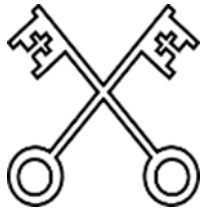


# BRADFORD CATHEDRAL

A stylized blue compass rose icon with a vertical line through the center, positioned to the right of the text.

## **Easter Around the World**



## Easter in the United Kingdom

All Christians celebrate Easter, but in very different ways, even in the United Kingdom (UK). Because there are lots of different denominations (types of Christians) traditions vary. However, Easter is the most joyful season of the Church year and the climax at the end of the season of Lent.

Lent lasts for forty days and many Christians try to give up doing certain things, or they may fast from certain foods during this period. Originally Lent was a penitential time when Christians didn't eat meat or dairy products; it is still a time when Christians ask God to forgive them for all the things they have done wrong. Today Christians actually might promise to do something during Lent, rather than stop doing something, for example they may volunteer for a charity. However Christians mark Lent it is always a time of prayer and reflection.

In many Church of England (Anglican) churches, like the Cathedral, worship during Holy Week and Easter follows a similar pattern to the one described below. Different denominations may have slightly varying, but similar customs and rituals.

On **Palm Sunday** many Christians attend church to remember the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem nearly 2000 years ago. In most churches Christians receive palm crosses, to remind them of this. Very often these will be kept for almost a full year, until Ash Wednesday the following year, when they will be burnt and used as ash to mark the foreheads of Christians who attend the Ash Wednesday service at the start of Lent.

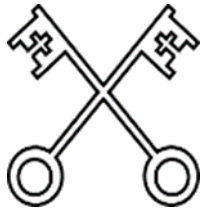
## The Paschal Triduum

The last three days of Holy Week are called the **Triduum**, a phrase meaning the three day feast of Easter. These days are the most important of all in the Church calendar.

On **Maundy Thursday** Christians remember the time when Jesus celebrated the Last Supper and gave them the Sacrament of Holy Communion, (this is also called the Lord's Supper, Mass or Eucharist). This marks the occasion when Jesus asked his special friends, his disciples, to break and eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of him. It was also the occasion when he gave his disciples the mandatum (from which we get the word Maundy), the commandment to love one another. Jesus showed the disciples his love by washing their feet, as in those times, in Judea a servant would have done for their masters. This is a custom which is repeated in many churches on Maundy Thursday. On **Good Friday** or God's Friday, the second day of the Triduum, Christians remember the trial and the death of Jesus on the cross and then finally on **Easter Sunday** they celebrate his resurrection. The celebration of Easter itself begins at the Easter Vigil on Saturday evening. The service begins in a darkened church when the priest lights the Paschal Candle to represent Christ, the light of the world, rising in glory from the darkness of death.

The priest cuts a cross in the wax to remind Christians of Christ's death and then traces with his or her finger the letters Alpha and Omega, the first and last of the Greek alphabet, to show that Christ is the beginning and end of all things. In many churches as s/he does this s/he says:

CHRIST YESTERDAY AND TODAY,  
THE BEGINNING AND THE END,  
ALPHA AND OMEGA,  
ALL TIME BELONGS TO HIM



AND ALL THE AGES,  
TO HIM BE GLORY AND POWER  
THROUGH EVERY AGE,  
AMEN.

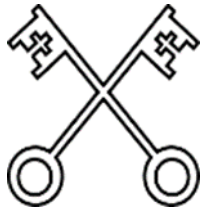
The priest may then put five grains of incense in the form of a cross on the Paschal Candle, as a reminder of the wounds of Christ and then lifts the candle and says three times 'The Light of Christ'. The congregation reply 'Thanks be to God'. As Saturday night becomes the early hours of Sunday morning, Christians continue to worship with celebratory songs, readings from the Bible, the renewal of baptismal promises and the joyful celebration of the first Holy Communion of Easter, sharing bread and wine in memory of Jesus.

On Easter morning a service of Holy Communion is held, the church will be decorated in gold and white because it is a festival day and flowers, banished from the church during Lent, will adorn the building.



Many churches have an indoor Easter garden, which is changed each day over the Easter Triduum to reflect the different events of the Easter story.

