

HOLY WEEK

SEASONAL RESOURCES FROM THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF CONNECTICUT

Holy Week is the week before Easter, commemorating events in the last days of Christ's life. It begins on Palm Sunday and ends on Easter Monday. Holy Week is the last week of Lent.

SPECIAL DAYS IN HOLY WEEK

- † **Palm Sunday** (Passion Sunday), the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem
- † **Holy Thursday** (Maundy Thursday), Last Supper and the betrayal by Judas
- † **Good Friday** (Holy Friday), the arrest, trial, crucifixion, death and burial of Jesus Christ
- † **Holy Saturday**, the Sabbath on which Jesus rested in the grave
- † **Easter Sunday**, the Celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ

PALM SUNDAY (PASSION SUNDAY)

Palm Sunday is the sixth and last Sunday of Lent and the beginning of Holy Week. The date for Palm in 2009 is April 5.

What is Palm Sunday? The Sunday before Easter is known as Palm Sunday. It marks the beginning of Holy Week and celebrates Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem for, we believe, the Jewish festival of Passover. Great crowds of people lined the streets waving palm branches to welcome him. They spread branches on the road—and even laid down their clothes. They shouted 'Hosanna!'

Why is it called Palm Sunday? The Sunday before Easter is called Palm Sunday because the crowds waved palm branches as they followed Jesus' procession into Jerusalem.

Why did Jesus go to Jerusalem? It is believed that Jesus traveled to Jerusalem for the Jewish feast of Passover. Many Jews traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate this

feast together.

Pax Cakes In some English churches small buns called pax cakes (symbolic of peace and goodwill) are given to the congregation as they leave after a Palm Sunday service.

What happens to any Palm crosses left over? Any leftover Palm Crosses are kept and burned to make ashes for next year's Ash Wednesday services.

MAUNDY THURSDAY (HOLY THURSDAY)

Maundy Thursday – also called Holy Thursday is the feast or holy day on the Thursday before Easter. It commemorates the Last Supper of Jesus Christ with the Apostles. On this day, Christians remember the Last Supper. During the meal Jesus took bread and wine and shared them with his disciples.

The Last Supper was probably a Passover meal – the meal which Jewish people share together to celebrate the time when God delivered Moses and Israelites from slavery in Egypt. The name 'Maundy' is derived from the command or mandatum by Christ at the Last Supper, to love one another: *'And now I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.'* John 15:12 After supper Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. It is here that Judas betrayed Jesus and the Roman soldiers arrested him.

GOOD FRIDAY (HOLY FRIDAY)

When is Good Friday? Good Friday is the Friday before Easter Sunday. On this day, Christians remember the day when Jesus was crucified on a cross. The date of Good Friday changes every year. The first

Good Friday date will never be known. The Anglo-Saxon name for Good Friday was Long Friday, due to the long fast imposed upon this day.

Why is it called Good Friday? The name may be derived from 'God's Friday' in the same way that good-bye is derived from 'God be with ye'. It is 'good' because the barrier of sin was broken.

What happened on Good Friday? Jesus was tried, in a mock trial. He was handed over to the Roman soldiers to be beaten and flogged with whips. A crown of long, sharp thorns was thrust upon his head.

Jesus was forced to carry his own cross outside the city to Skull Hill, Golgotha. He was so weak after the beating that a man named Simon, who was from Cyrene, was pulled from the crowd and forced to carry Jesus' cross the rest of the way.

Jesus was nailed to the cross. Two other criminals were crucified with him, their crosses were on either side of him. A sign above Jesus read "The King of the Jews."

According to the bible:

- † The third hour of the day - Jesus was nailed to the cross. (9:00 am)
- † The Sixth Hour of the day - darkness covered the land (12:00 noon).
- † The ninth hour of the day - the darkness left, and the Lord died (3:00 pm). The hours in the bible are calculated from the first hour of the day, being 6 in the morning.

Good Friday Traditions Traditionally Good Friday was the day when everything was cleaned and whitewashed in preparation for Easter Sunday. Some Christians take part in a procession of witness, carrying a cross through the streets and then into church. Churches are not decorated on Good Friday. In some churches, pictures and statues are covered over. It is seen as a time of mourning. Many churches hold a special service. This may be a communion

service (although the majority of parishes do not celebrate the Eucharist on Good Friday) in the evening or a time of prayer during the day, especially around 3 o'clock as that is about the time of day when Jesus died. Churches hold services lasting three hours. They may celebrate the Stations of the Cross, or take part in Passion plays and dramatic readings.

Some Christians fast (go without food) on Good Friday. Others follow the tradition of eating fish on Good Friday instead of meat.

