

Easter day

Easter is the most important festival in the Christian calendar. It celebrates the resurrection from the dead of Jesus, three days after he was executed. The Easter story is at the heart of Christianity.

Easter Sunday

Easter Sunday marks Jesus' resurrection.

After Jesus was crucified on the Friday (now known as Good Friday), his body was taken down from the cross, and buried in a cave tomb. The tomb was guarded by Roman Soldiers and an enormous stone was put over the entrance, so that no-one could steal the body.

On the Sunday, Mary Magdalene, followed later by some of Jesus' disciples visited the tomb and found that the stone had been moved, and that Jesus' body had gone.



Jesus himself was seen that day by Mary and the disciples, and for forty days afterwards by many people. His followers realised that God had raised Jesus from the dead. Christians call this the Resurrection.

The week leading up to Easter is called Holy Week.

Holy Week

Palm Sunday

This is the Sunday before Easter Day.

It is the first day of Holy Week and celebrates Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem riding on a donkey. Crowds of people came out of the city to greet him, throwing down palm branches on the road.



Anglican and Roman Catholic churches give out small crosses made from palm leaves, as a reminder of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem and his death on the cross. Some Christians keep these in their homes all year as a symbol of their faith.

Maundy Thursday

This is the Thursday before Easter Day

Last Supper: On Maundy Thursday Christians remember when Jesus ate the Passover meal with his disciples, breaking bread and drinking wine, which is now known as the Last Supper.

Many Christians remember this by sharing bread and wine together in a service called Holy Communion, Eucharist or Mass. It is a reminder that Jesus sacrificed his life for mankind.

At this meal Jesus told his followers that they should love and serve one another. He demonstrated this by washing the feet of the disciples - something a servant would normally do. You can read this story in the Bible in John Ch.13v1-15

The word *maundy* comes from the command (mandate) given by Jesus at the Last Supper, that we should love one another.

Roman Catholic church services include a ceremony in which the priest washes the feet of 12 people to commemorate Jesus' washing the feet of his disciples.

Good Friday

Good Friday is the Friday before Easter Sunday. It commemorates the **execution of Jesus by crucifixion.**

Good Friday is a day of mourning in church. During special Good Friday services Christians remember Jesus' suffering and death on the cross, and what this means for their faith.

In some countries, there are special Good Friday processions, or re-enactments of the Crucifixion.

The main service on Good Friday takes place between midday and 3pm. In many churches it takes the form of a meditation based on the seven last words of Jesus on the cross, with hymns, prayers, and short sermons.

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