

# The Holy Days of October

Celebrations, Observances and Information about Religious, Spiritual, and Cultural Occasions

## Office of InterFaith Pastoral and Spiritual Care

Senior Chaplain Rev. Kathleen Ennis-Durstine extension 3321/room 4201

Staff Chaplain
Janie Brooks
extension 5050/ room 4115

Staff/Spanish Language Chaplain Margarita Roque extension 2626/ room 4115

> Catholic Chaplain Fr. Tukura Michael extension 2626/room 4115

Catholic Mass: Thursday at 12:00 noon (East Chapel, room 3033, third floor East Tower) and Saturday at 4:00 pm (Main Chapel, room 3201, 3rd Floor Main Hospital)

Prayer and Meditation Tuesday 12:45 pm East Chapel, room 3033, third floor East Tower—please listen for the announcement\*\*

Friday: Jummah Prayer R-114, floor 3.5 Main Hospital at 1:15

Sunday Worship 4:00 pm Room 3201, Main Chapel third floor, Main Hospital - please listen for the announcement\*\*

\*\*Because of staffing limitations leaders for these worship opportunities may not be available. We OVERHEAD announce them 1/2 hour prior to the service.

Note the Information Boards and Brochure Racks for other information October is: Bat Appreciation Month, Bullying Prevention Month, Celiac Disease Awareness Month, Cut Out Dissection Month;-), Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Gay & Lesbian History Month, National AIDS Awareness Month, National Down Syndrome Month, National Physical Therapy Month, National Spina Bifida Awareness Month, Rhubarb Month, Wishbones for Pets Month. Mental Health



Awareness week (2—8), Nuclear Medicine Week (2—8), Emergency Nurses Week (9—15), World Rainforest Week (10—16), National Respiratory Care Week (23—29) **Pastoral Care Week (23—29)**. Lace Day(1), Child Health Day (2), Cephalopod Awareness Day (7), Bring Your Teddy Bear to Work Day (12), Infant Loss Awareness Day (15), Boss' Day (17), National Mole Day (23). And so many more—a holiday for every day.

### HOLY DAYS WITH NO FIXED DATE

**NAVARATRI HINDU DOLL FESTIVAL** This is a nine day festival which takes place in South India. Women and girls dress in their best clothes and visit one another. As a



tribute to the Divine Mother, the Hindu goddess Durga, a copper or silver bowl filled with rice and covered with coconut or mango leaves is placed in each house. The room where entertaining occurs is decorated with brightly colored paper and flowers. Dolls representing animals, people, and gods line the walls. Music and dancing are part of the celebrations including songs to the goddess. As visitors leave the hostess gives them small gifts, usually of food.

SPRING FESTIVAL PERU CHRISTIAN October in Peru is known as the Purple Month since the violet blossoms of the jacaranda trees are opening. It is also the time to remember Señor de los Milagros, a member of a Catholic brotherhood near Lima who painted an image of Christ on an adobe wall of one of the buildings. In 1655 C.E. an earthquake shook the area causing many deaths and destroying virtually all the buildings. Only the wall with the image of Christ remained standing. Today the miracle is remembered and celebrated in conjunction with the Spring Festival. Women wear purple robes tied with while cords and men wear purple armbands in honor of Señor de los Milagros



At the right is the mural which is now preserved and housed in the Iglesia de las Nazarenas in Lima.

#### A Brief Overview of Zoroastrainism

Zoroastrianism is one of the world's oldest monotheistic religions. It was founded by the Prophet Zoroaster (or Zarathustra) in ancient Iran approximately 3500 years ago.

For 1000 years Zoroastrianism was one of the most powerful religions in the world. It was the official religion of Persia (Iran) from 600 BCE to 650 CE.

It is now one of the world's smallest religions. In 2006 the New York Times reported that there were probably less than 190,000 followers worldwide at that time.

Zoroastrians believe there is one God called Ahura Mazda (Wise Lord) and He created the world.

Zoroastrians are not fire-worshippers, as some Westerners wrongly believe. Zoroastrians believe that the elements are pure and that fire represents God's light or wisdom.

Ahura Mazda revealed the truth through the Prophet, Zoroaster.

Zoroastrians traditionally pray several times a day.

Zoroastrians worship communally in a Fire Temple or *Agiary*.

