



## **EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION CALENDAR**

### **DECEMBER – 2022**

#### **MONTH LONG OBSERVANCES:**

➤ **Universal Human Rights Month**

The UN adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 as a response to the Nazi holocaust and to set a standard by which the human rights activities of all nations, rich and poor alike, are to be measured. Some of the Rights are: No one shall be subjected to cruel and inhuman punishment being entitled to a fair and public hearing by an impartial tribunal, the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and effects, the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and the right to a standard of living.

#### **December 1: World AID Day**

Commemorates those who have died of AIDS and acknowledges the need for continued commitment to all those affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

#### **December 1: Rosa Parks Day (USA)**

Commemorates the arrest of Rosa Parks in 1955, for defying segregation by refusing to give up her seat on the bus for a white passenger. The incident led to the end of segregation.

#### **December 2: International Day for the Abolition of Slavery**

Held annually to raise awareness of the atrocities of modern slavery. It is not to be confused with another UN day, the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition. The General Assembly adopted the "United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others" (resolution 317 (IV) of December 2, 1949). The focus of this day is on eradicating contemporary forms of slavery, such as trafficking in persons, sexual exploitation, the worst forms of child labour, forced marriage, and the forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict.

**December 3: International Day of Persons with Disabilities**

Designed to raise awareness concerning persons with disabilities in order to improve their lives and provide them with equal opportunity.

**December 5: International Volunteer Day for Economic & Social Development**

The United Nations (UN) annually observes the International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development. The day, which is also known as International Volunteer Day (IVD), gives volunteers a chance to work together on projects and campaigns promoting their contributions to economic and social development at local, national and international levels.

**December 5: Ashura**

Ashura means the “tenth day” in the Semitic language. On this day Sunni and Shia Muslims, remember Allah’s role in saving Moses and Israelites from the Egyptian pharaoh (Sunni) and the passing of Hussain ibn Ali, the Prophet Muhammad’s grandson (Shia). Includes observing Ashura by fasting, which is not obligatory but recommended. It is a somber event, and the common greeting is, “May Allah greatly reward you”.

**December 6: St. Nicholas Day (Christian)**

He is the patron saint of Russia and came from a town in Turkey. Being known as a protector of children, the tradition of leaving shoes out in the hopes of receiving threats is practiced in the Dutch, German and Eastern European communities.

**December 6: Dia de la Constitucion (Constitution Day)**

Marks the anniversary of a referendum held in Spain on December 6, 1978, in which a new constitution was approved for Spain. This was an important step in Spain’s transition to becoming a constitutional monarchy and democracy.

**December 6: National Day of Remembrance & Action on Violence Against Women**

Commemorates the tragic event when on this date in 1989 a young man opened fire on a group of female engineering students in Montreal’s Ecole Polytechnique, killing 14 women.

**December 7: Pearl Harbour Day (USA)**

This day commemorates the attack of the Imperial Japanese Navy and Air Force on the armed forces of the United States stationed at Pearl Harbour, Hawaii, killing two thousand people. This caused the United States to enter World War II.

**December 8: Immaculate Conception of Mary** (Christian)

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception celebrates the solemn celebration by various Christian denominations of belief in the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus. It celebrates December 8, 1854, when Pope Pius IX issued A document stating the importance of the Immaculate Conception in the Catholic Church.

**December 8: Bodhi Day** (Buddhist)

In Japanese Zen, Bodhi Day is called “Rohatsu” and is the observance of enlightenment of the historical Buddha. Zen monasteries observe this day with a meditation retreat lasting several days. On the last night of a Rohatsu sesshin, monks and students often sit in meditation until dawn as the Buddha did 25 centuries ago.

**December 5 – 9: Inclusive Schools Week**

An annual event sponsored by the Inclusive Schools Network (ISN) celebrating the progress schools have made in providing a supportive, quality education to students who are marginalized due to disability, gender, socioeconomic status, cultural heritage, language preference, and other factors. The first full week in December, it provides and important for educators, students and parents to discuss what else needs to be done to ensure that their schools continue to improve their ability to successfully educate all children.

**December 10: International Human Rights Day**

Established by the United Nations in 1948 to commemorate the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

**December 12: Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe** (Mexico)

A religious holiday in Mexico commemorating the appearance of the Virgin Mary near Mexico City to an Indian boy in 1531. Processions, dances and visits are led to her Mexico City shrine.

**December 13: St. Luciadagen** (Sweden)

A young Christian girl who was killed for her faith in 304 CE. She secretly took food to persecuted Christians in Rome while wearing a wreath of candles on her head so both her hands would be free. The day is also known as “Queen of Light”. A candlestick parade takes place.

**December 14 – 24: Las Posadas**

A nine-day celebration in Mexico commemorating the trials Mary and Joseph endured during their journey to Bethlehem.

**December 15: Navidades** (Puerto Rico)

Marks the beginning of the Christmas season and ends with Three Kings Day on January 6<sup>th</sup>.

**December 16: Bijoy Dibash** (Bangladesh)

Signifies the independence after a 9-month Liberation War against Pakistan in 1971. East Pakistan became Bangladesh.

**December 16 – 24: Posadas** (Mexico)

A nine-day traditional celebration throughout Mexico. Processions of pilgrims go door to door asking for posada, which means shelter, commemorating the search by Mary and Joseph for shelter.

