

## Easter Day

Easter Day is the day Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The liturgical colours for Easter are white and gold. White symbolizes the hope of the resurrection, gold the light of the world brought by the risen Christ that enlightens the world.

### Dawn Vigil and First Eucharist of Easter at 5.30am

In the earliest days of the church, new converts were baptised on Easter Day - the high point of the Christian year. In preparation for Baptism they were taught the story of God's love for his world through the key Old Testament stories of Creation, Abraham and Isaac, the Exodus and Ezekiel's account of the valley of dry bones, placing the Christian story within the context of God's dealings with his people. These became known as the Vigil Readings.



At St Mary's these readings take place in the darkened church, symbolising the darkness of the tomb in which Jesus lay. After the Vigil Readings, we go out into the churchyard through the South doors for the 'Service of Light' where a "new fire" is lit amid the darkness. From this new fire the Paschal or Easter Candle is set alight, symbolising the presence of the risen Christ. We then process into church through the West doors proclaiming 'The Light of Christ'. After the shout 'Christ is risen' the church lights are turned on and the a fanfare is played on the organ. We share the first Eucharist of Easter together.

After the Service, breakfast is served in St Mary's Room.

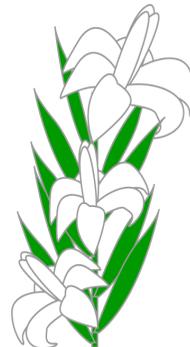
### 8am Easter Day

A traditional language service using the Book of Common Prayer.

### 10am Easter Day

Our 10am service continues the theme of joy and celebration but has more of a family focus.

During the opening procession, the children bring their flower baskets to the Easter Garden. The sermon is replaced by a talk or activity involving the children.



# Holy Week and Easter



at St Mary the Virgin  
Mortlake

Holy Week, the week immediately preceding Easter Day is the most important week in the Church calendar. The Holy Week services call us to look beyond the joyful celebrations of Palm Sunday and to place the Easter hope of Resurrection, newness and life, against the background of death and endings. It is only in walking through the shadows and darkness of Holy Week and Good Friday that we can truly understand the light and hope of Easter Day.

### Palm Sunday

Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday when we remember the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem

which was marked by the crowds waving palm branches and acclaiming him as the long awaited Messiah.

At St Mary's we gather with other local churches at Sheen Lane Crossroads at 9am for a short service which includes the blessing of the Palm crosses and the reading of the Palm Sunday Gospel. We then process around the Parish

accompanied by a donkey, arriving at St Mary's at 10am. During the service we hear the story of Jesus' arrest, trial and death read from one of the Gospels.



### Monday in Holy Week

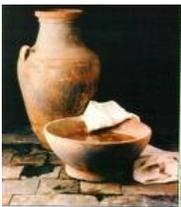
We meet at St Mary's for a short reflective service with prayers, songs from the Taize

Community and the opportunity for anointing with oil as we continue our journey through Holy Week.

### Maundy Thursday

On Maundy Thursday we remember the last meal which Jesus ate with his disciples. The term **Maundy**

is rooted in the Latin word *mandatum* which means 'commandment'. In John's Gospel we read of Jesus washing his disciples' feet and giving them a "new" **commandment** to love one another.



At the service at St Mary's, the celebrant washes the feet of 12 members of the congregation. We share the Eucharist together as we remember Jesus' last meal with his disciples and his command to 'do this in remembrance of me'. At the end of the service some of the consecrated bread is placed on the altar as a symbol of the presence of Christ with us. The altar coverings and decorations are removed from the church whilst Psalm 22 is sung. This "stripping of the altars" symbolizes the abandonment of Jesus by his disciples and his stripping by the soldiers prior to his crucifixion. After the altars have been stripped we listen to the 'Gospel of the Watch' which tells the story of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. The church remains open until 11pm when those who wish can spend time praying and reflecting.

### Good Friday

Friday of Holy Week has been traditionally been called 'Good Friday'. On this day, the church

commemorates Jesus' crucifixion, death and burial.

There is no service of Holy Communion on this day.

At St Mary's, after a Children's Service in the morning, we observe the 'Three Hours' between Jesus'

crucifixion and death. The first two hours are usually a mixture of prayers, readings, hymns and music (broken into four half hour slots so that people can come and go if they wish). The final hour is the Good Friday Liturgy when we listen to John's account of Jesus' suffering and death and the Choir lead us in the reproaches.



### Holy Saturday

This is traditionally a day of quiet meditation as Christians contemplate the darkness of a world without a future and without hope were it not for God and his grace.

At St Mary's our usual Saturday Eucharist is replaced with a service of Morning Prayer.