

Our Lady of Victories Church

(serving Harrington Park, River Vale and the Pascack/Northern Valley)

150 Harriot Avenue, Harrington Park, New Jersey

www.olvhp.org

WELCOME

To the Parish Family of
OUR LADY OF VICTORIES

The Little Church with a BIG Heart

Parish Office 201-768-1706

COME WORSHIP WITH US

Rev. Wojciech Jaśkowiak
Pastor

Rev. Edmond P. Ilg
Parochial Vicar

Mr. Thomas Lagatol Mr. Albert McLaughlin
Deacons

Maria Hellrigel - Parish Secretary
201-768-1706

Religious Education (CCD)
Susan Evanella Denise Coulter (LSEC)
201-768-1400

Sr. Elizabeth Holler, SC Sr. Mary Corrigan, SC
In Residence-Convent

Selena Piazza
Lesia Rossmann
Ministers of Music

Elizabeth Gulfo
Martin Coyne II
Parish Trustees

Jorden Pedersen Esq.
President Parish Council

Jon Fischer CFA
Chairman Finance Committee

WEEKEND MASS SCHEDULE:

Saturday Vigil: 4pm & 5pm

Sunday: 7am, 8am Latin, 9:30am, 9:30am Family Mass (gym),
10:45am, 12Noon, 1pm Spanish, 6pm

SPECIAL MASSES OR DEVOTIONS:

First Friday: 7:00pm, Mass of Sacred Heart & Devotions

First Saturday: 8:00am, Mass of Immaculate Heart of Mary

First Saturday: 12:00pm, Mass for Souls in Purgatory

Novenas prayed after 8:00 a.m. Mass:

Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal: Monday

St. Anthony: Tuesday

St. Joseph: Wednesday

St. Jude: Thursday

Infant of Prague: 25th of the month

St. Peregrine: First Friday of the Month

Rosary: Recited M - Sat after 8:00am & after 12:00Noon Mass

Christmas 2023



MARY'S CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

Christmas Eve, December 24

3:30pm Christmas Carols/Pageant & 4:00pm Family Mass
in OLV Gym

4:15pm Mass in Church

5:30pm Mass in Church

7:00pm Mass in Church

9:00pm Latin Mass in Church

Christmas Day, December 25

Midnight Mass in Church (Live-Streamed)

(Christmas Carols 30 minutes before Mass)

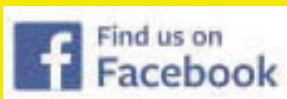
8:00am English Mass in Church

10:00am Mass in Church

12:00Noon Mass in Church

1:00pm Spanish Mass in Church

NO 6PM EVENING MASS Christmas Day



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Fr. Wojciech's Corner

The Son of man came to seek and save what was lost Luke 19:10

As I was preparing myself for Christmas this year, I reflected on how God went out of his way to "seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk 19:10).

He became a small human embryo in Mary's womb.

He became flesh.

He became EMMANUEL, God with us.

He became a WORD in which God said everything.

...All to seek and save what was lost. What LOVE!...

May the Solemnities of His HOLY birth surprise us to see that He will do anything to seek and save us and that *nothing is impossible for God*.

Following on that theme of seeking and saving that what was lost, I cannot but think of the enormous suffering surrounding us: people live without hope, so many marriages are destroyed, anxieties, addictions, suicides... People young and old are bored by the Church and leave it to follow false ideas of happiness. How can we help them?! How can we bring them back?! That is why I am happy to announce that in January, we will begin a new initiative which will start on the weekend of January 20/21 and will help us face these challenges and give an answer to them. More info to come.

**Dear OLV Family, friends and visitors,
on behalf of Fr. Ed and our Parish Staff**

Merry Christmas to ALL!

Nice Polish Tradition!