The Zoroastrian book of Holy Scriptures is called The *Avesta*.

The Avesta can be roughly split into two main sections:

The Avesta is the oldest and core part of the scriptures, which contains the Gathas. The Gathas are seventeen hymns thought to be composed by Zoroaster himself.

The Younger Avesta - commentaries to the older Avestan written in later years. It also contains myths, stories and details of ritual observances.

Zoroastrians are roughly split into two groups:

The Iranians
The Parsis



**ZOLLA NIGERIA HARVEST FESTIVAL** This festival marks the beginning of the new year and last from five to seven days. Near sundown an appointed elder of the village climbs to a high vantage point and faces east. People go outdoors and stand very quietly, waiting for the shouted cry that signals that the moon has risen, and a new year begun. There is dancing and drumming and much joy. There are family or neighborhood feasts after which everyone goes to the village square for dancing and a bonfire. On the following days people visit friends and continue with music and celebration each evening. A special food enjoyed during the festival is Zolla—a sort of fried bread made of cornmeal.

#### **HOLY DAYS WITH FIXED DATE**

**OCTOBER 1-2 WORLDWIDE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH (LDS)** This is the largest worship gathering for the LDS Church membership. Twice a year, in five meeting sessions, senior-most Church leaders, male and female, speak to life's challenges and opportunities, applying Gospel doctrine to personal living. The conference proceedings are broadcast live with language translation via the internet, and other electronic media, worldwide.

OCTOBER 2 WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY CHRISTIAN World Communion Sunday is a celebration observed by several Christian denominations, taking place on the first Sunday of every October, that promotes Christian unity and ecumenical cooperation. The tradition originated in the Shadyside Presbyterian Church (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) in 1933, was adopted throughout the US Presbyterian Church in 1936, and subsequently spread to other denominations. In 1940, the Federal Council of Churches (now the National Council of Churches), led by Jesse Moren Bader, en-



dorsed World Communion Sunday and began to promote it to Christian churches worldwide.

**OCTOBER 2 JASHNE MEHERGAN ZOROASTRIAN** Mehrgan (s a Zoroastrian and Iranian festival celebrated since the pre-Islamic era to honor "Mehr" (Persian: Mehr or Mihr), which means friendship, affection and love. It is also widely referred to as Persian Festival of Autumn.

Mehrgan was once an Iranian festival, and possibly even older. By the 4th century BC, it was observed as one of the Zoroastrian name-day feasts. These name-day feasts are festivals celebrated on the day of the year when the day-name and month-name dedicated to a particular angel or virtue intersect. The pre-Islamic Iranians had 30-day months, which means that each day in each month had a different name. 12 of the days are also names of the 12 months. The day whose name corresponded to the name of the month was celebrated. It was a celebration of life, the season, God, and joy.

The *Mehr* day in the *Mehr* month also corresponded to the day farmers collected their crops. They thus also celebrated the fact God had given them food to survive the coming cold months. Today, only two of these name-day continue to have a wide following in (predominantly) Islamic Iran. These are *Mehrgan*, dedicated to *Mehr*, and *Tirgan*, dedicated to *Tishtrya/Tir*.

In Biruni's 11th century Book of Instructions in the Elements of the Art of Astrology (233), he reiterates a local anecdotal association for his description of *Mehrgan* with a fragment of a tale from Iranian folklore: On this day, *Fereydun* vanquished the evil *Dahak* and confined him to Mount Damavand. This fragment of the legend is part of a greater cycle that ties *Mehrgan* with *Nowruz*; *Dahak* vanquished *Jamshid* (who the legends have as the one establishing *Nowruz* or New Year's Day), and *Fereydun* vanquishes *Dahak*, so restoring the balance. The association of *Mehrgan* with the polarity of spring/autumn, sowing/harvest and the birth/rebirth cycle did not escape Biruni either, for as he noted, (continued)

St. Francis Of Assisi - Canticle Of The Creatures/Brother Sun

Most high, all-powerful, all good, Lord! All praise is yours, all glory, all honor And all blessing.

