

## **Panui ki te iwi**

### **Easter, a time of hope, faith and resilience - <https://youtu.be/Im9fronxxSE>**

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Ngahiwi Tomoana – Chairman, Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated

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Easter is a time of hope, faith and resilience best commemorated in the death, burial and coming back to life of Jesus of Nazareth. However Easter harks back pre-Christianity to the Goddess Oestre from where the name Easter is derived, the English goddess of spring.

Spring symbolised new life and fertility following a cold bleak winter. Childbirth was symbolised by hares, rabbits and bunnies as great examples of fertility sometimes breeding three times a year hence the Easter bunny.

In Māori tradition Hine te Iwaiwa is the goddess of childbirth and reproduction. She also farewells people before welcoming their descendants back into this world. She tattoos women's lips before they conceive as a fertility enhancer.

The Easter egg is also a symbol of new life hatched from its shell. The broken shell is a symbol of Jesus leaving the womb of Mary and also Jesus leaving the tomb in the resurrection. Whatever story told, women feature prominently in faith, hope and resilience, in fertility and reproduction. We call this "Te wharetangata" "The house of humankind".

As we go into Easter lockdown and isolation over the Covid-19 threat, we must cherish our women, mothers, nannies, single mums, sisters, daughter's aunties and so on. They are our Easter symbols of life and resilience. Midwives delivering babies, nurses tending the final breaths of the dying, mums massaging the needs of whānau. Easter is a celebration of our women who are our living goddesses, like their predecessors Oestre, Hine te Iwaiwa, Mary, Hinepare and others.

Have a safe and resilient Easter everyone. Me aro koe ki te ha o Hineahuone - give respect and dignity to the loving breath of Hineahuone!