HOLY SATURDAY

Holy Saturday is also known as Easter Even and the Great Sabbath. The term "Easter Even" was used by the 1549 Prayer Book. The 1979 BCP uses the title "Holy Saturday" for the Saturday before Easter (p. 283)

When and What is Holy Saturday?

This day is the Saturday before Easter, the day when Christ's body lay in His Tomb. In the early church Holy Saturday was a day of fasting and preparation for the Easter Vigil.

Easter Vigil Easter Vigil, dating back to at least the Roman times, takes place on Holy Saturday. The Easter Vigil is a service held in many Christian churches as the official celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The service includes the first use of the word alleluia since the beginning of Lent as well as the first Eucharist of Easter.

The Easter Vigil is a celebration of the darkness of Good Friday making way for the light of Easter by the use of a paschal candle which is inscribed with symbols such as, a cross, the letters alpha and omega, the four numbers representing the current year, five grains and others.

EASTER SUNDAY

Easter Sunday / Easter Day is the celebration of Christ's resurrection from the dead. Easter falls on the first Sunday after the Full Moon that occurs on or after the Vernal (Spring) Equinox – the Paschal Full Moon. The date of Easter therefore changes every year. Easter Day in 2009 falls on Sunday April 12.

The Easter Season The Easter Season begins at the first Easter celebration and lasts 50 days, ending on Pentecost.

What happened on Easter Sunday?

It was on Easter Sunday that Jesus rose from death. Jesus had told his disciples before he was arrested that he would be crucified and on the third day he would rise from the dead. Sunday was the third day, (Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Day). The second day after Good Friday.

What happens on Easter Sunday today? Some Christians gather together on Easter Sunday for a Sunrise Service. This service takes place at sun rise again representing the light of Christ returning to the world. Some Christians take part in an Easter vigil, lighting a new fire outside the church Saturday evening. The Paschal candle, may be lit from the fire and carried into the church where it is used to light the candles of the worshippers. The Easter Eucharist is a particularly joyful service. It is a popular time for baptisms and renewal of baptism vows. Some churches have an Easter Garden. A stone is placed across the mouth of a tomb before Easter, then rolled away on Easter morning.

Why do we give Easter eggs? For Christians, Easter eggs symbolize new life. They believe that, through his resurrection, Jesus defeated death and sin and offers people the promise of eternal life by following his teachings. Eggs have been a symbol of continuing life and resurrection since pre-Christian spring celebrations.

Eggs had a religious significance in many ancient civilizations; Egyptians buried eggs in their tombs as did the Greeks; A Roman proverb states, "All life comes from an egg". It's probably no surprise that Christianity should also adopt the egg to symbolize the resurrection of Christ.

The Traditional Egg Gift The first eggs given at Easter were birds' eggs. These eggs were painted in bright colors to give them further meaning as a gift. As chocolate was becoming more wide spread in the 20th Century, a chocolate version of the traditional egg was developed. The size of the chocolate egg has grown over the years and is now more likely to be the size of an ostrich egg rather than a small birds' egg.

Around 80 million chocolate eggs are eaten each year in Britain.

Easter Egg Hunt Small chocolate eggs are hidden for the children to find on the traditional Easter Egg Hunt. In recent years this game has been linked to the Easter Bunny, which only arrived in Britain relatively recently.

Easter Presents Chocolate eggs are given to children. The eggs are either hollow or have a filling, and are usually covered with brightly colored silver paper.

Origins of Coloring Eggs at Easter Decorating and coloring eggs for Easter was a common custom in England in the middle ages. Eggs were brightly colored to mimic the new, fresh colors of spring.

Special Food at Easter After the lean months of winter and the fast weeks of Lent, food at Easter was/is always a special treat. Easter day, like Christmas day, is also associated with special food.

Boiled eggs are traditionally served at breakfast, then Easter cards and gifts may be exchanged. Roast lamb, which is the main dish at Jewish Passover, is the traditional meat for the main meal on Easter Day. It is served with mint sauce and vegetables. The traditional pudding is custard tarts sprinkled with currants and flat Easter biscuits. Simnel cake is baked for tea. Eleven balls of marzipan are placed around the top layer to represent the eleven true disciples (excluding Judas). Originally the simnel cake was a gift to mothers on Mothering Sunday in Mid Lent.

Easter Biscuits Easter Biscuits are sometimes called "Cakes", and are eaten on Easter Sunday. They contain spices, currants and sometimes grated lemon rind.

Why do we eat Hot Cross Buns The pastry cross on top of the buns symbolizes and reminds Christians of the crucifixion cross. The buns were traditionally eaten at breakfast time, hot from the oven. They were once sold by street vendors who sang a little song about them. "*Hot cross buns, Hot cross buns, One a penny, two a penny, Hot cross buns.*"