



*Image by Kay Nielsen, (1816-1957)*

# Ephemera ~ April 2023

*April Moons*





EACH YEAR AFTER EQUINOX,

## THERE'S A CELESTIAL SHUFFLING

This happens when Sun and Moon trade places in the star-filled hemispheres. From late March to late September, the Sun will travel through the Northern Celestial Hemisphere, which means that every Full Moon during this same period will occur in the Southern Celestial Hemisphere, because every Full Moon happens on the opposite side of the Earth from the Sun. This trading of places between the two great lights is filled with opportunity and invitation for entering livingly into the great mystery of the season, each year.

*“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven;”\**

This first Full Moon of the northern Spring is used to determine the date for Easter. This Moon will always occur during the Holy Week, and there will always be a moment in this Holy Week when the first Spring Full Moon rises up in the East before the Sun sets in the West. From the moment the Vernal Full Moon rises until the Easter Sun rises, as the solar forces overtake the lunar for the first time in the year, the Earth regains its central position in the cosmos, not as the physical center, but spiritually, for now the attention of the living cosmos is focused earthward, where, on the stage of Earth, the great mystery of the Christ Event takes place. In the celestial world, the Sun radiates earthward from in front of the stars of Pisces, while the Moon comes Full in the region of Virgo stars, as though it was “below the feet of the Virgin” (\*see *Book of Revelation*, ch 12 and the Easter evening sky star picture).

In 2023, the Vernal Full Moon will occur in the midnight hour Thursday, April 6 (at 12:36 am in the eastern time zone). Further west, Full Phase will occur while it's still Wednesday on the calendar. It's worth noting that Wednesday evening, April 5, the nearly-Full Moon will rise at 7:53 pm edt, just 20 minutes before the Sun sets, at 8:12 pm in the West (readers are encouraged to check local times for sunset and moonrise).

For years I have held the imagination that these few moments when the Vernal Moon and the Spring Sun are together above the horizon, with Moon rising as Sun is setting, are the

moments when the sacred gates swing open for encountering anew the year's great mystery. It is as though, at such moments, because the Earth lies east of the setting Sun and west of the rising Moon, it becomes like the castle in the [fairy tale](#) (*East of the Sun and West of the Moon*), and we are offered an invitation to enter. But entering the castle is no easy task. As Rudolf Steiner described it in reference to Day Two of [The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz](#), an initiation narrative that, like Dante's *Divine Comedy*, takes place during the Holy Week, “...events that befall when one enters the castle determine whether the seeker of the spirit will attain the faculties for true spiritual perception, or whether one's soul will be surrounded by a world of spiritual error. For the capacity of perception these experiences are clothed in the imagination of ‘entering a castle,’ where the world of spiritual experience is administered.”

See [The Secret Stream - Christian Rosenkreutz and Rosicrucianism](#), ch. 10





THE reason I see it this way is that this particular moonrise and sunset presents us with a mighty contradiction between microcosm and macrocosm. It's like this: if we describe the microcosm as the Earth world defined by the visible horizon, then we have the experience that the Moon is rising up above the horizon, while the Sun is setting below. But in the macrocosm, defined for our purposes by the celestial equator, the Sun at Equinox has risen above the celestial equator, where it will be for six months, while the Moon, coming Full, sets below. So as the Vernal Full Moon rises above the horizon in the microcosm, it is still below the celestial equator in the macrocosm, and vice versa for the Spring Sun. Herein lies the mighty contradiction of the two lights being simultaneously above and below, which is the key to opening the gate into the mystery!

If we hold to the idea that the Easter Festival is a celebration of the spiritual new year, further definition of the story comes into play based on the day in the Holy Week narrative when the Vernal Full Moon occurs. As stated above, in 2023, this will happen overnight Wednesday to Thursday, which is the night that Judas Iscariot covenants to betray the Christ ([Matthew 26:14-16](#)).

