



Good Friday

Good Friday commemorates Jesus' crucifixion.

The most important events in Christianity are the death and later resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Jewish prophet who Christians believe is the Son of God, and whose life and teachings are the foundation of Christianity.

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

Good Friday is a day of mourning in church. There are traditionally no decorations in church so that the building looks plain and bare in keeping with the sad day. During special Good Friday services Christians meditate on 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 reflection based on the seven last words of Jesus on the cross, with hymns, prayers, and short sermons.



Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday commemorates Christ's triumphant arrival in Jerusalem to the cheers of the crowd.

Traditionally on this day, churches hold Palm Sunday processions. There is a blessing of palms and Christians process waving palm branches. This reminds Christians of the story of the first Palm Sunday. In many churches, Christians are given small palm crosses.

In Cyprus the priest leads a procession of people waving olive braches which are then left inside the church for 40 days. They are then taken home and set alight and smoldered in a special pot. The pot is carried around the house to banish hatred.

In Greece after willow branches are blessed, the people can take them home. It is custom to use them to sprinkle holy water onto the cattle. In Brazil, On Palm Sunday palm braches are woven into intricate patterns.



Easter Sunday

Christians regard Easter Sunday as the most important day of the Christian year (even more important than Christmas Day).

In many churches the Easter day service begins just before midnight. The use of light as a symbol is very important in these Easter Day services. Usually the church is in darkness and all is quiet. Then on the stroke of midnight the priest will appear with a single candle in his hand. This is used to light other candles and soon the whole church is ablaze with the light. Christians believe Jesus is the light of the world and at Easter light has overcome darkness, good has triumphed over evil.

Eggs, of course, play an important part in Easter Day celebrations. In Greece at the midnight service, some take with them a hard boiled egg which they break open as a sign of Jesus breaking out of the tomb. In Poland Easter eggs are called pisanki and are made from real hens' eggs which have been 'blown' by piercing them with a needle.

The giving of chocolate Easter eggs especially to children is now a popular custom. In the Black Forest area of Germany, children traditionally search for eggs and chocolate which have been hidden.



Holy Days

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