I remember this beautiful tradition on Christmas Eve of gathering as a family at the dinner table next to the manger and Christmas tree, and before starting a meal to hear normally the father proclaim the gospel of Luke (Lk 2:1-14) about the birth of Jesus. Then we exchange Christmas wishes (also thank-you's and sorry's) and break the wafer - opiatek - which symbolizes Christ who comes in Bethlehem (city of bread) to become THE BREAD for us. Then we sing some carols, eat a splendid meal. Plates in some homes are even placed on the tablecloth under which there is hay in memory of the manger in which Christ our true food was placed - His first plate was made of hay, what a humility. We also leave a plate at the table empty for Christ who might come that night, as Advent taught us to be waiting and vigilant. He might come as a poor person that night as well. As a kid, these traditions taught me to focus my life on waiting for Christ. After the meal we exchange gifts. There is a beautiful tradition of waiting, while singing Christmas carols, for Midnight Mass -**THE BEST BREAD-and in HIM find everything!**

Christmas ... Virtue of Humility Advent and Christmas present the perfect opportunity to focus on humility and poverty. This comes alive most especially when we meditate on the humble scene of Jesus' birth. Often modern Nativity scenes don't communicate this central truth strongly enough, as the constructed stable can look almost cozy and warm, instead of what was likely the cold, messy and brutal reality behind it all. A meditation found in a 19th-century prayer book on the Child Jesus highlights this profound mystery.

It is midnight. The winter air is cold and chill. See a comfortless stable, partly shed and partly cave, hollowed in the side of a rock. A poor place indeed. The keen breeze finds its way in freely. In that stable lies a BABE. His only cradle is a manger from which cattle feed. He lies there on the rough straw - a new-born Babe. His little limbs are wrapped around with swathing bands like the babes of the poorest.

Think about that scene and the poverty of it all - how uncomfortable it must have been! The scene should move us to ask God for the gift of humility and to examine our own lives, asking ourselves if our modern comforts hold any influence over our spiritual lives -excerpt aletea.org

**Oh my Jesus! Let me climb to You on the steps of humility,
on which You came down to me.**

—St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

MARY'S DREAM



I had a dream, Joseph. I do not understand it, not really, but I think it was about a birthday celebration for our Son. I think that was what it was all about. The people had been preparing for it for about six weeks. They had decorated the house and bought new gifts. It was peculiar, though, because the presents weren't for our Son. They wrapped them in beautiful paper

and tied them with lovely bows and stacked them under a tree.

Yes, a tree, Joseph, right in their house. They decorated the tree, too. The branches were full of glowing balls and sparkling ornaments. There was a figure on the top of the tree. It looked like an angel might look. Oh, it was beautiful! Everyone was laughing and happy. They were all excited about the gifts.

They gave the gifts to each other, Joseph, not to our Son. I don't think they even knew Him. They never mentioned His name.

Doesn't it seem odd for people to go to all that trouble to celebrate someone's birthday if they don't know Him? I had the strangest feeling that if our Son had gone to this celebration, He would have been intruding.

Everything was so beautiful, Joseph, and everyone so full of cheer, but it made me want to cry. How sad for Jesus, not to be wanted at His own birthday celebration.

I'm glad it was only a dream. How terrible, Joseph, if it had been real.

**IT IS JESUS' BIRTHDAY
DO NOT FORGET HIM
HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS**

Christmas ... a Living Reality

John Paul II, in his Angelus message of December 19, 1999, explained that Christmas is not simply the remembrance of the Event that took place 2000 years ago when, according to the Gospel, the power of God took on the frailty of a baby. It is really about a living reality that is repeated every year in the heart of believers.

"The mystery of the Holy Night, which historically happened two thousand years ago, must be lived as a spiritual event in the 'today' of the Liturgy," the Pope clarified. "The Word who found a dwelling in Mary's womb comes to knock on the heart of every person with singular intensity this Christmas." -St. John Paul II December 19, 1999

Annual Beefsteak Dinner January 20, 2024

OLV Knights of Columbus Council 14483

This is a major fundraiser for the Knights of Columbus to fund our charities. It is a fun evening, and every year it's a great success. Please support this dinner. Tickets: Adults \$40 - Children 12 & under \$15. Tickets will be on sale after all Masses weekends of January 6th & 13th

What if you are CALLED! ??? Call Fr. Gino, Director of Vocations 973-497-4365, who is always ready to listen or call Fr. Wojciech 201-768-1706 ext. 11.