This might feel disconcerting as the accent mark for the spiritual new year, but what it suggests in 2023 is that we find ourselves faced with attending to the mystery of how a community regains itself after the trials of betrayal. In the Christian narrative, the ultimate fulfillment of this mystery is expressed in the rushing winds and the flaming tongues of the Pentecost, when, after the apparent confusion and sense of loss

that had accompanied them, the 11 Apostles find one another, 'human being to human being, heart to heart, soul to soul,'\* and are thereby able to speak of the mystery they have witnessed to, one could say, all of humanity (\*excerpted from the words of welcome spoken by Rudolf Steiner, January 1, 1924 at 4:30 pm).



*Christian Rosenkreutz at the castle by Johnfra Bosschart*

Following the Moon further into the month, it comes to New Phase on Thursday, April 20, a significant date in the history of the Anthroposophical Movement. The Christmas Conference of the Anthroposophical Society had been held during the first week of the Holy Nights,

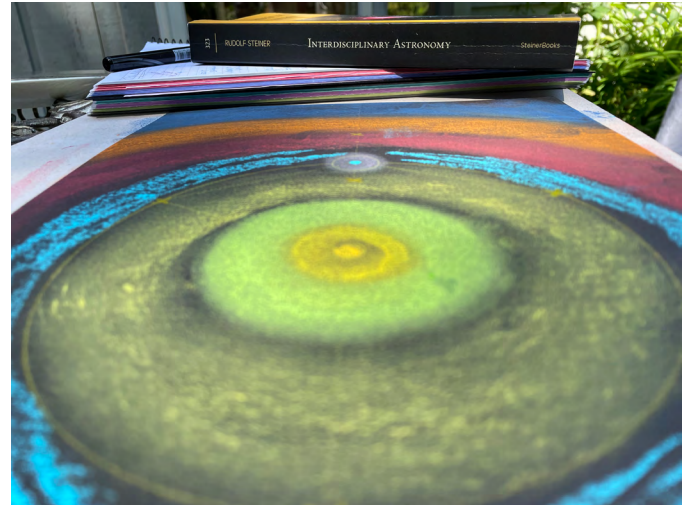
*Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests. And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him. -Matthew 26:14-16*





December 24, 1923 to January 1, 1924, during which Rudolf Steiner performed the ceremonial rite of laying the Foundation Stone as a meditation into the hearts of the members of the newly-refounded Society. Immediately after the close of the Christmas Conference, he began creating the eurythmy form for the Foundation Stone, which was then first performed at Easter, April 20, 1924. This turned out to be Rudolf Steiner's last Easter before his death less than one year later.

This eurythmy performance of the Foundation Stone at Easter 1924 can be imagined as the fourth stage in a sublime celestial inscribing undertaken by Rudolf Steiner that began in 1913 when, during a spiritual New Year that was inaugurated by a totally eclipsed Easter Moon (on March 22, 1913), and during the ensuing Total Lunar Eclipse cycle six months later (September 15, 1913), Rudolf Steiner laid the twelve-sided double dodecahedral Foundation Stone into the Earth at Dornach, with Mercury as witness in