To you, alone, Most High, do they belong. No mortal lips are worthy To pronounce your name.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through all that you have made, And first my lord Brother Sun, Who brings the day; and light you give to us through him. How beautiful is he, how radiant in all his splendor! Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Moon and Stars; In the heavens you have made them, bright And precious and fair.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air, And fair and stormy, all the weather's moods, By which you cherish all that you have made.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Water, So useful, lowly, precious and pure.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brother Fire, Through whom you brighten up the night. How beautiful is he, how gay! Full of power and strength.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Earth, our mother, Who feeds us in her sovereignty and produces Various fruits with colored flowers and herbs.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through those who grant pardon For love of you; through those who endure Sickness and trial.
Happy those who endure in peace,
By you, Most High, they will be crowned.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Death, From whose embrace no mortal can escape. Woe to those who die in mortal sin! Happy those She finds doing your will! The second death can do no harm to them.

Praise and bless my Lord, and give him thanks, And serve him with great humility.

"they consider *Mihragān* as a sign of resurrection and the end of the world, because at *Mihragān* that which grows reaches perfection."

In ancient times *Mehrgān* was celebrated in an extravagant style at Persepolis. Not only was it the time for harvest, but it was also the time when the taxes were collected. Visitors from different parts of the Persian Empire brought gifts for the king all contributing to a lively festival.

During pre-Islamic and early Islamic Iran, *Mehrgān* was celebrated with the same magnificence and pageantry as *Nowruz*. It was customary for people to send or give their king, and each other, gifts. Rich people usually gave gold and silver coins, heroes and warriors gave horses while others gave gifts according to their financial power and ability, even as simple as an apple. Those fortunate enough would help the poor with gifts.

In the present-day: for this celebration, the participants wear new clothes and set a decorative, colorful table. The sides of the tablecloth are decorated with dry wild marjoram. A copy of the *Khordeh Avesta* ("little i"), a mirror and a *sormeh-dan* (a traditional eyeliner or kohl) are placed on the table together with rosewater, sweets, flowers, vegetables and fruits,

especially pomegranates and apples, and nuts such as almonds or pistachios. A few silver coins and lotus seeds are placed in a dish of water scented with marjoram extract.

A burner is also part of the table setting for *kondor/loban* (frankincense) and *espand* (Syrian Rue seeds) to be thrown on the flames.

At lunch time when the ceremony begins, everyone in the family stands in front of the mirror to pray. Sherbet is drunk and then—as a good

omen—sormeh is applied around the eyes. Handfuls of wild marjoram, lotus and sugar plum seeds are thrown over one another's heads while they embrace one another.

**OCTOBER 4 FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS CHRISTIAN** Many Catholics worldwide celebrate the Feast of St Francis of Assisi on October 4 each year. The feast commemorates the life of St Francis, who was born in the 12th century and is the Catholic Church's patron saint of animals and the environment.

feast of St Francis of Assisi is the most important festival of the Franciscan calendar in Assisi, Italy. It commemorates the saint's transition from this life to the afterlife, according to the Catholic Church. For two days, starting on October 3, the town of Assisi is illuminated by oil lamps burning consecrated oil brought from a different Italian town each year. Solemn religious services are held in the Basilica of St Francis and in the Basilica of Santa Maria *degli Angeli*.

Many children in countries such as the United States bring their pets to the church to be blessed on St Francis' feast day because of his love for animals as expressed in his *Canticle of Creatures*. People may also plan a nature walk and teachers, caregivers or parents may spend time helping children write about plants, insects and animals that they see. For many educators, caregivers and animal rights organizations, this day is an opportunity to teach children about endangered or abused animals and what can be done to help save these animals. This feast coincides with World Animal Day.



St. Francis by John August Swanson

**OCTOBER 6 Dashara or Vijaya Dashami Hindu** Vijaya Dashami also known as Dasara, *Dashahara*, Navaratri, *Durgotdsav...* is one of the very important festivals of India. This festival is celebrated not only in India but in almost all eastern countries like Java, Sumatra, Japan etc... Dasara is Nepal's national festival.

The word dashara is derived from the Sanskrit words "Dasha" & "hara" meaning removing the ten (10). In Sanskrit, 'Vijaya' means Victory and 'Dashami' means 10th day. 'Thus Vijaya Dashami' means victory on the 10th day.

