Easter

Easter is the single most important holy day throughout Christianity.

It celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ — a central belief for Christians worldwide and the focal point of their faith. Religious scholars believe the event occurred three days after the Romans crucified Jesus in roughly 30 AD. Christians therefore derive hope that they too will experience a resurrection in heaven.

Easter falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after March 21. For 2023, Easter is on April 17.

Christians observe Easter in ways both personal and universal. Let’s take a closer look.

## History of Easter:

Easter is a 2,000-year-old Christian holiday that celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ and marks the arrival of Spring. For many, Easter is all about chocolate bunnies, dyed eggs, and bouquets of daffodils and lilies, but the holiday is one of the most important observances of the year for Christians around the world.

Easter is also significantly associated with the exodus of the Jews from Egypt as depicted in the Old Testament and the Jewish holiday of Passover. The Last Supper, which took place the night before Jesus was arrested, is also linked to these events.

The Sunday before Easter is called Palm Sunday. It commemorates and celebrates the day Jesus arrived in Jerusalem when his followers greeted him by laying palm leaves at his feet to demonstrate their reverence for him. In many churches, the observance of Easter begins on the night of Holy Saturday, just before Easter Sunday. This religious service is known as the Easter Vigil.

According to Eastern Orthodox Christianity, the Great Lent, which begins 40 days before Easter on Clean Monday, marks the beginning of the Easter rituals. The 40 days, which do not include Sundays, is a time of repentance, fasting, and commemoration of the biblical events leading up to the persecution, crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The last week is known as Holy Week and is concluded with Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter.

Religiously, Easter is celebrated by Christians in a number of ways, including the baptismal rite and traditional liturgy observed by Catholics on the night of Holy Saturday, or the sunrise practices on Easter Sunday favored by Protestants. Easter is also celebrated zealously by members of the Orthodox church, but the day on which they observe Easter differs by 13 days from the Catholics, since they follow the Julian calendar.

Over time, many pagan celebrations have been merged with Easter to welcome the season of spring. These relatively modern traditions include the Easter bunny — a figure associated with spring, who brings colorful eggs symbolizing new life. The origins of the concept of the Easter bunny have been disputed, but many agree that it started in Germany. Either way, the kids always look forward to his arrival, and decorating eggs, consuming candy, and community Easter egg hunts have become a huge part of the evolved Easter holiday.