

family MATTERS

THE MONTH OF *January*

Don't put away the Christmas decoration quite yet. The season of Christmas isn't quite over. The Catholic Church celebrates the season of Christmas over a span of twelve days. The twelve days of Christmas begin on December 25 and end of January 5, the day before the feast of the Epiphany (which celebrates the day when the magi discovered Jesus.) These two important feast days and the twelve days of Christmas give us time to celebrate Jesus' birth at Mass and discover how we can bring his love to people in our everyday lives.

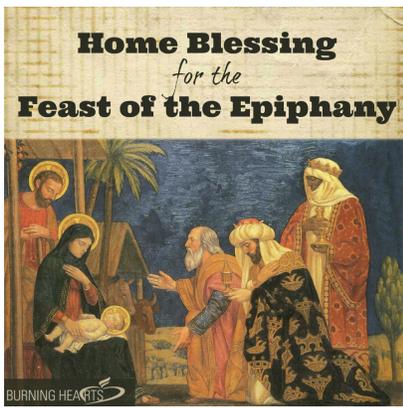


"The twelve days of Christmas" a popular Christmas carol. From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly, someone during that era wrote the carol to teach children about the Catholic Church. Although the lyrics may sound like nonsense, the song actually has hidden references. Teach this carol to your family this Christmas season, can they identify the hidden references?



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| A Partridge in a Pear Tree | Jesus |
| Two Turtle Doves | The Old and New Testament |
| Three French Hens | The Three Theological Virtues: Faith, Hope and Love |
| Four Calling Birds | Four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John |
| Five Golden Rings | The first five books of the Old Testament |
| Six Geese A-Laying | Six days of creation |
| Seven Swans A-Swimming | Seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, fear of the Lord |
| Eight Maids A-Milking | The eight beatitudes |
| Nine Ladies Dancing | Nine fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control |
| Ten Lords A-Leaping | The Ten Commandments |
| Eleven Pipers Piping | Eleven Faithful Apostles |
| Twelve Drummers Drumming | Twelve points of belief in the Apostles Creed |

- Other celebrations and feasts in the month of January.
- January 1 Mary Mother of God
 - January 4 St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
 - January 6 Epiphany
 - January 13 Baptism of the Lord
 - January 21 St. Agnes
 - January 28 St. Thomas Aquinas
 - January 31 St. John Bosco



The Feast of Epiphany marks the end of Christmas, and commemorates the Magi who followed a star to find the Christ-child. The Feast of Epiphany blessing asks that we might find the Lord when our pilgrimage is ended. It also reminds us that we should be looking for God, and finding Him, all along the way. Catholics traditionally bless their homes on Epiphany night with holy water. Pray that all who enter your home will be treated with dignity and love, and that those who come there might find, as did the magi on their journey, the true and ever-living Christ.

Celebrating these feasts are so beneficial for our families today. They call us back to the "important" things in life. Through these feast day celebrations, we take time to pray, to be inspired by the saints, and to bond with each other as we are engaged in conversation and simply having fun together.

- During this month of January why not make some spiritual New Year's Resolutions with your family?
- Here are a few ideas: -Increase Your Marian Devotion -Make more time for spiritual reading -Make good stewardship a lifestyle -Share your Catholic faith with others -Bring back regular penances -Go an extra day to Mass -Pray the Rosary -Pick a new saint buddy
- Pick one to do this month, and maybe a different one each month though out this new year.