

## The Twelve Days of Christmas

(Our faith hidden in song)

Catholics in England were forbidden to practice their faith openly during the years from 1538 to 1829. This song was developed to communicate their gift of faith in coded lyrics. The 12 days run from December 25 (Christmas) to January 6 (Epiphany). The “True Love” refers to God. The repetition of the melody signifies God’s continual renewal of His gifts.

**A partridge** is the symbol of Christ. The partridge will pretend to be injured to protect nestlings who are defenseless, just as we are defenseless without Christ. A **pear tree** is the symbol of the salvation of humanity, just as the apple tree signifies human downfall.

**Two turtle doves** symbolize the Old Testament sacrifice offered by even the poorest of people in Israel (with which Christ was “redeemed” by His parents at His presentation in the Temple).

**Three French hens**, valued for their beauty and rarity, symbolize the gifts of the three wise men and also the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity.

**Four calling birds** represent the four major prophets and the four evangelists, the former announcing His coming and the latter proclaiming His message.

**Five golden rings** represent first and foremost the five most precious wounds of Christ crucified (to which there had long been great devotion, and thus the reason for the change in the melody at this point). The rings also represent the perfect circle of faith: God’s love for us, our love for God, and our love for each other. The number five refers as well to the five obligatory sacraments (Baptism, Penance, the Holy Eucharist, Confirmation, and Anointing of the Sick). Finally, five represents the first five books of the Bible—the Pentateuch—known as the Law in the Old Testament.

**Six geese a-laying** represent the six days of creation.

**Seven swans a-swimming** are the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost and the seven works of mercy (there are seven works of corporal mercy and seven of spiritual mercy).

**Eight maids a-milking** are the eight Beatitudes preached by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount, as well as the eight occasions during the year that were prescribed at that time for the reception of the Holy Eucharist.

**Nine ladies dancing** are the nine ranks of angel choirs, the spirits who surround the Throne of God.

**Ten lords a-leaping** represent the Ten Commandments.

**Eleven pipers playing** are the eleven surviving Apostles proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus.

**Twelve drummers drumming** are the twelve minor prophets of the Old Testament and the twelve points of

the Apostles’ Creed. They symbolize also the twelve tribes of Israel, the twelve Apostles (their number being restored after Pentecost), as also the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit, Who came down at Pentecost. Twelve is also the Scriptural number representing completeness and fairness.

## 16 Practical Tips for Creating & Maintaining Your Daily Prayer Habit

-Used with permission from St. Peter’s List. Visit: <http://www.stpeterslist.com/13714/practical-tips-for-creating-maintaining-your-daily-prayer-habit/>

### 1. Use your Phone

Every smartphone has both built-in and third-party apps for reminders. Use the “repeat” function to set daily reminders to pray. If you are the kind of person who uses your calendar for planning out your tasks for the day, schedule time for prayer. Pictured above, the fantastic [Due app for iOS](#) is a great choice for iPhone users.

### 2. Be Specific

When you schedule prayer on your calendar, or add it to your to do list, don’t just say “Pray” but rather *be specific* and say something like “Pray the Rosary” or “Pray the Hail Holy Queen.” This removes what psychologists call [decision avoidance](#), or what the rest of us call putting something off because it’s too hard to decide what to do. The whole point of a reminder is so that you don’t have to decide *when* to pray, add some specificity and you won’t have to decide *what* to pray in the moment either. Of course, once you’ve said your prayer you can add extemporaneous, or other prayers as you wish. This is just a way to help get things started.

### 3. Place a framed prayer in plain sight

Often we just think about whatever is in front of us, so put some prayers in plain sight by writing them out, and framing them. Then you can hang them on the wall, or use the frames’ built-in stand to place them on a flat surface. Some good spots to consider might be near the sink in your kitchen, on your desk, on your nightstand, by the sink in your bathroom, on a bookcase you walk by frequently, or on a hall or entryway table.

### 4. No frame? Write a prayer on your bathroom mirror

As a convert there are many beautiful prayers from tradition which I do not know by heart and need to see over and over to remember, this simple tip is how I learned to pray the *Memorare* and made sure I saw it every day: Take [a dry-erase marker](#) and copy the prayer right onto the mirror in your bathroom. Now, every time you brush your teeth you can say a prayer. Bonus: Pick a long enough prayer and it’s a good way to make sure you’re brushing as much as you ought to.

#### 5. Turn your morning alarm into a reminder to pray

If you use your phone to wake up in the morning, and it has the ability to edit the name of the alarm, change it to something like “Get up! Offer the day to God.” or “Good morning! Thank God for it!”

#### 6. Make a place for prayer

We’ve written about [home altars](#) before, and they’re a great option for making a dedicated space for prayer. Maybe your current situation does not allow for something very elaborate, that is ok. A simple cloth napkin with a small crucifix, perhaps some prayer cards and a tea light candle can be a dignified, if diminutive prayer corner. Having a dedicated space will be a reminder of, and an invitation to prayer whenever you see it.

