

What is the significance of Palm Sunday?

Palm Sunday is celebrated on the Sunday before Easter Day. It marks the triumphal entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem, an event that is recorded in all four Gospels.

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, while the crowds waved palm branches and shouted: "Hosanna!" (an exclamation of praise).

To mark this, Palm Sunday is often celebrated with a procession, either inside the church or through the streets outside. Congregations carry palm branches or other greenery, sometimes decorated with flowers. Some churches or cathedrals even involve a real donkey in their procession.

What does 'Maundy Thursday' mean?

Maundy Thursday is the day when Christians remember the Last Supper shared by Jesus and his disciples before he was betrayed and arrested.

Maundy Thursday takes its name from the Latin word 'mandatum' meaning 'commandment'. During the supper Jesus told his disciples: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another." (John 13.34 – NRSV).

He also got up from the table, poured a basin of water and washed the disciples' feet. This was the act of a servant. He also told them to do the same for others.

Many churches recreate this act at special services on Maundy Thursday as a reminder of how Jesus served others and of how Christians should also serve others.

Why is it called 'Good Friday'?

Good Friday is the most sombre day of the Christian calendar when the crucifixion and death of Jesus is commemorated in churches and cathedrals so it can be difficult at first glance to see what is 'good' about it. Some sources suggest that it may be a corruption of 'God's Friday' which has evolved over time. But – more importantly – Christians see the death of Jesus as the means by which God's people are invited to share in new life.

Why do some churches do a 'walk of witness' on Good Friday?

Many congregations take part in a public 'walk of witness' before the start of service on Good Friday to remember that Jesus had to carry his cross through the streets of Jerusalem.

Each church's walk will be slightly different. People might give out hot cross buns or enact the actual events of Jesus' walk through the streets of Jerusalem or someone might carry a cross.

Why is Easter so important to Christians?

Easter is important to Christians as it is the celebration of Jesus dying for our sins and then rising again. In so doing, he offers us new life in him. On the third day after his crucifixion, Jesus's tomb was found to be empty. He had risen from the dead. Life triumphs over death! The joy of resurrection is possible only because Christ endured death and conquered it.

How long does Easter last?

Easter lasts for 50 days, from the Easter Sunday to the Day of Pentecost. During this time the Church celebrates the resurrection of Jesus and looks towards his ascension into heaven.