Dasara is also known as Navaratri, as in the first nine days the Divine Mother Goddess Durga is worshipped and invoked. The basic purpose behind this festival is to worship feminine principle of the Universe in the form of the divine mother; at the social level it is to respect women and to remind women, who are the guardians of the family, culture, and national integrity, to take lead in times of crisis to guide the humanity towards the path of social justice, righteousness, equality, love, and divinity. In India, the harvest season begins at this time and as mother earth is the source of all food, the Mother Goddess is invoked to start afresh the new harvest season and to reactivate the vigor and fertility of the soil through religious rituals.

On the day of Dasara, statues of the Goddess Durga are submerged in the river waters. These statues are made with the clay & the *pooja* (prayer/ritual) is performed with turmeric and other items, which are powerful disinfectants and are mixed in the river waters. This makes water useful for the farmers & yields better crops.

**OCTOBER 7/8 YOM KIPPUR: DAY OF ATONEMENT JEWISH** Also known as Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the year for the Jews. Its central themes are atonement and repentance. Jews traditionally observe this holy day with a 25-hour period of fasting and intensive prayer, often spending most of the day in synagogue services. Yom Kippur completes the annual period known in Judaism as the High Holy Days (or sometimes "the Days of Awe").

According to Jewish tradition, God inscribes each person's fate for the coming year into a book, the Book of Life, on Rosh Hashanah, and waits until Yom Kippur to "seal" the verdict. During the Days of Awe, a Jew tries to amend his or her behavior and seek forgiveness for wrongs done against God (*bein adam leMakom*) and against other human beings (*bein adam lechavero*). The evening and day of Yom Kippur are set aside for public and private petitions and confessions of guilt (*Vidui*). At the end of Yom Kippur, one considers oneself absolved by God.

The Yom Kippur prayer service includes several unique aspects. One is the actual number of prayer services. Unlike a regular day, which has three prayer services, or a Shabbat or *Yom Tov*, which have four prayer services, Yom Kippur has five prayer services. The prayer services also include a public confession of sins (*Vidui*) and a unique prayer dedicated to the special Yom Kippur avodah (service) of the *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest) in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

As one of the most culturally significant Jewish holidays, Yom Kippur is observed by many secular Jews who may not observe other holidays.

OCTOBER 7-9 KUNCHI FESTIVAL JAPAN (Primarily Nagasaki) The Nagasaki Kunchi has been celebrated for more than 370 years. Nagasaki Kunchi, the autumn festival of Suwa Shinto Shrine, is renowned as one of the three great festivals of Japan. The word kunchi is said to be derived from the word kyunichi, or "shrine day." Another theory ascribes the origin to ku'nichi or "ninth day," referring to the auspicious ninth day of the ninth month (Oct. 9 on the modern calendar). The highlight of the original festival (began as a dedication to the deities of Suwa Shinto Shrine in 1634) was Noh drama, a feature that it shared with many other festivals around Japan. But after a devastating fire in 1857, Nagasaki Kunchi became a "new" festival in which the participating neighborhoods were free to innovate and to compete with each other in creating opulent and eye-catching performances. About five to seven groups perform each year, presenting traditional Japanese dances, Chinese influenced dragon dances or performances involving large floats. The result is the stunning array of presentations we see today, many of which reflect the international (Chinese and Dutch) color and unique history of Nagasaki.



Reinier Hesselink's paper The Dutch and the Kunchi festival of Nagasaki in the Seventeenth Century describes the relationship of the Dutch with the Kunchi festival. An excerpt:

"The Kunchi festival of Nagasaki was first celebrated in 1634. As this date indicates, the festival was originally part of the bakufu policy to forge a Yamato spirit for Nagasaki, which up to 1614 had been Japan's only Christian town. In other words, the Kunchi festival started out as an anti-Christian festival, in which the anti-Christian forces in Nagasaki: the bakufu, Shinto, Buddhism and the brothel wards all joined hands to provide an alternative to the famous Easter processions, which had been performed throughout the city during the Christian period (1570-1614)."

#### Israeli couscous stew for Sukkot:

#### Ingredients:

- couscous
- onions
- pumpkin
- zucchini squash
- carrots
- potatoes
- cabbage (optional)
- can of chick peas, drained
- salt and pepper
- Turmeric
- Chicken soup mix

#### **Preparation:**

- 1. In a soup pot, fry two onions in a bit of oil
- 2. Add vegetables, chick peas and spices. Use quantities according to taste. Cover with water.
- 3. Bring to a boil, and then simmer until vegetables are softened but not mushy.
- 4. Make couscous according to package directions.
- 5. To serve, spread couscous on a shallow serving plate. Top in the center with the stew.
- \* This tastes best when served within hours of making.



