



The Meaning Behind the **12 Days of Christmas**

"The Twelve Days of Christmas" is an English Christmas carol. From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly. Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism song for young Catholics. It has two levels of meaning: the surface meaning plus a hidden meaning known only to members of the Church. Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality which the children could remember. When you reach #9, representing the Fruits of the Holy Spirit, the originator consolidated the fruits to fit the number sequence, leaving out the ones in brackets. There are actually Twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit.

The "True Love" one hears in the song is not a smitten boy or girlfriend but Jesus Christ, because truly Love was born on Christmas Day. The partridge in the pear tree also represents Him because that bird is willing to sacrifice its life if necessary to protect its young by feigning injury to draw away predators.

According to Ann Ball in her book, HANDBOOK OF CATHOLIC SACRAMENTALS:

The two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments

The three French hens stood for faith, hope, and love.

The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

The five golden rings represented the first five books of the Old Testament, which describe man's fall into sin and the great love of God in sending a Savior.

The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.

Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit-----Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy.

The eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes.

Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit-----Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience [Forbearance], Goodness [Kindness], Mildness, Fidelity, Modesty, Continency [Chastity].

The ten lords a-leaping were the Ten Commandments.

The eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful Apostles.

The twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in The Apostles' Creed.

Original Source: Fr. Calvin Goodwin, FSSP, Nebraska



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News From Home

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A Few Thoughts from Sr. M. Christine

Dear Friends,

I remember it was a cold, crisp Christmas Day as our family headed out for morning Mass; a tradition that we had held through the years. But this Christmas was different from all the other Christmases. My mother had passed away in March; the loss still so great. And, as we entered the church, I realized just how keenly I missed my mother and the gift she would give my sister and me each Christmas. Mother was a seamstress, and her present would be a handmade dress for the two of us. This time, however, I had to wear an old dress; and the realization of how much these dresses had meant to me going into Mass was quite profound. I had looked forward to these new dresses, thinking how pretty they were, how proudly I wore them, and how much I enjoyed the many compliments I would receive.

Although this Christmas was surely different without my mother and her new dress for me, it was the first time that I could remember looking at the manger and the life-sized crib with spiritual insight. The baby Jesus was real! This was the moment that God became man for me. Although the birth of Jesus becoming man is a simple truth, for me, this realization was quite staggering and I found myself seeing this familiar truth in a new way. I understood the true meaning of Christmas.

What does Christmas mean to you? Does it make you think of children with new toys? Gift cards? Family dinners? Christmas caroling? All of these things, while good in themselves, do not hold the true meaning of Christmas.

It is so easy to celebrate Christmas and miss the main point, or become so familiar with the Christian concept about it that it fails to make a real impact. The

birth of Jesus should have a profound effect upon our lives. It is a feast that demonstrates and celebrates the love of God, who sent his only Son to become one of us. God sent His Son to each of us, personally and individually. God never looks at crowds, He sees only the individual. Jesus was sent to share in who we are as humans, to give meaning to what we do, to heal wounds, to show us the love of the Father, and to teach us how to forgive. Do we recognize Him when He comes?

Throughout the years, I have come to treasure each Christmas. I invite you to go with faith to the crib and look at the image of the Child lying in the manger. When we look at the face of the child Jesus, we look on the face of utter love. St. John says that "God is love," not just that He loves us, but that He "is" love. He be-

came like us so that we might become like Him. The celebration of Christmas is empty without the enduring belief that this child is indeed the Christ, Son of the living God. The angel said to the shepherds: "I proclaim to you a great joy; today the Savior of the world is born for you."

When we open the door to our hearts, we experience the ultimate joy of God's love. He is the light to guide us. This is the Christmas gift; the reason for the presents we give one another and a reminder of the greatest of all gifts: God's love for each one of us.

Gratefully yours in Christ,

Sister M. Christine, FSGM

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MILESTONES

Welcome New Residents
Frances Walsh

Farewell
Jean Weishhaus

With Deepest Sympathy
Lois Albers
Margaret Essmann
Roy Klutho
Leontine Morris
Eleanor Schlafly

December Birthdays

Residents
Barbara Flynn—9th
Maxey Mann—11th
Peggy Matter—12th
Imelda Eisenbeis—16th
Donald Wittich—17th
Helen Craven—19th
Martha Ficklen—25th

Staff Members
Lisa Webb—13th
Maria Brown—20th
Raquel Yancy—21st
Brandon Wells—26th
Linda Jean—31st



Trivia Night 2019!



Are you as excited as we are about our 4th Annual Trivia Night coming up on April 6, 2019?!?!?
We sold out last year, so we made room for a few more tables this year.



We will also have some new ideas and fun surprises!!!
Don't wait too long to get your table together—
this is the one event everyone is talking about!!
As usual, we can use your support.
The fliers and more information
will be coming your way soon!!

The Trivia Night committee



Santa is Coming ! Join us on Saturday, December 1 at 2 pm in the Activity Hall for our annual Santa Party! Enjoy cookies, carols, and Christmas cheer and have your picture taken with the REAL Santa!



Reminder: No December or January Potluck

Join us again on Tuesday, February 12th, for our Pasta Potluck! Look for more details in the February News From Home.



Christmas Eve Mass
9:00 p.m.
Christmas Day Mass
10:00 a.m.

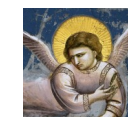
The Symbolism of The 3 Christmas Masses

There are three Masses celebrated on Christmas Day: one at midnight, one at dawn, and one during the day. Each Mass is distinct and highlights a different aspect of the Christmas story.

MIDNIGHT: THE ANGELS' MASS

According to tradition, Jesus was born in Bethlehem at midnight. The first Christmas Mass at midnight to honor the very hour that our Savior came into the world to save us. The darkness at midnight also parallels humanity's condition of spiritual darkness as the world awaited the radiant birth of the promised Messiah.

The Responsorial Psalm proclaims the joyful tidings of the Angel: "Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord." The Gospel reading for this Mass tells the first part of the Christmas story from the Gospel of Luke, when Baby Jesus is born and the Angels herald the Good News to the shepherds tending their flocks. Therefore this Midnight Mass is traditionally referred to as "The Angel's Mass."



DAWN: THE SHEPHERD'S MASS

The second Christmas Mass is celebrated at dawn. Sacred Scripture draws a parallel between Christ and the sun; as the sun begins to rise over the darkness of the land, it calls to mind how Jesus, the Light of the World, dispelled the darkness of sin and death at His birth. The Responsorial Psalm highlights this theme: "A light will shine on us this day: the Lord is born for us." The Gospel reading for this Mass continues the Christmas story from the Gospel of Luke. After the Angel announces the Good News to the shepherds, the shepherds hasten to Joseph and Mary to worship the Christ Child. The shepherds then joyfully proclaim the Good News to others. Therefore Christmas Mass at Dawn is traditionally referred to as "The Shepherd's Mass."



CHRISTMAS DAY: THE KING'S MASS

The final Christmas Mass is celebrated in the fullness of daylight, signifying that the promised Son of God has now been revealed to the whole world. The Responsorial Psalm for this Mass declares this by saying: "All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God." The Gospel reading is a call for all people and nations to worship the newborn King of Kings. Therefore this Mass is traditionally referred to as "The King's Mass."



December Coming Events

Cards/Games—Mondays Bingo—Tuesdays and Thursdays Santa Party—1
Birthday Party—5 Shop 'til You Drop—7
Music w/Sr. Brenda & Louise—13 Angel Visit/Caroling—16
Movie: Holiday Inn—18 Sing Along w/Ed—24 New Years Eve Party—28

