dialogue.**
- \* **Commemorating thousands of Polish religious sisters who rescued Jews in WW2.**
- \* **Palm Sunday procession in Jerusalem cancelled due to war.**
- \* **Pope assures Archbishop of Canterbury of dialogue 'in truth and love'** Pope Leo XIV sends a message to Archbishop Sarah Mullally on the occasion of her installation, recalling the progress and challenges in Catholic–Anglican relations.

**CATHNEWS (https://cathnewsnz.com)**

- \* **The Child Poverty Action Group is calling for an increase to the winter energy payment to help offset the cost-of-living crisis for families on core benefits.**
- \* **A Dunedin parish outreach helping immigrants with English language skills** has been praised by an automotive company as a much-needed resource in the city.
- \* **Vatican wants global ethics for use of animal organs in humans.**

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**SUNDAY MASS**

- Omakau** St Peters (Saturday): 6pm vigil
- Alexandra** St John the Baptist: 9am
- Roxburgh** Our Lady of Peace: 11am

**WEEKDAY MASS**

	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>Alexandra</b>	5pm	9am	9am	Noon	9am
<b>Roxburgh</b>				5:15pm	

**RECONCILIATION (Rite I)**

**Alexandra:** Saturdays 9:30-10am; or upon request.

**ANOINTING OF THE SICK (Mar, Jun, Sept, Dec)**

- Alexandra:** First Friday Mass (noon)
- Roxburgh:** First Wednesday Mass (5:15pm)

**EXPOSITION and BENECTION**

**Alexandra:** Side chapel, Fridays 11:30-11:50am.

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**PARISH CONTACT DETAILS**

- Parish Priest:** Fr Brendan Ward.
- Church Address:** 3 Killarney St, Alexandra.
- Phone:** 03 448 8202, or 027 975 3272
- Email:** [alexatholic@xtra.co.nz](mailto:alexatholic@xtra.co.nz)
- Parish Council:** Mrs. Kathleen O'Kane.
- Finance Chair:** Mr. Pat Cooney.
- St Gerard's Principal:** Mrs. Julie Flannery.
- Catholic Social Services:** 0800 277 669 (toll-free)
- Parish Website:** [www.alexatholic.nz](http://www.alexatholic.nz)
- Diocese Website:** [www.cdd.nz](http://www.cdd.nz).