

Maundy Thursday (Holy Thursday)

What is Maundy Thursday?

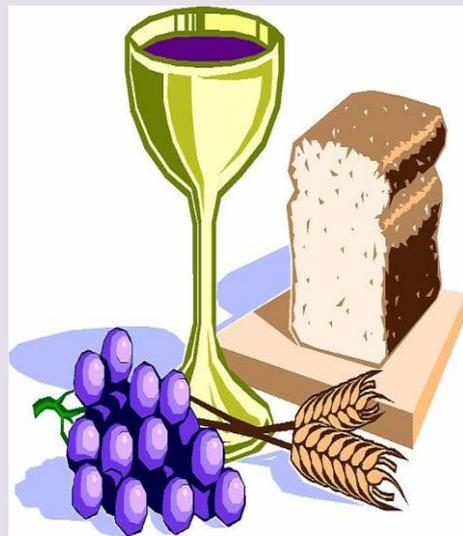


Maundy Thursday - also called Holy Thursday, is the **beginning of the three day celebration of Easter** - the most important time in the year for Christians. This period ('**The Triduum**') is one big celebration, remembering the last supper, the crucifixion and the death of Jesus, and the Resurrection to new life.

Maundy Thursday **commemorates the Last Supper of Jesus Christ with the Apostles.**

The Last Supper

On this day, Christians remember the Last Supper. During the meal Jesus took bread and wine and shared them with his disciples. Christians continue to share bread and wine as part of their worship in church.



The Last Supper was probably a Passover meal - the meal which Jewish people share together to celebrate the time when God delivered Moses and the people from slavery in Egypt.

The night of Maundy Thursday is the night on which Jesus was betrayed by Judas in the Garden of Gethsemane.

When is Maundy Thursday?

Maundy Thursday is the day before Good Friday. It is one of the lesser known days of the Christian calendar.

What is the origin of the name Maundy?

The name '**Maundy**' is derived from the Latin word "**mandatum**", meaning a commandment. Jesus Christ, at the Last Supper, commanded:

'And now I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.' John 13:34

The washing of feet

During the Last Supper, Jesus washed his disciples' feet. This act has sometimes been followed literally in history as a good way of reminding rulers that they are here to serve their subjects.

What once happened in England on Maundy Thursday?

In England, the custom of washing feet by the Monarch was carried out until 1689. Up until then the King or Queen would wash the feet of the poor on Maundy Thursday in Westminster Abbey. (You should, however, note that the feet were first washed by Yeoman of the Laundry before the monarch had to wash them and kiss them!). Food and clothing were also handed out to the poor.