The Nativity of the Lord

Pray for Those in the Military

US Army

Captain Devin Borland, National Guard
 Captain Ben Clemente
 RRT Specialist James Crumb
 Staff Sergeant Peter Dippolito
 Major Michael Franson
 Sergeant First Class Charles Greene
 Private First Class Sean Keohane
 Captain Shawn Linn
 Colonel John McLaughlin
 Captain John G. Miele
 Captain Joseph W. Niece
 1st Lieutenant Jack Ottomaneli
National Guard
 1st Lieutenant Matthew Dinnell

US Air Force

1st Lieutenant Brian Kearney
 Chief Master Sergeant Shawn Llewellyn

US Marine Corps.

Corporal Shanna Bennett
 Sergeant Matthew Brady
 1st Lieutenant Ryan Colomeo
 Corporal Mark Fredrick
 Captain Stephen Ikalowych
 1st Lieutenant J.P. Maher
 Corporal Cody McGrath

US Navy

Lt. Commander Julia Cheringal
 Lieutenant Jonathan Clemente
 Lieutenant Joseph Jaeger
 Lieutenant Andrew Jaeger
 Airman Cody Massa

Prayer for the Safety of Soldiers

Almighty and eternal God, those who take refuge in You will be glad and forever will shout for joy. Protect these soldiers as they discharge their duties. Protect them with the shield of Your strength and keep them safe from all evil and harm. May the power of Your love enable them to return home in safety, that with all who love them, they may ever praise You for Your loving care. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Pray for Our Sick

Please Pray in the name of JESUS, the Healer, that the *sick of the Parish* may be restored to health and all those who *assist and care* for the sick will be given the *strength* to continue *God's Will*: infants Abigail Jude, Aidan, Olive, Adeline Quarello, Jonathan & Joseph; little boys Gabriel Aungst, Antonio and Shane, little Cordelia and Eileen, little Remy and Silvie, Michael Baruch, Julie Berbert, Richard Bolton, Paul Brennan, Anna Carfagno, Dominic Carini, Kevin Columbo, Eddie Cooper, Paula Criquei, Michael Curran, Marie D'Ascenzo, Maryann Dean, Noelle DeJoseph, Vincent DePaola, Marge Devitt, Guy DeSantis, Ann Dilel, Siobhan Donaghi, Whitney Dugan, Carl Falasca, Michael Fallon, Kathleen Falotico, Dan Filippone, Jeremy Fillis, Walter Flaherty, Phil Gangusa & Vicky Ferrara, Robin Fletcher, Ken Grier, Glenn Hall, Cara Hansen, Amy Hartwell, Mavis Ince, Rolando Joaquim, Rob, Dianne & Dee Kaiser, Josephine Kasper, Austin Kellar, Pat Kissane, Christina Kenny, Robert Knaack, Joseph Koch, Artie Latz, Lisa LeGrand, Lisa LoSchiavo, Mary Lowe, Mary Ann Luther, Peter Mahler, Robert Mayer, James McGarry, Matt McGowan, Michael McMahon, Tom McMullen, Kim McWilliams, David Mercur, Ann Millar, Alice Miller, Len Moriarity, Gianna Moscatello, Kevin Mullane, Rose Marie Myers, Natalie Niebergall, Emily O'Neill, John Pal, Mary Parker, Tom Paskewich, Bob Phillips, Cathy Pommert, Canice Prince, William Ragu, Dan & Phyllis Ragusa, Adolf Rajner, Debra Rendon, Vincent Ricciardi, Herman Rodriguez, Veronica Romanchuk, George Ross, Wendy Ruggiero, Beth Sacco, Samantha Sconzo, Patricia Ann Shalhoub, Peggy and Chris Shedden, Michael Suresh, Angeline Thomas, Mary Ann Torre, Charles Touw, Aileen Vassar, Carl Walker, Megan Weingarten, Hope White, Stefan Wiklinski, Maria Williams, Craig Williams, Daniel Wu, Mary Young, Brian, Carla, Chris, Christina, Edward, Elba, Jennifer, Joann, John, Karen, Lauren, Lisa, Lou, Lucas, Lynn, Mary, Margaret, Michelle, Patrick, Peter, Robert, Samantha, Sarah, Sean, Sharon, Steven, Tina W., Tom, Tara M.

