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Definition: **Good Friday** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

Friday before Easter Day. It is observed by Christians as marking the day of the crucifixion of Jesus. For many Christians, it is a day of fasting and abstinence.



Image from: [The Entombment in National Gallery Collection](#)

Summary Article: **Good Friday**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

In the Christian church, the Friday of Holy Week, before Easter, which is observed in memory of the crucifixion (the death of Jesus on the cross).

It is called 'Good' Friday because of the goodness Jesus showed in giving life as a sacrifice for others.

St Mark's Gospel relates how, after the Last Supper, Jesus was betrayed by Judas Iscariot and arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane. Arrested on the Thursday night (Maundy Thursday), he was hastily tried, convicted, and sentenced to a traitor's death by crucifixion on the Friday (Mark 15:25–27).

Good Friday is a solemn day in the Christian year, representing an apparent victory of darkness over light, or evil over good. Jesus was called the 'light of the world' in St John's Gospel, and at the crucifixion, it appeared that he had been defeated. Some churches have a three-hour service from noon until 3 p.m. because tradition says that this was the time when Jesus hung on the cross. No Holy Communion takes place, but in some churches, including Roman Catholic, Christians follow the Stations of the Cross. They pray at scenes around the church depicting the events of the day of the crucifixion. Some Christians may have an image of Jesus on the cross as a reinforcement of the significance of his sacrifice and as a focus for their worship. They may also hold a service known as the 'Veneration of the Cross' (symbolizing deep respect for the cross), where the passion story is retold and Christians bow or prostrate themselves before the cross in recognition of Jesus' sacrifice for all people.

Passion plays may be performed, depicting the trial and death of Jesus. In the UK, Christians of different churches and denominations meet together to join in processions behind full-sized wooden crosses. In Jerusalem, processions are held on Good Friday re-enacting Jesus' journey to the place of crucifixion.

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