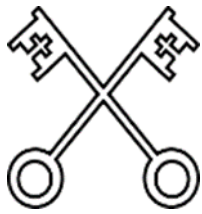




### General Traditions in the UK

On Good Friday it is traditional to eat hot cross buns. Flowers, plants, eggs, chicks, rabbits and lambs are all now connected with Easter, as they are all associated with new beginnings and new life. Eggs are also a symbol of the boulder that the Gospel stories suggest was rolled in front of Jesus' tomb. On Easter Sunday many children receive chocolate Easter eggs and it has become common in recent years to send Easter cards to family and friends. Lamb is traditionally eaten on Easter Sunday and a light fruitcake called a Simnel Cake formerly eaten during the pre-Easter period, has become a traditional cake for Easter Sunday. It is distinguished by two layers of almond paste or marzipan, one in the middle and one on top.

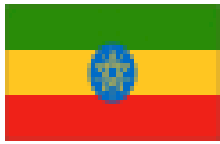




## Easter around the World

Easter is celebrated by all Christians, all over the world. The way in which Christians celebrate varies, but all the traditions have a common theme: hope, new life and the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus. Below are just a very few of the many Easter traditions and rituals, which are determined to some extent by the cultural and national customs of the countries to which they belong.

### Ethiopia



The main Church in Ethiopia is the Ethiopian Coptic Church.

During Lent in Ethiopia, Christians don't eat or buy any animal products like meat, eggs, butter, milk, yogurt, cream and cheese.

On Palm Sunday, people wear head bands made of palm leaves with crosses marked on them.

The first Easter Day service actually starts at 8.00 pm on Easter Saturday night and lasts until three o'clock on Easter Sunday morning. Most people go to the whole service and wear new or their very best clothes. These are often white and are called 'yabesha libs'. People have candles made of cotton and wax called 'twaf'. At ten o'clock drummers start playing and accompanying the priests as they chant a prayer called the 'Geez'.



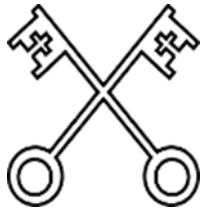
After the service people go back to their homes and have a breakfast to celebrate the end of Lent with 'dabo', sour-dough bread. It is traditional that the bread is cut into pieces by a priest, or by the head male of the family.

The main Easter meal is eaten in the afternoon on Easter Sunday. The meal normally consists of a sour dough pancake called 'injera' which is eaten with a lamb stew called 'beg wot'.

### France



The majority church in France is Roman Catholic. On Palm Sunday in France boxwood branches are used instead of palm leaves. These branches are put over the doorways of houses to bring good fortune to the people in the house and in remembrance of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem.



One of the main French Easter traditions are the Easter bells or *les cloches de Pâques*. On Maundy Thursday, the Thursday before Easter, church bells across France are silenced to mourn the death of Christ and they remain silent until Easter Sunday. According to legend, the bells would fly to Rome to be blessed by the Pope. Young children are often told that 'the bells have gone off to see the Pope!' When the bells begin their journey back to the French churches, they pick up eggs along the way before scattering them into gardens. The bells ring on Easter Sunday to announce the Resurrection of Christ and therefore 'return'. So in France it is the bells rather than the Easter bunny who delivers the Easter eggs that are eaten as a treat on Easter Day.

On Easter Day in France Christians celebrate Jesus Christ's resurrection by attending special church services. They eat a festive meal and search for Easter eggs with family and friends. Often the meal will include lamb as the main course. Usually, dessert is chocolate-based and cheese is eaten as it was not allowed during Lent.

## Germany



Germany has many different Christian denominations, but many Christians belong to Protestant as opposed to Roman Catholic churches.

In Germany, at the Palm Sunday service, it is not uncommon for a priest to ride to the church on a donkey, mirroring Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.

People in some areas of Germany, particularly in northern parts, light Easter fires late in the evening of Holy Saturday. Some people stay up all night. They keep the Easter fires burning until dawn on Easter Sunday.

Many people attend a special church service on Easter Sunday. These generally have a celebratory mood and churches are decorated with a range of spring flowers. Some communities hold an Easter breakfast or lunch after the church service.

