

Marianist Moments

“O star of wonder, star of light, guide us to thy perfect light.”



On the First Day of Christmas...

Did you know that the 12 Days of Christmas BEGIN on Christmas Day and conclude on Epiphany?

Did you know that each of the 12 Days of Christmas, as sung in the traditional Carol, are symbols of the Catholic faith?

Did you know that many Christian in countries around the world exchange gifts on January 6, not December 25?

Read on if you want to learn more!

You've probably heard the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas." It's one of the most popular Christmas songs in America, but many people don't realize that it has Catholic roots!

The world starts celebrating Christmas after Thanksgiving *but for Catholics the Christmas season doesn't begin until Christmas Eve*. Catholics celebrate the Christmas season from Jesus' birth, December 25, until the day before the Epiphany. The Epiphany is the celebration of when the three wise men visited Joseph, Mary, and Jesus in Bethlehem. Since the Church is still celebrating, it's a great opportunity to leave your Christmas decorations up a little longer!

<https://www.dynamiccatholic.com/advent/twelve-days>

Roman Catholics focus on the manifestation of Christ's birth to the entire world, represented by the magi and the star.



The religious wars in sixteenth century

England made it dangerous to be a Catholic. Catholic families courageously developed unique ways to secretly pass the faith onto their children, hence, "The 12 Days of Christmas." Although the lyrics may sound like nonsense, the song actually contains hidden references!

The First Day of Christmas: A Partridge in a Pear Tree: A partridge is a bird that is known to sacrifice its life for its babies. This bird represents Jesus, who is willing to give his life for us. The pear tree symbolizes the Cross.

The Second Day of Christmas: Two Turtle Doves: Turtle doves often mate for life and are seen as symbols of love, fidelity, and connection. In "The Twelve Days of Christmas," the two turtle doves represent the Old and New Testament, which are deeply connected and meaningful.

The Third Day of Christmas: Three French Hens: The French hens signify the three theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity.

The Fourth Day of Christmas: Four Calling Birds: The four calling birds symbolize the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

The Fifth Day of Christmas: Five Golden Rings: The five golden rings represent the first five books of the Old Testament.

The Sixth Day of Christmas: Six Geese A-Laying: The six geese symbolize the six days of creation, emphasizing God's power as the creator of the world.

The Seventh Day of Christmas: Seven Swans A-Swimming: The seven swans represent the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord.

The Eighth Day of Christmas: Eight Maids A-Milking: The eight maids a-milking symbolizes the eight Beatitudes preached by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.

The Ninth Day of Christmas: Nine Ladies Dancing: The nine ladies dancing represents the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

The Tenth Day of Christmas: Ten Lords A-Leaping: The ten lords a-leaping signifies the Ten Commandments, which provide guidance for how to be the-best-version-of-yourself.

The Eleventh Day of Christmas: Eleven Pipers Piping: The eleven pipers piping represent the eleven faithful disciples of Jesus (Judas was not faithful).

The Twelfth Day of Christmas: Twelve Drummers Drumming: The twelve drummers drumming represent the twelve points of doctrine in the Apostles' Creed, which summarizes the core beliefs of Christianity.

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We are all familiar with the three gifts of the Magi: **gold, frankincense and myrrh**. Some say that they are symbols of who Jesus is: the gold acknowledges his royal dignity as the King of the Universe, frankincense proclaims his divinity and myrrh is the foretaste of His redeeming death and burial. In many places around the world, "Christmas gifts" are actually exchanged on January 6, the Solemnity of the Epiphany in remembrance of the Magi's gifts to Christ the King!



<https://www.stmaryny.org/fr-toms-blog/the-gifts-of-the-epiphany/>