



This month's editor: [Catholic Chaplain Wayne O'Reilly](#)

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## Editorial

Welcome to April's edition of the newsletter!

The clocks have recently gone forward and spring is upon us. Hopefully we can start looking forward to some warmer and weather and lighter evenings.

Schools have broken-up for Easter and the traditional family getaway will begin for many of us. We here at the chaplaincy team wish those who do manage to get away a peaceful and restful break.

Here within the Chaplaincy team it is a busy time especially with the three Abrahamic religions all being celebrated within this month.

Saleha one of our Muslim chaplains joined Moody's for a panel discussion on Ramadan and shared if- tar with them. Likewise, our lead Chaplain Fiona and Muslim Chaplain Ibrahim took part in a presentation at Barclays on Easter, Passover and Ramadan.

Using our social media platforms, we have also presented reflections on Purim, Ramadan, Holy week and Easter.

## Celebrating Faith Festivals

The three Abrahamic religions Christianity, Judaism and Islam all celebrate certain festivals during this month.

In this newsletter we have asked three people of the Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths to share with us their personal experience of celebrating these festivals.

For those of who identify with one of these faith traditions, the closeness of our holy days should remind us of our connection to each other- the ways in which our stories and culture overlap.



## Ramadan

Guest writer

[Faizah Hambali, Canary Wharf Group](#)

For me, Ramadan is not only a time where we are abstaining from food and drink, but it is also a time where we should improve on our faith. I try to refrain from bad habits and try to learn more about my religion and be a better person. It can be exhausting, but so incredibly rewarding.

I usually awake about 30 minutes before sunrise to observe Suhoor, this is the meal eaten before dawn when fasting during Ramadan. It is important to prepare the body for a long day of fasting ahead, and so Suhoor should be as balanced and nutritious as possible.

Normally I will eat porridge and try to drink as much water as possible to get me through the day. After I have eaten I will start my daily prayers, I never go back to sleep as this would make me more tired. As part of my usual daily routine I usually run or do some weightlifting, but during Ramadan to conserve my energy this stops.

This year as Ramadhan is not in summer, it feels a little easier as we are only fasting for around 14 or 15 hours compare to 18 hours in previous year so feels okay.



## Passover

Guest writer  
Elan Ovits, Barclays

From the 6<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> April (15<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> Nissan), Jews all over the world celebrate the festival of Passover, or 'Pesach' in Hebrew. It is one of the most important festivals of the year and its high point is the 'Seder'. The Seder is an act of remembering, the telling of the Exodus story – the 'Haggada' – when the Israelites 3,300 years ago ate their last meal, in Egypt, preparing for their journey from slavery to freedom – both mentally and physically. During the festival Jews must eat unleavened cracker bread called 'Matzah'.

The biblical narrative relates that the Israelites left Egypt in such haste they could not wait for their bread dough to rise. The flat, unpretentious Matzah represents the humility, self-effacement and commitment that are the ultimate liberators, enabling us to connect to G-d without our egos getting in the way.

As we sit around the Seder table re-enacting the journey from the bread of oppression to the wine of freedom, we commit ourselves to a momentous proposition: that history has meaning. We are not condemned endlessly to repeat the tragedies of the past. Not everywhere is Egypt; not all politics are the exploitation of the many by the few; life is potentially something other and more gracious than the pursuit of power.

Passover also teaches us about faith; we need to have faith, despite being in a difficult situation. It teaches us to embrace and realize the true value of freedom. It is our connection with a higher calling and faith, which we had in the past and maintain today, and celebrate on Passover.

### Faith Festivals April

Jains	4	Mahavir Jayanti
Judaism	5 to 13	Passover
Hinduism	5	Hanuman Jayanti
Christian	9	Easter:
Sikh	14	Vaisakhi
Islam	21/22*	Eid al-Fitr:



## Easter

Guest writer  
Anne Drakeford, Clifford Chance

As a Christian Holy Week and Easter are important to me and they are central to my faith because it is the point in the year where I have to reconsider and reconfirm my faith on a personal level. In the period from Ash Wednesday to Palm Sunday, Christians are given the opportunity to consider the temptations Jesus faced, and the sacrifices he made in order to prepare himself for his ministry.

We observe Holy Week by commemorating, in real time, the events of the last week of Jesus' life. On Palm Sunday we remember Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem by walking round the outside of the church, waving crosses made of palm leaves and singing hymns.

On Maundy Thursday, there is a service during which the Priest washes the feet of members of the congregation, reflecting the same act undertaken by Jesus during the last supper.

At lunchtime on Good Friday, a short service takes place during which an account of Jesus being taken to Pontius Pilate where he was sentenced to death on the cross is recounted

Once the sun has set on Saturday evening, a single candle is lit and brought into the church which is otherwise in total darkness. I am always amazed by how much light a small candle can emit into a vast, dark space. The light represents resurrection and hope - a very powerful symbol.

I really look forward to Easter day. The church will be decorated with flowers and the mournful Lenten hymns will be replaced with cheerful ones. It is a wonderful celebration after the events of Holy week.