**December 18: International Migrants Day**

Declared by the UN, this is a day to honour the international convention on the protection of the rights of migrants.

**December 18 – 26: Hanukkah** (Jewish)

A Jewish holiday that is celebrated for eight days and nights. Hanukkah celebrates the victory of the Maccabees, or Israelites, over the Greek Syrian ruler, Antiochus, approximately 2,200 years ago. The Festival of Lights is celebrated for eight days. Approximately, in 164 BC Maccabees, a small group of Jews fighting for religious freedom won victory of the Syrians. The legend goes that to rededicate the Temple, they found only one jar of holy oil and miraculously the candelabra remained lit for 8 days. An eight-candle menorah is lit.

**December 20: Human Solidarity Day**

Held annually to celebrate unity in diversity. It also aims to remind people on the importance of solidarity in working towards eradicating poverty.

**December 21: Yule Winter Solstice** (Wicca)

Celebrated by Pagans and Wiccans. The shortest day of the year represents a celebration focussing on rebirth, renewal and new beginnings as the sun makes its way back to the Earth. A solstice is an astronomical event that happens twice each year when the sun reaches its highest position in the sky. The yule tree is decorated with fruit and candles are lit to represent the sun.

**December 21: Dongzhi Festival** (China)

A traditional Chinese holiday that celebrates the winter solstice and the balance of yin, the negative qualities of darkness and cold, and yang, the qualities of light and warmth. The day is marked with worship of the heaven and ancestors and traditional foods. Wish observers a “Happy Dong Zhi” or “Happy Festival”. To observe proper holiday protocol culturally, do not refuse food that is offered.

**December 21: Toji-Tasai** (Shinto)

The sun is of central importance in Japan and this day celebrates the end of the Yin period of the Sun in its declining strength and the growing power of the Yang period.

**December 23: Joseph Smith's Birthday** (Christian – Mormon)

He was the American Mormon Leader, founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

**December 24: Christmas Eve**

The evening before Christmas, which is often observed with a long meal, usually with family, sometimes accompanied by other celebrations such as midnight mass.

**December 25: Christmas Day**

The day that many Christians associate with Jesus' birth over 2000 years ago. Customs include lighting candles, exchanging gifts and using evergreen decorations to celebrate this day, the most widely observed Christian festival of the year. In most communities, it is a family day.

**December 26: Boxing Day**

A secular holiday celebrated in the United Kingdom, Canada, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and South Africa.

**December 26 – January 1: Kwanzaa** (African American/Canadian, USA)

An African American holiday started by Maulana Karenga in 1966 to celebrate universal African American heritage in 1966. Kwanzaa means first fruit in Swahili and is a harvest festival. Families exchange gifts and have African-style feasts. Seven-pronged candleholders are lit on each consecutive night for the seven principles: unity, self-determination, working together, sharing, purpose, creativity and faith.

**December 26: Zartosht No-Diso** (Death of Prophet Zarathushtra)

A day of remembrance in the Zoroastrian religion. It commemorates the anniversary of the death of the prophet Zoroaster or Zarathushtra.

**December 26: St. Stephen's Day** (Ireland)

A day to commemorate St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, or protomartyr. Boys in wren costumes go from house to house with a captured wren, singing songs and gathering coins. These coins help to pay for a big celebratory feast in the evening.

**December 27: St. John's Apostle and Evangelist Day**

Feast day for St. John, celebrated by Christian denominations.

**December 28: Feast of the Holy Innocents**

A Christian feast in remembrance of the massacre of young children in Bethlehem by King Herod the Great in his attempt to kill the infant Jesus.

**December 30: Feast the Holy Family**

A liturgical celebration in the Catholic Church in honour of Jesus, his mother and his foster father, St. Joseph as a family. The primary purpose of this feast is to present the Holy Family as a model for Christian families.

**December 30: Rizal Day** (Philippines)

A Philippine national holiday commemorating life and works of Jose Rizal, a national hero of the Philippines. It is celebrated every December 30, the anniversary of Rizal's 1896 execution at Bagumbayan in Manila.

**December 31: Watch Night**

A day for Christians to review the year that has passed, make confessions, and then prepare for the year ahead by praying and resolving.

**December 31: Omisoka** (Japan)

To usher in the new year, families clean their homes, eat toshi-koshi buckwheat noodles in the hope that one's life will be stretched out as long as these noodles. As midnight approaches, Shinto temples around the country begin ringing out the old year, sounding the temple bell 108 times, signifying the 108 human worldly desires removed by the striking of the bell.

**December 31: Hogmanay** (Scotland)

Fire ceremonies, torch light processions, fireball swinging, and lighting of New Year fires play an important part in the Hogmanay celebrations. Hogmanay's roots reach back to the animistic practice of sun and fire worship in the deep mid-winter. This evolved into the ancient Saturnalia, a great Roman Winter festival, where people celebrated completely free of restraint and inhibition. The Vikings celebrated Yule, which became the twelve days of Christmas.

**December 31: New Year's Eve**

The last day of the year in the Gregorian calendar and celebrated as the passing of one year and the beginning of another.

**December 31 – January 4: Gahambar Maidyarem** (Zoroastrian)

This day celebrates the creation of animals. It is also a time for the equitable sharing of food.