

Faith Festivals 2019

2nd February (Friday) The Presentation of the Lord/of Christ in The Temple /Candlemas

Tradition: **Christian**

Congregations hold lighted candles to recall the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, and Mary's following Jewish tradition after the birth of a son. His recognition by the aged Simeon is expressed in the words of the Nunc Dimittis.

5th-7th February (Tuesday to Thursday) Losar Buddhist

Tibetan New Year festival, often observed in Nepal as well. It celebrates the miracles performed by the historical Buddha at Saravasti, the capital city of the kingdom of Kosala.

8th February (Friday) or 15th February (Thursday)

Tradition: **Buddhist**

Parinirvana or Nirvana day is for our some of our Mahayana Buddhist friends. Nirvana Day is an annual festival that remembers the death of the Buddha when he reached Nirvana at the age of 80. It is celebrated by some Buddhists on February 15th.

Nirvana is believed to be the end of the cycle of death and rebirth. Buddhism teaches that Nirvana is reached when all want and suffering is gone.

Buddhists may celebrate Nirvana Day by meditating or by going to Buddhist temples or monasteries. On this day, Buddhists think about their lives and how they can work towards gaining the perfect peace of Nirvana. Buddhists believe that loss and change are things to be accepted rather than causes of sadness. They remember friends or relations who have recently died and reflect on the fact that death is a part of life for everyone. The idea that nothing stays the same is central to Buddhism. In monasteries Nirvana Day is treated as a social occasion. Food is prepared and some people bring presents such as money, household goods or clothes. As with other Buddhist festivals, celebrations vary throughout the world.

More at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/buddhism/holydays/parinirvana.shtml>

9th February (Saturday) Sarasvati Puja/Vasant Panchami

Tradition: **Hindu**

Widely celebrated in North India, this festival marks the beginning of spring. Vasant Panchami day is dedicated to Saraswati, the Goddess of knowledge, music, arts, science and technology. Goddess Saraswati is worshipped on Vasant Panchami day. Vasant Panchami is also known as Shri Panchami and Saraswati Panchami. Yellow is her associated colour.

People worship Goddess Saraswati to get enlighten with knowledge and to get rid of lethargy, sluggishness and ignorance. This ritual of initiating education to children is known as Akshar-Abhyasam or Vidya-Arambham/Praasana which is one of the famous rituals of Vasant Panchami. Schools and colleges arrange pujas in the morning to seek blessing of the Goddess. For More: <https://www.drikpanchang.com/festivals/vasant-panchami/vasant-panchami-puja-date-time.html?year=2019>

19th February (Tuesday) Magha Puja

Tradition: **Buddhist**

1,250 enlightened disciples came to the Bamboo Grove on the full moon of *Magha*. The Buddha predicted his death and gave a summary of his teachings and a code of discipline which all monks are expected to recite every fortnight. The day is observed with meditation, chanting and listening to sermons.

For more: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/religious-festivals> :
<https://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/buddhist/magha-puja>