New to the area? Register to become a member of the OLV Family. Visit OLV's website olvhp.org and click on "Parish Registration"

New address or phone number? Please inform the rectory.

Relevant Radio 1430am

Listener Supported Talk Radio for Catholic Life

Mass Intentions

Christmas Eve Masses-Sunday, December 24

4:00 *Gym* Living and Deceased members of OLV Parish
 4:15 Gerald Kasper - 1st Anniversary R/b the Poggi Family
 5:30 Stanley Wiklinski R/b Barbara Wiklinski
 7:00 Families of Fr. Wojciech and Fr. Ed
 9:00 *Latin* All Souls

Monday, December 25 - THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

Midnight Living and Deceased members of OLV Parish
 Families of Fr. Wojciech and Fr. Ed
 8:00 *English* Bob Hamilla R/b Ann Hamilla
 10:00 Deceased priests of OLV
 12:00 Edward and Winifred Pavlu R/b the Kip Family
 1:00 *Spanish* All Souls

No 6PM Mass Today

Tuesday, December 26—St. Stephen-first martyr

8:00 Black Poster Project Children R/b Glynis Burke Dolan
 12:00 Christina Crowley R/b Mike and Beth Rota

Wednesday, December 27— St. John, Apostle and Evangelist

8:00 Helen McLaughlin R/b Bob and Dolores Cavagnet
 12:00 William Hogan R/b Harry and Diana Hoppe

Thursday, December 28—The Holy Innocents-Martyrs

8:00 James McGrath, Jr. R/b Dennis and Kathleen Falotico
 12:00 Christina Crowley R/b Rae Rinaldi

Friday, December 29—St. Thomas Becket, bishop, martyr

8:00 Richard and Michael Supple R/b the Supple Family
 12:00 Frank Muggeo R/b Bob and Sue Muggeo

Saturday, December 30-St. Anysius, Bishop

8:00 Christina Crowley R/b Carl and Ellen Sutter
 12:00 Sven Carlson R/b Peter and Linda Wayne
 4:00 Intentions of Amy Madden R/b Bridie Kiene
 5:00 George Smith R/b William and Dianne Smith

Sunday, Dec. 31—The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

7:00 Patrick James Dolan R/b the Dolan Family
 8:00 *Latin* Intentions of Joseph Mallon R/b Bridget Walsh
 9:30 Frank and Elsie May Reeves R/b Scott and Barbara Anzalone
 10:45 George Smith R/b the Oakley Family
 12:00 Frank Muggeo R/b Bob and Sue Muggeo
 1:00 *Spanish* People of the Parish
 6:00 Mena Corrigan R/b Karen Keaney

Sanctuary Memorials (this week)

The Sanctuary Lamp will burn for the repose of the soul of

Deirdre Sykes - 1st Anniversary.

The Blessed Virgin Mary Votive Lamp will burn for the repose of the soul of Anna Hackett.

The Saint Joseph Votive Lamp will burn for the deceased of the Seifriz Family, r/b John and Linda Russo.

The Hosts and Wine which will become the Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ at holy Mass this week have been donated in memory of Suzanne Bicknell, r/b the Creagh Family.

My Parish-My Responsibility Thank you to those who so generously continue to support our parish by mailing in your donations. At the same time, we understand that some have been laid off from their work or are experiencing decreased income and are unable to continue their donations at this time. *Donations/offering envelopes may be mailed to OLV Rectory, 81 Lynn Street, Harrington Park, NJ 07640. Thank you for your generosity.*

Flower & Sanctuary Offerings If you would like to donate flowers for the Altar, Bl. Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, call the rectory. Flowers, Bread and Wine, the Bl. Virgin Mary and St. Joseph Votive Lamps and Sanctuary Lamp in Church can be dedicated on a weekly basis.