**OCTOBER 12/19 SUKKOT: FESTIVAL OF TABERNACLES JEWISH** Sukkot hearkens back to times in ancient Israel when Jews would build huts near the edges of their fields during the harvest season. These dwellings not only provided shade but allowed the workers to maximize the amount of time they spent in the fields, harvesting their food more quickly as a result.

Sukkot is also related to the way the Jewish people lived while wandering in the desert for 40 years (Leviticus 23:42-43). As they moved from one place to another they built tents or booths, called *sukkot*, that gave them temporary shelter in the desert. Hence, the i (booths) that Jews build during the holiday of Sukkot are reminders both of Israel's agricultural history and of the Israelite exodus from Egypt. There are three major traditions associated with Sukkot: Building a *sukkah*. Eating in the *sukkah*. Waving the *lulay* and *etrog*.

In modern times people most often build a *sukkah* in their backyards or help their synagogue construct one for the community. Few people live in the *sukkah* today but it is popular to eat at least one meal in it. At the beginning of the meal a special blessing is recited, which goes: "Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who has sanctified us with commandments, and commanded us to dwell in the *sukkah*."

Since Sukkot celebrates the harvest in the land of Israel, another custom on Sukkot involves waving the *lulav* and *etrog*. Together the *lulav* and *etrog* represent the Four Species. The *etrog* is a kind of citron (related to a lemon), while the *lulav* is made of three myrtle twigs (*hadassim*), two willow twigs (*aravot*) and a palm frond (*lulav*). Because the palm frond is the



largest of these plants, the myrtle and willow are wrapped around it. During Sukkot, the *lulav* and *etrog* are waved together while reciting special blessings. They are waved in each of the four directions - sometimes six if "up" and "down" are included in the ritual - representing God's dominion over Creation.

The *lulav* and *etrog* are also part of the synagogue service. On each morning of Sukkot people will carry the *lulav* and *etrog* around the sanctuary while reciting prayers. On the seventh day of Sukkot, called *Hoshana Rabba*, the Torah is removed from the Ark and congregants march around the synagogue seven times while holding the *lulav* and *etrog*.

The eighth and last day of Sukkot is known as *Shmeni Atzeret*. On this day a prayer for rain is recited, demonstrating how the Jewish

holidays are in tune with the seasons of Israel, which begins on this day.

**OCTOBER 12-16 AYATHREM GAHAMBAR ZOROASTRIAN** Gahambar is a festival of Parsis and holds great significance within the community. They are meant for honoring the seasons and occur six times in a year. Gahambar means "full time" or "proper season". The traditions of pays tribute to all the phases responsible for creation of world: heaven, water, earth, flora, fauna and man. Each of these elements of the world is associated with one Gahambara. The celebration of each Gahambar goes on for five days period.

Among the Zoroastrians it is important and traditional to pay tribute to God - Creator and to the creations of God. This reinforces the feeling of community. It is aimed at reminding Parsis of their roots and the good deeds that a true Parsi must do.

These deeds are *radih* (being charitable), *rastih* (being truthful), celebrating the Gahambars, observing the three-day ceremony after death, worshipping god, building lodgings for the poor, and wishing everyone well.

The six festivals are: *Maidhyozarem Gahambar* ('heaven', festival); *Maidhyoshahem Gahambar* ('water', festival); *Paitishhahem Gahambar* ('earth', festival); *Ayathrem Gahambar* ('flora and fauna', festival)

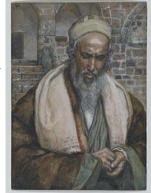
Maidyarem Gahambar ('mid-year', festival); Hamaspathmaidyem Gahambar ('all souls', festival). (continued)

Four liturgical services are performed during the first four days, and the fifth day is reserved for communal interaction. Celebrations begin with a benediction ceremony called *Afrin*. It is a prayer of love and praise in remembrance of one's ancestors. The *yaztas*, or angels, and the *fravashis* are honored next in the *Baj* prayers. This is followed by the main Parsi rite, the *Yasna*. The last of the four customs for social service is the *Pavi*. It is a prayer for the particular Gahambar being celebrated. The priest and the faithful pray together during the *Pavi*. On the fifth day of the Gahambar, there is a solemn feast. People can either donate or serve at the feast. Those who participate are expected to recall not only the blessings bestowed by the seasons, but also the seven main acts that a good Parsi must perform.