#### 7. Use prayers or holy cards as bookmarks

This is particularly useful for students: keep your place in books with prayers or holy cards and before you start reading pause to pray. Some Saints’ cards you might consider are St. Francis de Sales, St. Thomas Aquinas, especially when studying, St. Josemaria, and St. Joseph the Worker for your business reading.

#### 8. Change your wallpaper

You know that giant background on your computer, iPad, or phone? You can change that. Consider finding an image that reminds you of prayer, or even using a free [website](#) or [app](#) to add a simple prayer to your favorite image. Some of these [really short prayers](#) might work well.

#### 9. Put an icon & prayer on your computer desktop

Another option is simply saving a holy image right to your computer’s desktop. Most computers can be set to show a preview of files, and you’ll have a small icon (in a couple senses) right on your desktop. You can also copy-and-paste prayers into simple text files or word documents and save right to your desktop.

#### 10. Pray while exercising

My very favorite exercise is simply walking outdoors. I usually go on several walks every day, and nearly always pray the Rosary on my first walk. In my experience, being in the gym and lifting weights isn’t an environment well suited to lengthy prayer times – but if you’re a runner or enjoy walks like I do, try praying a rosary instead of cranking up the music or podcasts next time.

#### 11. Turn your commute into adoration

No, you probably shouldn’t set up a mobile adoration chapel but if you live in a city where your commute is a nightmare, consider stopping by a church and praying for a few minutes rather than sitting at the office or in traffic. The traffic will be there, you may not be home until later anyway, so check for churches

that may be along your commute and see if you might be able to spend some time in God’s presence.

#### 12. Put a holy water font by your door

My father and mother-in-law recently gave my wife and me this beautiful little holy water font which belonged to my wife’s grandmother. I promptly installed it by our front door and more than being a family heirloom, it serves as a reminder to invoke the name of the Holy Trinity every time we are coming or going from our home. If your in-laws aren’t as great as mine, you can always find holy water fonts at local Catholic shops or even [online](#).

#### 13. Place a holy card on your desk

Spend a lot of time at a desktop computer? Consider keeping a holy card taped to the computer monitor’s bezel, or propped up in the keyboard by the otherwise totally useless “function” keys. Or, simply place it on the desk but beware of it simply getting lost in the shuffle of regular papers.

#### 14. Keep a weekly prayer journal

What I say: “Oh my! I’ll pray for you.” What actually I do: forget. What I say: “Oh, that sounds like a great opportunity, I’ll say a prayer for you!” What I actually do: forget. What I say: “I’m so sorry to hear that, I’ll pray for you.” What I actually do: forget. I’m sure you can’t possibly relate to this, but here’s the weapon I’ve used to (mostly) overcome this terrible vice: A prayer journal. It is nothing fancy, just a simple black moleskin-styled notebook. We keep two lists in the notebook, one for things for which we want to give thanks, and another for prayer requests. Each Sunday, we turn the page, and update the lists for the week. Now, when I tell someone “I’ll pray for you” I either do it instantly, or add it to our prayer journal for the week.

#### 15. Set your homepage to a prayer

Change your browser’s homepage to a favorite prayer. Perhaps one of our lists, Father Z’s [Prayer Before Connecting to the Internet](#), or something from [EWTN’s page of prayers](#). Then whenever you open up your browser, pause for a brief prayer.

#### 16. Pray with your family

Finally, the number one thing you can do develop a habit of prayer is to create a culture of prayer in your family. Make a point of praying *together* before and after meals, pray the *Angelus* as a family at noon if you’re together, pray the Rosary after dinner, pray compline at the end of the day, etc. Make it a regular practice, and hold each other accountable. For a fantastic introduction to creating a culture of prayer in your home, we highly recommend this book filled with practical advice and ageless principles: [The Little Oratory: A Beginner’s Guide to Praying in the Home](#) by David Clayton & Leila Marie Lawler.

**Thank You, Faithful Christians** (from Fr. Michael)

It is so wonderful to see spiritual stirrings spring into action. I am very grateful to see a thriving Bible study in Grand Lake. A Bible study has sprung up at St. Bernard. A Novena in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe was prayed in Kremmling and there is a prayer group that meets on Tuesday mornings at St. Peter. There are the men's and women's groups that meet at Our Lady. Keep it rolling, people. Network and pray and study!

**Advent—A Time to Prepare to Receive Baby Jesus**

How is your reading of Sirach going? Some more classic lines:  
-Sir 25:1: My soul takes pleasure in three things, and they are beautiful in the sight of the Lord and of men; agreement between brothers, friendship between neighbors, and a wife and a husband who live in harmony.  
-Sir 27:8: If you pursue justice, you will attain it and wear it as a glorious robe.

