

Newton's Birthday - Crispness

On December 25th we celebrate Newton's Birthday because Newton actually was born on December 25th. We call the holiday Crispness because it's about keeping your mind crisp. And it's not a coincidence that it's the same day as Christmas and the Yule holiday from where Christmas came. It is the day that we celebrate the {In:Tree of Knowledge}, which represents the sum total of all human understanding. We use the traditional pine tree, which is already a very fractal looking tree to represent the Tree of Knowledge. The tree is decorated with lights and ornaments symbolizing The {In:Sacred Network} or the Internet. Lights on the tree represent servers on the Internet where information is stored and made available to all of humanity. The wires represent the fiber optic cables used to move information between the servers and around the tree. In the Church of Reality, we tend to choose lighted wires and strings of light that make the wires look alive, as if they were carrying information. The more complex the lighting is, the more glorious the tree.

We also put presents under the tree, which symbolizes that everything we know today is a gift from the past, that all our knowledge comes from other people and that the Tree ties us all together. The Tree gives to us, and we give back to the Tree. We celebrate, in community, that we are one planet, that we are all here together, and that we are all one with the Tree. Exchanging gifts symbolizes the exchange of ideas that makes humanity what it is. We share our ideas with others and others share their ideas with us. And it is the sharing that allows all of us to rise together.

In celebrating shared knowledge, everyone is encouraged to come up with a new idea that no one has ever thought of before and post it on the internet. The idea can be simple or complex. It can be grand and glorious or just some little time-saving trick. The idea can also be about future innovations or requests for people to invent something. People can also improve something that already exists by creating documentation for something confusing. The tradition is to be an act of intellectual tithing when everyone gives something to the tree, and, as a reward, they get to open the gifts under the tree.

In celebration of Newton's birthday, we also encourage the discussion of gravity and momentum, how Newton understood these concepts and how they changed with Einstein's Theory of Relativity. We talk about the Evolution of Understanding where we think about what gravity meant to ancient humans, what it meant to Newton and Einstein, and we imagine what people in the future will think about gravity and physics. Crispness is a celebration of the understanding of the physical world. We honor science, and we wonder about how we got here and where we are going.