THE NATIVITY SCENE

One of the most beautiful and popular teaching tools of the Christian Faith is the Nativity Scene, or "Crèche," an Old French word for manger. The "Book of Blessing" says that St. Francis of Assisi began the custom of displaying figures to depict the birth of Jesus Christ on Christmas Eve, 1223. However, there are wall paintings depicting the Nativity of the Lord, based on the Gospel accounts of Matthew and Luke, dating from as far back as the fourth century! Some of the ancient Nativity scenes even include the prophecies of Isaiah and Habakkuk, which foretold the Messiah would be born in the midst of animals in a manger. "Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping watch over their flock." **LUKE 2:8.** The good news of the birth of the Good Shepherd was given to the poor, uneducated shepherds. This is in keeping with St. Luke's Gospel theme that the lowly are singled out as recipients of God's favors and blessings. One thousand years earlier, while out in the fields shepherding the flock, David was called to be the King of Israel. From then on, God continually promised an even greater shepherd, One who would lead the people and be a Son to Him. "And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." **LUKE 2:12** The manger, or animals feeding trough, gives us much "food for thought" – pun intended! How appropriate that Jesus, the Bread of Life, was placed in a feeding trough! Animals know where to go to be fed by INSTINCT, but we know where to go to be fed by FAITH! By faith, we are much smarter than animals. Or are we? That's what St. Francis asked by placing two special animals in the crèche. "An ox knows its owner, and an ass, its master's manger, but Israel does not know me, my people have not understood." **ISAIAH 1:3** These "dumbest" of animals are placed in the crèche to "chide" us into realizing what THEY were smart enough to know: that the Holy Child was the One through Whom all things were made! Jesus, God's Son in human flesh, is their Owner and Master! Another explanation for their presence is that the ox, an animal often sacrificed, was a sign of the supreme sacrifice Jesus would offer on His cross; the ass was a sign that the donkey would carry Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, so He could become our Sacrifice. The people of Bethlehem (means house of BREAD) represent us! Like our ancestors, we cry out in need to the Lord, waiting for His reply. As they went about their daily routine, some found room for the Lord in their hearts– but others did not. Those who took the time to stop, to look and to reflect found the Lord; those who were so preoccupied with work, earthly concerns or whatever, probably missed Him! Will we find room for Him in our hearts and our lives today?



KIDZ KORNER ANSWERS

1. Bethlehem. 2. The House of Bread - *Beth* in Hebrew is house and *lehem* bread. 3. God saves. 4. The Shepherds. 5. The Angels told them while they were in the field. 6. An ox and a donkey, according to Isaiah 1:3.

Fear not; for behold
I bring you good tidings of great joy.
Luke 2:10

REQUIREMENTS FOR BAPTISM OR CONFIRMATION SPONSOR

Godparent/Sponsor must be at least 16 years old.

Godparent/Sponsor must be in good standing with the Catholic Church. Must be a practicing Catholic (*Attend Sunday Mass weekly*).

Must have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Communion, and Confirmation. If married, must be married in the Catholic Church. If single, not living with significant other, nor married civilly only.

Godparent/Sponsor cannot be the candidate's parent. Each child only requires one Godparent. If you wish to have two Godparents there must be one female and one male. (Canon Law 872-874)

Are you an **ADULT** without

Confirmation, Communion or Baptism?

If you want to become a Roman Catholic or complete your Initiation into the Church, the RCIA is for you! For information, phone the rectory. *Adult Catholics* who have not yet celebrated *Confirmation* or Holy Communion should contact the rectory for preparation class/information.

Start your marriage at the altar with God

Start your married life with God and receive grace for your married life through Sacramental Marriage in Church. "Wedding" ONLY at the venue is not a valid Sacrament. In this Sacrament, God's own divine life can be experienced and lived. **Were you married only civilly** by a mayor or justice of the peace and would now like to be married in the Catholic Church? Contact Fr. Wojciech or Fr. Ed for details.