october 18 St. Luke, Apostle AND EVANGELIST ANGLICAN CHRISTIAN The day recognizes the work and writing of Luke. Luke the Evangelist was an Early Christian writer who the Church Fathers such as Jerome and Eusebius said was the author of the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. He is considered one of the Four Evangelists. He is venerated as Saint Luke, patron saint of artists, physicians, surgeons, students, butchers. Luke was a Greco-Syrian physician who lived in the Greek city of Antioch in Ancient Syria. If one accepts that Luke was in fact the author of the Gospel bearing his name and also the Acts of the Apostles, certain details of his personal life can be reasonably assumed.

While he does exclude himself from those who were eyewitnesses to Jesus' ministry, he repeatedly uses the word "we" in describing the Pauline missions in Acts of the Apostles, indicating that he was personally there at those times.[

The composition of the writings, as well as the range of vocabulary used, indicate that the author was an educated man. Luke died at age 84 in Boeotia, according to a "fairly early and widespread tradition". According to *Nikiphoros-Kallistos Xanthopoulos* (Eccles. History XIVth c. AD., Migne P.G. 145, 876) and others, Luke's Tomb was located in Thebes (Greece), from whence his relics were transferred to Constantinople in the year 357 CE. His symbol is the ox, or bull, usually depicted with wings.



St. Luke, by James Tissot, Brooklyn Museum

#### OCTOBER 19/20 SHEMINI ATSERET JEWISH (See page 4)

**OCTOBER 19 BIRTH OF THE BÁB BAHÁ'I** This day is the anniversary of the birth of one of the twin Prophet founders of the Bahá'í faith. His 19 disciples, known as Letters of the Living, taught his religion throughout 19th Century CE Persia.

OCTOBER 20/21 SIMCHAT TORAH: REJOICING WITH THE TORAH JEWISH This is a celebration marking the conclusion of the annual cycle of public Torah readings, and the beginning of a new cycle. Simchat Torah is a component of the Biblical Jewish holiday of Shemini Atzeret ("Eighth Day of Assembly"), which follows immediately after the festival of Sukkot.

The main celebration of Simchat Torah takes place in the synagogue during evening and morning services. In many Orthodox and Conservative congregations, this is the only time of year on which the Torah scrolls are taken out of the ark and read at night. In the morning, the last *parashah* (*section*) of Deuteronomy and the first *parashah* of Genesis are read in the synagogue. On each occasion, when the ark is opened, all the worshippers leave their seats to dance and sing with all the Torah scrolls in a joyous celebration that often lasts for several hours and more.

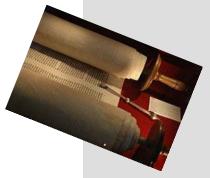
The morning service is also uniquely characterized by the calling up of each male member (in non-Orthodox congregations, male and female members) of the congregation for an *aliyah* (reading), as well as a special *aliyah* for all the children in attendance.

#### Bahá'í Faith

Founded a century and a half ago, the Bahá'í Faith is today among the fastest-growing of the world's religions. With more than five million followers, who reside in virtually every nation on earth, it is the second-most widespread faith, surpassing every religion but Christianity in its geographic reach. Bahá'ís reside in more than 100,000 localities around the world, an expansion that reflects their dedication to the ideal of world citizenship.

The Faith's Founder was Bahá'u'lláh who taught that there is only one God, that there is only one human race, and that all the world's religions represent stages in the revelation of God's will and purpose for humanity. In this day, Bahá'u'lláh said, humanity has collectively come of age. As foretold in all of the world's scriptures, the time has arrived for the uniting of all peoples into a peaceful and integrated global society. "The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens," He wrote.





#### **HISTORY OF THE CORN MAZE**

Mazes go back thousands of years, but the actual growing of a maze did not become popular until the 15th Century CE or later. They originated among Europe's nobility as a way to entertain aristocrats. These were predominantly garden or hedge mazes. The oldest garden maze is at Hampton Court Royal Palace in England and is over 300 years old, having been planted during the reign of King William III. It is 1/3 acre in size with winding paths nearly 1/2 mile in length.

