

## Religious, Cultural & Ethnic Holidays & Days of Observance

### May 2020

This handout is to call your attention to just some of the many nationally and internationally recognized and/or celebrated diverse days of observance and religious/ethnic holidays that fall within the month of **May 2020**. We invite you to share it with the students, staff, and faculty you work with across campus. For more information, feel free to visit the Multicultural Resource Calendar located on Campus Life's Mosaic Center website:

[http://www.diversityresources.com/aa\\_gsr/index.php?key=adCaO2Shix6u](http://www.diversityresources.com/aa_gsr/index.php?key=adCaO2Shix6u)

Thank you,

The Mosaic: Center for Culture and Diversity, Interfaith Center, and Pride Center Staff

#### **May 1- Pagan and Wiccan : Beltaine**

Beltaine, second to Samhain in importance, falls opposite Samhain on the Wheel of the Year. It marks the beginning of the summer season and celebrates life and fertility. Customs for celebrating Beltaine vary from country to country, however, one of the rituals most familiar to people in the United States is dancing around a May Pole and doing the Morris Dance, the English name for May Day dances.

#### **May 7- Buddhist : Vesak (Buddha Day)**

Also called Buddha Day, the festival commemorates the birth, enlightenment (Buddhahood), and death (ParinirvĀna) of Buddha. The holiday is observed by Buddhists and some Hindus on different days throughout Asia and other parts of the world. Known by many names, ranging from Buddha Jayanti to Buddha Purina, the festival originated from the Theravada or southern tradition.

#### **May 11- Jewish : Lag BaOmer begins at sundown**

#### **May 12- Jewish : Lag BaOmer**

This holiday occurs thirty-three days from the second night of Passover, called the "counting of the omer," during the seven weeks between Passover and Shavuot and allows a break from the usual prohibitions during this period, such as having weddings. It is a minor holiday and work is permitted.

**May 13- Portugal : Our Lady of Fatima Day**

This commemorates the miracle of the vision of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of Jesus, to shepherd children on May 13, 1917.

**May 18-Islamic : Laylat al-Qadr begins at sundown**

**May 19- Islamic : Laylat al-Qadr**

This festival occurs during the month of Ramadan and commemorates the beginning of the revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad.

**May 21-Christian : Ascension Day**

This marks the anniversary of the day Christians believe that Jesus rose to heaven.

**May 22-Baha'i : Declaration of the Bab (5/22-5/23)**

This holiday commemorates the Bab's prediction in Shiraz, Persia, in 1844 of the imminent appearance of the new messenger of God. This is one of the nine holy days when Baha'is refrain from work.

**May 22-Islamic : Jumu'atul-Wida**

This holiday, which literally means "Friday of farewell," is observed on the last Friday in the month of Ramadan before Eid al-Fitr. Regarded by some Muslims as the second holiest day of the month of Ramadan, this is a time when Muslims attend congregation in lieu of the midday prayer and perform *ibadah*, acts of submission and devotion to Allah. This is a public holiday in Bangladesh.

**May 23- Islamic : Eid al-Fitr begins at sighting of crescent moon**

The Feast of Breaking the Fast, this holiday marks the end of Ramadan. It begins at the sighting of the first lunar crescent following the new moon. This is a three-day festival of feasting, buying and wearing new clothes, and celebrations. (See discussion under Days of Religious Observance.) This ends the month-long fast during Ramadan. Gifts of sweets, such as pastries, halvah, and sugared almonds, are appropriate. *Eid Mubarak* and "Happy Eid" are common greetings.

**May 23- Baha'i : Declaration of the Bab**

This holiday commemorates the Bab's prediction in Shiraz, Persia, in 1844 of the imminent appearance of the new messenger of God. This is one of the nine holy days when Baha'is refrain from work.

**May 24- Islamic : Eid al-Fitr begins at sighting of crescent moon**

The Feast of Breaking the Fast, this holiday marks the end of Ramadan. It begins at the sighting of the first lunar crescent following the new moon. This is a three-day festival of feasting, buying and wearing new clothes, and celebrations. (See discussion under Days of Religious Observance.) This ends the month-long fast during Ramadan. Gifts of sweets, such as pastries, halva

**May 27-Baha'i : Ascension of Baha'u'llah**

This observance commemorates the anniversary of the death of the founder of the Baha'i faith in 1892. This is one of the nine holy days when Baha'is refrain from work.

**May 28-Coptic Orthodox Christian, Eastern Orthodox Christian : Ascension Day**

This marks the anniversary of the day Coptic Orthodox Christians and Eastern Orthodox Christians believe that Jesus rose to heaven.

**May 28-Baha'i : Ascension of Baha'u'llah**

This observance commemorates the anniversary of the death of the founder of the Baha'i faith in 1892. This is one of the nine holy days when Baha'is refrain from work.

**May 28- Jewish : Shavuot begins at sundown**

Shavuot, taking place seven weeks after Passover, is the festival of the first fruits, and the weeks between are the most important in the harvesting season. The holiday is also celebrated in commemoration of the day when Moses received the Torah and the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. Many Jews restrict their diet during this period to dairy foods. Popular dishes include cheese blintzes, cheesecake, and cheese *knishes*, all of which can be found at a Jewish delicatessen.

**May 29- Jewish : Shavuot (Festival of Weeks)**

Shavuot, taking place seven weeks after Passover, is the festival of the first fruits, and the weeks between are the most important in the harvesting season. The holiday is also celebrated in commemoration of the day when Moses received the Torah and the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. Many Jews restrict their diet during this period to dairy foods. Popular dishes include cheese blintzes, cheesecake, and cheese *knishes*, all of which can be found at a Jewish delicatessen.

**May 29- Baha'i : Ascension of Baha'u'llah**

This observance commemorates the anniversary of the death of the founder of the Baha'i faith in 1892. This is one of the nine holy days when Baha'is refrain from work.

**May 30-Jewish : Shavuot (Festival of Weeks)**

Shavuot, taking place seven weeks after Passover, is the festival of the first fruits, and the weeks between are the most important in the harvesting season. The holiday is also celebrated in commemoration of the day when Moses received the Torah and the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. Many Jews restrict their diet during this period to dairy foods. Popular dishes include cheese blintzes, cheesecake, and cheese *knishes*, all of which can be found at a Jewish delicatessen.

**May 31-Christian : Pentecost (Whit Sunday)**

This spring festival takes its name from the Greek word for fifty because Pentecost originally occurred on the fiftieth day after the first day of Passover, corresponding to the Jewish festival of Shavuot. Christians now celebrate Pentecost on the seventh Sunday after Easter to commemorate the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles. For this reason, Pentecost signifies the birth of the Christian Church. The day is sometimes called Whit Sunday (White Sunday) because the newly baptized wore white baptismal robes. Among foods associated with Pentecost is *Sopa do Espirito Santo*, Holy Spirit Soup, a hearty mixture of meats, from the Azores. Azorean communities in Massachusetts retain the custom.