Respect Life

Any woman who is pregnant and in need of assistance should never feel that abortion is her only option. Personal and confidential assistance is available at the following: Several Sources 800-662-2678 (24/7) -Heartbeat International: 800-712-4357 (24/7) - Birthright: 800-550-4900 - Archdiocese Respect Life Office: 973-497-4350.

next YOUTH GROUP Meeting Sunday, January 7 after 6PM Mass

PARENTS NIGHT OUT

The OLV Youth Group calls all teens! Let's give our Parents a Night Out, Sunday, Jan. 7th after the 6pm Mass. Scan the QR Code or see the parish website for details.



OLV Needlers If you knit/crochet or would like to learn, join us! We meet Wednesdays in the lower church at 6:00PM.

Catholic Daughters of the Americas To learn more call Marie 201-741-0499

OLV Adult Choir For grades 9-12 and adults. Rehearsals are Tuesdays at 7PM. Choir Mass Sundays at 10:45AM.

Array of Hope Sign up for FREE on the Array of Hope Channel app: watch.arrayofhope.net * Available on Apple TV, Roku, iOS, and Android mobile devices.

St. Joseph HS Performing Arts presents "LES MISERABLES". at Inserra Theater, St. Joseph HS campus: Jan. 26 (7pm), Jan. 27 (2pm & 7pm), Jan. 28 (3pm), 2/2 (7pm), & Feb. 3 (2pm & 7pm). Senior Citizen Preview Wed, Jan. 24 at 3pm, incl a "nosh/pre-show discussion" at 2:15pm for \$10. More information at SJRTheater@sjmj.org or call 201-391-7422.

Clothing Bins Please help Catholic Charities in its mission by donating clothes, small appliances, shoes, linens, sheets, towels, stuffed animals, novels, knickknacks, toys, and children's books. Please place your donations INSIDE the bins (you may have to push it in). Do not leave items outside.

CHRISTMAS COLORS

The liturgical color for Christmas is white, often trimmed in silver and gold, but the 'secular' colors for Christmas are red, white and green. Some say that this is because of how the red and green poinsettia plant and holly of wintertime contrast with the white snow. (Is St. Valentine's Day red, and St. Patrick's Day green, so stores can get rid of all their green and red stuff?) Red symbolizes love (the heart) and reflects our warmth (fire) and love for each other. It is also the color that is considered the greatest excitement. As a religious symbol it stands for fire, blood, and charity. Red vestments are worn twice during the octave of Christmas: 12/26, the feast of the first martyr, St. Stephen, and 12/28, the Feast of the Holy Innocents, martyrs. Green symbolizes hope, the eternal longing for spring, and all the promises of the future. Green is the symbol for nature, youth, and the hope of eternal life. Since Christmas is a feast of hope, with a newborn child as its central symbol, green plants like holly, pine trees, ivy, and mistletoe are all closely associated with Christmas. White stands for purity and is represented by the crystalline form of water and the snowflake. White is the religious symbol which stands for light, purity, joy and glory. White is seen in the robes of Christmas angels and the clergy, in Santa's beard, in Christmas snow and snow flakes.

POINSETTIA and Baby Jesus?!

Poinsettias are native to southern Mexico, Central America, Africa, and even in the wild in Hawaii and Puerto Rico. They are named after Joel Roberts Poinsett, the first US ambassador to Mexico. As a statesman and a botanist, he introduced the American elm to Mexico – and brought the beautiful Mexican shrub with large red flowers he found growing on the roadside to the USA in the 1820's. Although South Carolina was their first 'home,' they were first sold in Pennsylvania; currently the leading producer of poinsettias is the State of California. Ancient Mayan Indians believed poinsettias were powerful creatures from another world. A legend with many variations tells how they became a Christmas flower. In each version a poor child - who could not afford a gift to offer to Christ on Christmas Eve - picked weeds from the roadside; the child had been told that any humble gift, given in love, would be acceptable to God. Once inside the church the weeds bloomed into red and green flowers, which many proclaimed a Christmas miracle! From that day on, the bright red flowers were known as the "Flores de Noche Buena" or "Flowers of the Holy Night" - for they always bloom during Christmas.

