

## Culham / REEP Easter Calendar 2003

<http://www.reep.org/resources/easter03/>

### BURIAL

#### JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA

After Jesus died Joseph of Arimathea, an important Jew, asked Pilate for the body, so that it could be properly buried.

#### NICODEMUS

Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes to anoint the body of Jesus.

#### MARY

Mary, Jesus' mother, is also often shown helping to bury her son.

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### EXTRA INFORMATION

#### JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA

Devout Jewish people put a lot of effort into the careful ritual burial of bodies. Dead bodies could, in strict eyes, cause those who came into contact with them to become ritually impure. This is part of the reason why the priest won't go near the apparently dead person in the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).

There were many different ways to crucify people – some were simply tied up until they died, which could take a long time and be horribly painful. Mark suggests that Pilate was surprised that Jesus died so quickly (Mark 15:44).

#### NICODEMUS

Myrrh was, of course, one of the gifts given to the baby Jesus by the Magi.

Nicodemus appears at the beginning of John's Gospel, where he comes to Jesus at night to ask him questions (see John 3:1-21). He, like Joseph of Arimathea, was a member of the ruling council. Both men seem to have been attracted to the teachings of Jesus but, unlike disciples such as Peter or John, they were unwilling to sell all their goods and live a nomadic life with him. Which kind of disciple would you have been? During the Reformation, one and a half centuries later, people who believed in Protestant ideas, but were too frightened to do so openly, were sometimes known as '*Nicodemites*'.

#### MARY

There is no mention of Joseph, Jesus' father, at the crucifixion, so it is generally assumed that he had died earlier. Mary, though, survived her son and is often shown both helping take the body from the cross and helping to anoint the body.

Many women seem have been disciples of Jesus and many of these, who were obviously well known in the early church, play a prominent part in the events during and after the crucifixion: '*Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and Joses, and Salome. In Galilee these women had followed him and cared for his needs. Many other women ... were also there.*' (Mark 15:40-41) Confusingly, many of them seem to have been called Mary! Preparing a body for burial was a woman's job and many of Jesus' female disciples helped.