The first modern corn maze was called "The Amazing Maize Maze" and was designed by Adrian Fisher and Don Frantz. Fisher is considered the world's leading maze designer since 1979.

In the spring, corn is planted in the field in a grid pattern. The entire field is covered by corn. Then, when the corn is about 6 inches tall, the maze pattern is mowed out. A weed killer is sprayed where the corn has been mowed to prohibit the corn from re-growing. The remaining corn grows tall around the patterns design creating the paths. Below is an aerial picture of a 2004 maze in Fredericksburg, Virginia. It took at least 2 hours to navigate!



OCTOBER 23 ST. JAMES OF JERUSALEM ANGLICAN CHRISTIAN The day focuses on the life of James, brother of Jesus, and a martyr. James, first Bishop of Jerusalem, who died in 62 AD, was an important figure in Early Christianity. He is distinguished from the Apostle James by various epithets; he is called James the brother of the Lord by Paul (Galatians 1:19), James the Just by Hegesippus and others, "James the Righteous", "James of Jerusalem", "James Adelphotheos", and so on.

James became the leader of the Christian movement in Jerusalem in the decades after Jesus' death, but information about his life is scarce and ambiguous. Apart from a handful of references in the Gospels, the main sources for his life are the Acts of the Apostles, the Pauline epistles, the historian Josephus, and St. Jerome, who also quotes the early Christian author Hegesippus. The Epistle of James in the New Testament is traditionally attributed to him, and he is a principal author of the Apostolic Decree of Acts 15. Tradition holds that he was stoned to death for "breaking the law."

**OCTOBER 24 MARTYRDOM DAY OF GURU TEGH BAHADUR SIKH** Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom day is a very important day in the religious calendar of the Sikhs. Guru Teg Bahadur was beheaded in Delhi (1675 CE) for supporting the rightsof Kashmiri Hindus who were being forcibly converted to Islam by the Emperor Aurangzeb. Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom day is celebrated to worship the great Guru and pay him respect.

The Sikhs faithfully observe ten important religious festivals each year. Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom day is one among the ten major festivals celebrated by the Sikhs. Like in any other festival, the Sikhs celebrate by organizing processions or *Prabhat Pheris*. They go out in huge processions and read out the Holy Book of the Sikhs, Guru Granth Sahib. They sing hymns in the *gurdwaras* (places of worship), and organize sermons and lectures. A large number of devotees visit to the *Gurudwaras*. Kirtans are also sung to pay homage to the Guru.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom day is one of the ten *Gurupurabs*. These are anniversaries concerning the lives of the ten Sikh religious leaders. During every such festival, one of the ten *Khalsa Pantha* gurus is honored. The most significant of the events are the birthdays of Guru Govind Singh and Guru Nanak and the days of martyrdom of Guru Arjun Dev and the great Guru Teg Bahadur.

**OCTOBER 26 DIWALI (Hindu) or DIWDIWÄLI OR DEEPÄVALI (Jain)** Diwali, popularly known as the "festival of lights", is an important festival in Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism, celebrated for different reasons, occurring between mid-October and mid-November. For Hindus, Diwali is one of the most important festivals of the year and is celebrated in families by performing traditional activities together in their homes. For Jains, Diwali marks the attainment of *moksha* or nirvana by Mahavira in 527 BCE. For Sikhs, Diwali is celebrated as *Bandhi Chhor Diwas* (The Celebration of Freedom), and celebrates the release from prison of the sixth guru, Guru Hargobind, who also rescued 52 Hindu kings held captive with him by the Mughal Emperor in the Gwalior Fort in 1619 CE.

The name "Diwali" is a contraction of "Deepavali", which translates into "row of lamps". Diwali involves the lighting of small clay lamps (*diyas or dīpas*) filled with oil to signify the triumph of good over evil. During Diwali, all the celebrants wear new clothes and share sweets and snacks with family members and friends.

Diwali commemorates the return of Lord Rama, along with Sita and Lakshmana, from his 14-year-long exile and the vanquishing of the demon-king Ravana. In joyous celebration of the return of their king, the people of Ayodhya, the Capital of Rama, illuminated the kingdom with earthen diyas and by bursting firecrackers.