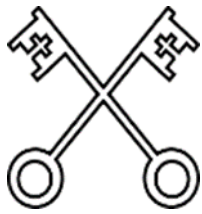
Many people prepare a festive breakfast, lunch or evening meal on Easter Sunday. Popular treats are:

- Fried, scrambled or boiled eggs
- Roast lamb
- Lamb stew
- Rich loaves of sweet bread decorated with frosting and candy eggs
- Cookies shaped like chicks, eggs or lambs
- Butter in the shape of a lamb
- Cakes baked in the shape of a hare or lamb
- Various salads.

Many people give and receive Easter eggs and Easter hares on Easter Sunday (the tradition of the 'Easter Bunny' started in Germany). Children are often told that the Easter hare brings and hides Easter eggs. Many families, communities and businesses







organise Easter egg hunts on Easter Sunday or Easter Monday. As in many other countries the Easter eggs are made of chocolate or are large sweets.

In the lead up to Easter some people will decorate small branches with eggs and make Easter trees. Boiled eggs are painted or dyed with food colouring and decorative eggs made of plastic, fabric or wood are used along with the Easter trees to decorate homes.

## Greece



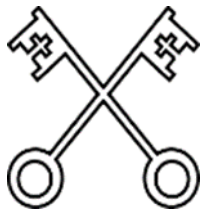
In the Greek Orthodox Church the fasting of Lent continues throughout Holy Week and does not end, until Christ is risen on Easter Sunday. In Greece, preparations for Easter begin on Holy Thursday. Easter bread (tsourekí) is baked and eggs are coloured with red dye, because red is the colour of life and also symbolic of the blood of Christ.

On Good Friday, flowers are taken to church to decorate an icon or representation of the body of Christ, which is carried in a procession during a Service of Lamentation. A symbolic tomb is placed in the centre of the church for the Good Friday service. People process as if they going to a funeral; it is a day of mourning and reflection. The most devout do not eat or cook at all, but if any cooking must be done, it's only simple foods.

On Easter Saturday, families prepare mayiritsa, a soup made from lamb offal or chicken, cooked on the stove with onions and herbs (plus an egg and lemon sauce that's mixed in at the end). It's usually left on a low heat when everyone goes to church so it can then be eaten when they get back from the Easter Saturday evening service. This takes place just before midnight. Priests give out candles to people in the Church and they are lit at midnight. Fireworks are also sometimes used to signal that Easter Day has started. After midnight, as Easter Day begins, early morning prayers are said and Holy Communion takes place. Traditionally, a worshipper carries their candle home and uses it to light other candles in the house. Families then gather around the table and break their fast with soup, bread and eggs.

Easter Sunday, or Easter Day, when Christ's Resurrection took place, is marked at home with a shared lunch or early evening meal of roast lamb and a feast containing all foods that could not be eaten during Lent.





## Serbia



On Good Friday in the Serbian Orthodox Church, an icon of Jesus is placed in the centre of the church in front of the iconostasis (the icon screen). It is in darkness, as dark as a tomb. On Easter Saturday evening, there is a candle lit procession around the

church. At exactly midnight the church doors are thrown open to reveal an empty church, symbolic of the empty tomb on the first Easter morning.

On Easter Sunday morning a family service is held and people bring special foods to be blessed by the priest during or at the end of worship. This food, including slava bread, will be eaten later when families share an Easter meal together. The congregation celebrates Holy Communion and at the end of the service, the priest gives each person a brightly coloured boiled egg as they leave the church. Outside everyone enjoys the game of cracking eggs; this is a game which is very similar to conkers (but without the string!). The one whose egg cracks last is the winner.

## Peru



Peru's Christians are predominantly Roman Catholic. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday are national holidays and Peruvians try to visit their friends and family members. Good Friday is a time for reflection and mourning. Many people will go to church after lunch and there are many processions, remembering the journey of Jesus to the place of execution.



It is customary to abstain from meat and alcohol and to eat only fish on Good Friday. Glory Saturday, as it is known in Peru, is a mourning day and Christians may spend the day praying and meditating. Easter Sunday is to worship, take Holy Communion and to celebrate with friends and family; families and friends gather for a special meal and alcohol may be consumed. In some towns and cities there are parades and fireworks, very reminiscent of a carnival. It is a day of great celebration.