

On 24 June New Zealand celebrates historic Public Holiday.



On 24th June, New Zealand celebrates **Matariki** by having its first-ever national holiday for a Maori festival.

For centuries the Maori people have celebrated Matariki (the eyes of God).

At this time of year, the Matariki cluster of stars (Pleiades) reappears above the horizon after having been out of sight for several weeks.

This re-appearance begins the Maori New Year, with preparation of the soil and planting of crops. When the star cluster set it was a time to remember those who had died during the past year.

As it rises, we consider the rising of the dead who are now joining the stars of the night sky. It's time to plan for the future, look forward in hopefulness and spend time with family and friends.

(With thanks to Anne Phibbs CSB for this Reflection)