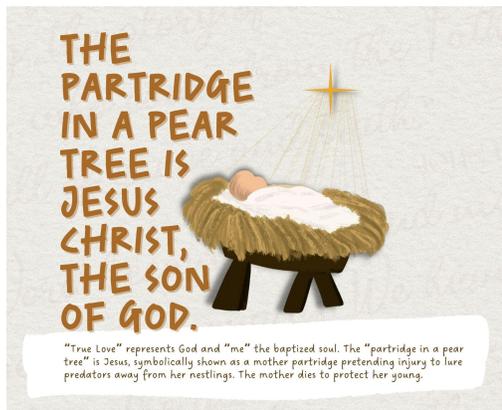


St. John's Newsletter



12 Days of Christmas hidden meaning?



I have always loved the song the 12 Days of Christmas. The presents didn't make a lot of sense to me – turtledoves, and French hens? Not to mention when the gifts became people – maids, lords, ladies, drummers... HMMM.

When I heard that there was a legend that Catholics used the song to teach the catechism, I wanted to know more. The story is that during Elizabethan times, persecuted Catholics used the song to teach children secretly. But, it is just a legend. The song has French roots and wasn't even around during the 1600s. Cool story debunked. However, the beauty of the comparison of the gifts and the symbols that they COULD represent in the catechism is amazing. It is good to remember that Christmas is more than just Christmas Day. That the 12 days of Christmas – from the Birth to Epiphany – are a fantastic celebration of our faith. Make your Christmas more than one day – even if you don't use the song. But odds are that you are humming it right now....

<p>Partridge in a pear tree:</p>  <p>Jesus Christ (Isa 12:1-2, Rev 2:7)</p>	<p>Turtle doves:</p>  <p>The Old & New Testament Also the sacrifice Mary and Joseph offered at the presentation (Lk. 2:22-24, CCC 105)</p>	<p>French Hens:</p>  <p>The theological virtues of faith hope and Charity (1Cor. 12:31, CCC 1813)</p>	<p>Calling Birds:</p>  <p>The 4 Evangelists – Matthew, Mark, Luke & John who shared the Word of God (Rev 4:6-7, CCC 120)</p>
<p>Golden Rings</p>  <p>The first 5 books of the Old Testament, which give the details of our fall from grace and need for Jesus (CCC 702)</p>	<p>Geese-a-laying:</p>  <p>The days of Creation (Gen. 1, CCC 279-324)</p>	<p>Swans-a-swimming:</p>  <p>Gifts of the Holy Spirit – Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety Fear of the Lord (Isa 11:2-3, CCC 1831)</p>	<p>Maids-a-milking:</p>  <p>The Eight Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-11, CCC 1716)</p>
<p>Ladies dancing:</p>  <p>The fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control (Gal. 5:22-23, CCC 736)</p>	<p>Lords-a-leaping:</p>  <p>The 10 Commandments (Ex. 20:1-17, CCC 2056)</p>	<p>Pipers piping:</p>  <p>The faithful apostles: Peter, Andrew, John, Philip, Matthew, James, Bartholomew, Thomas, James, Thadaeus and Simon (Matt. 10:2-4, CCC 75)</p>	<p>Drummers drumming:</p>  <p>The points of belief in the Apostle's Creed (CCC 191)</p>

Sources: <https://media.ascensionpress.com/2019/12/27/the-12-days-of-christmas-isnt-a-secret-catechism-heres-why-we-should-claim-it-anyway/>
<https://www.churchpop.com/the-suspected-meaning-of-the-12-days-of-christmas-according-catholic-legend/>
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Volume 15 - January 2024- St. John's Newsletter is a once-a-month publication aimed at providing you with items of interest about our Catholic faith. If there is a topic you are interested in, please contact the parish office and we will try to address it in future issues. – Submitted by Mary Jo Peters