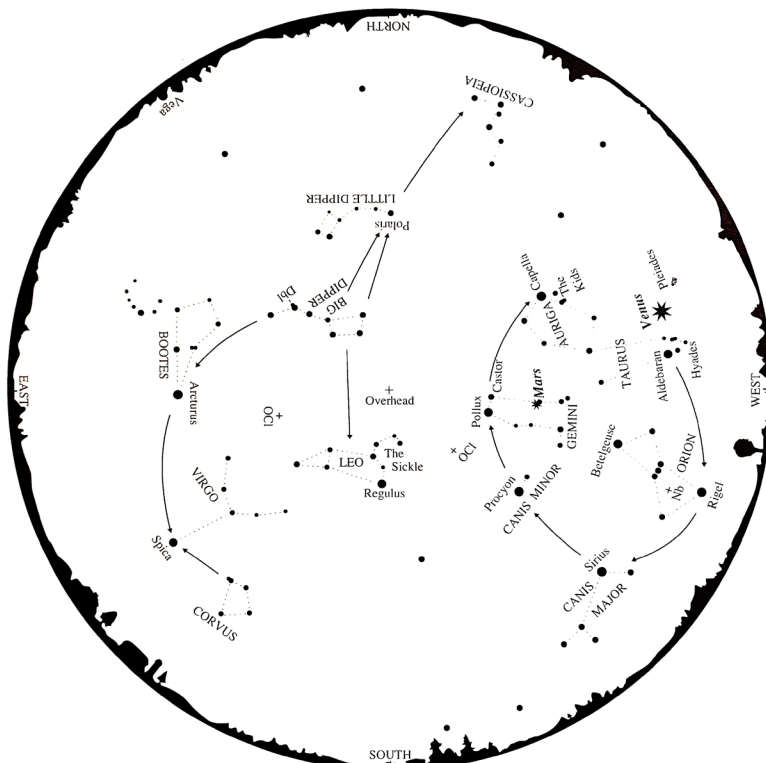


*Chalk Drawing, Mercury, Venus, Sun*

the West (September 20, 1913). Ten years later, he gave the Foundation Stone as a meditation, beginning at 10 am on Christmas Day, 1923 as Venus was rising in the East; and then, on Easter Sunday, April 20, 1924, it was offered in eurythmy. Each of these stages can be imagined as part of a sacred cosmic inscribing, written into the world of stars by a spiritual initiate at specific moments, sounding up from the Earth through the spheres of Moon, eclipsed by Earth's shadow; to Mercury, as evening star; to Venus, as it was rising; and, ultimately, to the Easter Sun.

Each of these moments can also be described by the attendant celestial configuration, which includes the degree of zodiac that the Sun occupied when they occurred. For instance, each year on April 20, the Sun comes back to the zodiacal degree where the spiritual initiate made the inscription. At such a time it is as though a sounding out of the deed of the Foundation Stone being offered up to the Easter Sun in eurythmy recurs, if we can but hear it. In 2023, we come to the 99th anniversary of this deed on April 20th, and there will be a Total Solar Eclipse. Its 100th anniversary will occur on April 20 in 2024; and in 2025, a mighty culmination will occur in space and time when Easter Sunday recurs on April 20th, as it did in 1924, the first time the eurythmy of the Foundation Stone was performed.

## April Sky Map



*Abrams Planetarium*

*We all have moments with the dust, but the dew is given. ~Emily Dickenson*



# Dante's Easter morning 'baptism' by Virgil, with the earthly dew, as beautiful ceremonial rite of the season:



*And the dawn rose triumphant, making flee  
The morning breeze before her; and far off  
I recognized the shimmering of the sea.*

*So we along that lonely plain did move,  
Like one who's lost the road and seems to go  
With wasted steps till repossessed thereof;*

*And coming to a place where dew can show  
Resistance to the sun, since day-long shade  
Keeps the earth cool and exhalation slow,*

*Gently upon the turf my master spread  
Both hands; and I, not unawares,  
But understanding what this purported,*

*Held up to him my face begrimed with tears;  
And so he brought my native hue once more  
To light, washed clean of hell's disfiguring smears.*

~Purgatorio, Canto I, lines 115-129

## *Dates to Consider:*

**March 20, 2023**

Vernal Equinox

**April 5, 2023**

Check local times for moonrise and sunset;  
when the great lights trade places and Earth  
becomes the castle that is East of the Sun, West  
of the Moon.

**Overnight April 5 to 6, 2023**

Moon comes exactly Full; regaining community

**April 9, 2023**

Easter Sunday

**April 20, 2023**

New Moon Total Solar Eclipse ~  
99th anniversary of first eurythmy  
performance of Foundation Stone Meditation

*Angels in the early morning may be seen as dews among.  
Stooping, plucking, smiling, flying. Do the buds to them belong?*

~Emily Dickenson