**Aid to the Church in Need**

Fellow Christians, if we are following Jesus the King, we have the four signs of a dynamic Catholic Christian: (1) prayer, (2) study, (3) generosity [in working to build up God's Kingdom by action and with money], and (4) evangelization [telling others what good things God is doing in our life]. Simply put: Pray, learn, act.

My heart was really struck over a year ago to hear about how ISIS was wiping out Catholic Christians and other Christians in Iraq and Syria. I wanted to give money immediately but let myself get too busy. Finally, about a month ago, I was able to find the right organization in which to funnel a donation.

Please consider giving to "Aid to the Church in Need." I was told that 90% of my donation will make it directly to the Christian refugees. Call (800) 628-6333 or visit: <http://www.churchinneed.org/site/PageServer?pagename=mainpage>

Recall: In the midst of all the chaos in the world, God is blessing you and me. We should be mindful of our brothers and sisters who are suffering and dying. We can pray and give significant money to help them.

**Christmas (Solemnity of the Nativity of Our Lord)**

**Thursday, December 24** (Christmas Eve)

- Winter Park Ski Lodge (West Portal), 6 p.m.
- St. Ignatius, 4 p.m.
- St. Anne, 7:30 p.m.

**Friday, December 25**

- St. Bernard, 7 a.m.
- Our Lady of the Snow, 9:30 a.m.
- St. Peter, 10 a.m.

**Collection Envelopes are Available in the Churches**

If you do not see your envelopes, please call the office and speak to Angela: 887-0032.

**Air Force Academy Cadet Choir coming Jan 8-10**

We need families to house the cadets on Friday and Saturday nights. Please call Angela: 887-0032.

**Bible Recommendations (great Christmas gifts):**

- Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, New Testament: Second Catholic Edition.*
- The Didache Bible: Ignatius Bible Edition.*

**Office Holy Season Closures**

The office will be closed on Thursdays, December 24 and December 31, so that all of us can prepare for the Holy Days.

**Calendar of Events**

- Jan 10 (Sun).** Spanish Mass at Our Lady at 1 p.m.
- Jan 14 (Thur).** Fr. Joseph speaks on death and dying at Fraser Valley Library in the evening.
- Feb 14 (Sun).** Spanish Mass at Our Lady at 1 p.m.
- Mar 13 (Sun).** Spanish Mass at Our Lady at 1 p.m.
- Apr 10 (Sun).** Spanish Mass at Our Lady at 1 p.m.

<b><u>Mass Collections, December 5 – 6</u></b>	
St. Anne	\$ 1133
St. Bernard	1721
Our Lady of the Snow	1702
St. Peter	643
St. Ignatius	<u>350</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 5549</b>

<b><u>Vocations Prayer Calendar; November/December</u></b>
<i>Please pray for our seminarians every day.</i>
<b>Sat--</b> Chad Smith & John Stapleton
<b>Sun--</b> Manuel Alarcon & Peter Srsich
<b>Mon--</b> Ryan Kent & Sean Conroy
<b>Tue--</b> Sile Wilfred Kone & Tony Davis
<b>Wed--</b> Yaroslav Cherniavskyi & Zach Taudien
<b>Thu--</b> Christian Mast & Christopher Marbury
<b>Fri--</b> Men and women applying for formation

<b><u>Mass Intentions and Schedule for StA, StB, and OLS</u></b>
<b>KEY:</b> StA = St. Anne; StB = St. Bernard; OLS = Our Lady of the Snow
-Sat, Dec 12, StA, 5 p.m., Parishioners and visitors
-Sat, Dec 12, StB, 7:30 p.m., Barry/Aimee Kroneberger
-Sun, Dec 13, StB, 7 a.m., +Timothy Davlin
-Sun, Dec 13, OLS, 9:30 a.m., +Wayne Cox
-Sun, Dec 13, OLS, 1 p.m. (Span.), Bernie McGinn
<u>Weekday Masses</u> (see extra Masses listed in bold)
-Mon, Dec 14, StA, 8:30 a.m., Jo Creath intention
-Tue, Dec 15, OLS, 7:30 a.m., +Willy Williamson
-Wed, Dec 16, StB, 8:30 a.m., John and Mary Wells
- <b>Thu, Dec 17, OLS, 8:30 a.m., Margaret Ledezma</b>
- <b>Fri, Dec 18, OLS, 8:30 a.m., John and Carolyn Murphy</b>

<b><u>Mass Intentions and Schedule for StP and StI</u></b>
<b>KEY:</b> StI = St. Ignatius (Walden); StP = St. Peter
-Sat, Dec 12, StI, 4 p.m., Parishioners and visitors
-Sun, Dec 13, StP, 10 a.m., Los Amigos staff