**OCTOBER 28 MILVIAN BRIDGE DAY CHRISTIAN** On this day in A.D. 312, the Roman Emperor Constantine was victorious in battle for control of the Western Roman Empire against the Roman Emperor Maxentius. The battle is known as the Battle at the Milvian Bridge, a stone bridge across the Tiber River. Constantine is said to have had a vision the preceding night telling him that he would win under a certain sign that included the appearance of a cross set against the sun and certain words in Greek that translate into Latin as: *in hoc signo vinces* 'you will win under this sign.' This sign and the following victory are credited with convincing Constantine to convert to Christianity, which he did, but not immediately.



OCTOBER 30/31 REFORMATION DAY PROTESTANT CHRISTIAN In 1516–17, Johann Tetzel, a Do-

minican friar and papal commissioner for indulgences, was sent to Germany by the Roman Catholic Church to raise money to rebuild St Peter's Basilica in Rome. Roman Catholic theology stated that faith alone, cannot justify man; and that only such faith as is active in charity and good works (*fides caritate formata*) can justify man. The benefits of good works could be obtained by donating money to the church.

On 31 October 1517, Martin Luther wrote to Albrecht, Archbishop of Mainz and Magdeburg, protesting the sale of indulgences, which came to be known as The 95 Theses. Luther, perhaps, had no intention of confronting the church, but saw his disputation as a scholarly objection to church practices. Nevertheless an undercurrent of challenge exists in several of the theses, particularly in Thesis 86, which asks: "Why does the pope, whose wealth today is greater than the wealth of the richest Crassus, build the basilica of St. Peter with the money of poor believers rather than with his own money?"

The 95 Theses were quickly translated from Latin into German, printed, and widely copied, making the controversy one of the first in history to be aided by the printing press. Within two weeks, copies of the theses had spread throughout Germany; within two months throughout Europe.



**OCTOBER 30 BHAU-BEEZ HINDU** The last Day of Diwali. On this day married women return to their parents' homes and all girls and women honor their brothers. Typically, a low stool is placed on the floor for the brother and the sister, or sisters, draw decorative designs on the floor around it. In the evening the brother sits on the stool and a ritual is performed including the sister throwing a few grains of rise on her brother's head to wish him a long and safe life. She waits on him and brings gifts of food. In return, the brother often places a gift for his sister on the tray. When a mother has only sons she invites a niece or the daughter of a friend to be "sister."

**OCTOBER 31 SAMHAIN/ALL HALLOWS' EVE ANCIENT/WICCA** Samhain is a time to remember those who have passed on, celebrate the Summers end, and prepare for Winter months ahead. The Sun God and earth fall into slumber, as the nights lengthen, and winter begins.

The last day of October marked the end of the Celtic Old Year and the beginning of the New. This time was considered by the Celts and many Craft traditions to be a "crack between the worlds." As time passed between one year and another, it belonged to neither, standing beyond the confines of normal reality. It was believed to be the one night when the veil that separated our world from the next was at its thinnest, allowing the dead to return to the world of the living, where their spirit and memory would be welcomed and celebrated by a feast attended by their kin.

The Feast of The Dead, or Festival of The Dead, was a festival of remembrance, honoring those who had left this world. On this night, the deceased were believed to make their way back from the grave to revisit their old homes. In many areas, on the eve of Samhain, people would leave their houses lit throughout the night to help the dead find their way along the dark path from the tomb. And once these travelers arrived, they were welcomed and refreshed with food and drink. Many prepared a feast, and set a plate at the table to for their dead relatives. On the eve of November 1, or on the morning of the following day, the custom in parts of Europe was to bake "soul cakes" or "soul bread" for those returning souls. In Wales, special food was prepared and left outside, and before everyone went to bed, the hearth was carefully prepared for the arrival of the dead relatives. Tradition also teaches that the aid of spirits and guides from the other world was easily enlisted at this time, so in the increasing moonlight of longer nights, many used this time to hone their psychic and divinatory skills, especially with regard to love and marriage.

The Christian religion has adopted this day as All Saints Day, or All Hallows Day, celebrating the eve as All Hallows Eve, or Halloween. The superstition and misconception linked to this celebration by the early church, led people to take some unusual precautions to protect themselves. They adopted the tradition of dressing in frightening costumes or disguises, and displaying scary looking Jack-O-Lanterns to help protect them from spirits they considered to be evil