UNTIMELY ANSWERED PRAYER

During the minister's prayer one Sunday, there was a loud whistle from one of the back pews. Tommy's mother was horrified. She pinched him into silence and, after church, asked, "Tommy, whatever made you do such a thing?" Tommy answered soberly, "I asked God to teach me to whistle, and He did!"

KIDZ KORNER

1. In what town was Jesus born?
2. What is the meaning of the name of the town where Jesus was born?
3. What does the name Jesus mean?
4. Who came first to visit the newborn baby Jesus?
5. How did they find out where Jesus was born?
6. What were the two animals present at Jesus' birth and where can we find the proof of it?

Answers on page 4

CHRISTMAS BANNED!!!

Can you imagine not being permitted to freely say "Merry Christmas?" Can you imagine having to conceal your beliefs by describing them in seemingly unrelated words, like singing an apparently happy, almost nonsensical song when it is really about your beliefs? For Catholics those conditions did occur in England as well as other places between 1558 and 1829.

The Christmas carol The Twelve Days of Christmas, in fact, is a result of Catholics needing to conceal their beliefs in this way, according to The Handbook of Catholic Sacramentals by Ann Ball (Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, Ind.). Written in England as a catechism for young Catholics, The Twelve Days of Christmas contains hidden meanings intended to help children remember lessons of faith. Instead of referring to an earthly suitor, the "true love" mentioned in the song really refers to God. The "me" who receives the presents is symbolic of every baptized person.

The partridge in a pear tree is Jesus Christ. In the song, Christ is symbolically presented as a mother partridge, a bird that feigns injury to decoy predators away from its helpless nestlings.

The meaning of the other symbols are:

Two turtle doves - The Old and New Testaments
Three French hens - Faith, Hope, and Charity
Four calling birds - The four Gospels
Five golden rings - The first five books of the Old Testament
Six geese a-laying - The six days of creation
Seven swans a-swimming - Seven gifts of the Holy Spirit
Eight maids a-milking - The eight Beatitudes
Nine ladies dancing - Nine fruits of the Holy Spirit
Ten lords a-leaping - The Ten Commandments
Eleven pipers piping - The eleven faithful disciples
Twelve drummers drumming - The twelve points of belief in the Apostles Creed.

Christmas is NOT 1 day long.

It also is NOT 12 days long - it is a whole season.

We tend to think of Christmas as being just December 25th, but the Christmas season lasts longer than that. Many think of the "twelve days of Christmas," but the Christmas season is actually variable in length, depending on how soon a Sunday occurs after January 6th.

Here is the official rule for when it begins and ends:

33. Christmas Time runs from First Vespers (Evening Prayer I) of the Nativity of the Lord up to and including the Sunday after Epiphany or after January 6.

This year (2018-2019), Christmas Time will run until January 13th (the Sunday after January 6). -9 things you need to know about Christmas by Jimmy Akin

CHRISTMAS IS NOT BASED ON A PAGAN HOLIDAY

No matter how many times you hear Sheldon Cooper (or anyone else) say Christmas is based on a pagan holiday (whether Saturnalia, Sol Invictus, or anything else), we simply have no evidence of this.

If you read the writings of the Church Fathers, you do not find those who assign Christmas to December 25th saying things like, "Let's put Jesus' birthday here so we can subvert a pagan holiday." (Not that subverting pagan holidays is a bad thing.) They simply don't do that.

The ones who say Jesus was born on December 25th do so because that is when they think he was born.

In his book, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, Pope Benedict comments: "The claim used to be made that December 25 developed in opposition to the Mithras myth, or as a Christian response to the cult of the unconquered sun promoted by Roman emperors in the third century in their efforts to establish a new imperial religion. However, these old theories can no longer be sustained" (pp., 107-108).

-9 things you need to know about Christmas by Jimmy Akin

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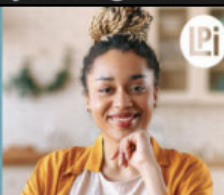
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