

# St. John's Newsletter

## *It's Still Christmas*

### **Christmas Season**

**December 24-January 11**

Christmas Season officially begins on Christmas Eve and continues until the Feast of the Baptism of our Lord on the second Sunday of January.

### **Christmas Octave**

**December 25- January 1**

Christmas Octave begins with the birth of our Lord and continues for eight days until the Solemnity of Mary Mother of God. Christmas Day is a **Holy Day of Obligation**.

### **Feast of the Holy Family**

**December 28**

Celebration of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. It is a time to reflect on our own families.

### **Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God**

**January 1**

We honor the Virgin Mary as the Mother of God and of the Church. It is a **Holy Day of Obligation**.

### **Epiphany**

**January 4**

Traditionally celebrated January 6, Epiphany commemorates the visit of the Magi or three kings bringing gifts to the child Jesus recognizing that Jesus is for all mankind. It is often celebrated on the Sunday closest to January 6.

### **Baptism of the Lord**

**January 11**

Jesus is baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River, beginning his ministry.

#### **Sources:**

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/294704369388924431/>

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/294704369388853433/>

<https://www.usccb.org/committees/divine-worship/liturgical-calendar>

## *Three Kings Day*

(also called Twelfth Night or Epiphany)

January 6

- The Season of Christmas is 12 days long, beginning December 25 and ending January 6, making it also called the Twelfth Night. The song "The Twelve Days of Christmas" honors this season.
- Western Christian Churches celebrate the Nativity on December 25, but Eastern Christian Churches celebrate it on January 6, calling it Epiphany.
- January 5 in many countries, there are prayers, sprinkling doors with Holy water, writing of the year split with the letters C +M+B above doors. It stands for Latin Christus Mansionem Benedicat (May Christ Bless this home), to protect their home from the dangers of fire and water for the next year.
- January 6 is called Feast of Epiphany, Adoration of Magi, Day of the 3 Kings or Wisemen, who traditionally are Caspar, from the Orient, who arrives on a camel; Melchoir, from Arabia, who arrives on a horse; Balthazar, from Africa, who arrives on an elephant.
- Traditions in Europe include taking down Christmas decorations, and children dressed as kings going house to house caroling and getting money for charities, or sweets on 3 Kings Day.
- Many Latin American countries call it "Dia de los Reyes", and the Kings or Wise Men are added to the Nativity. Children leave shoes or boxes with grass for the animals ridden by the Kings, and receive sweets or money if they have been good, or coal if they have been bad.
- A "Kings Cake" with an almond, bean or other item hidden inside has variations around the world. The person getting the item becomes King or Queen for day & has good luck.
- Some Eastern European countries throw a wooden cross into cold water, and the person who reaches it first has good health for their home for the next year. Many countries bless water to be used in their churches the next year, and water for blessings on the homes.
- Great Britain burns the Yule log from December 25-January 6, and the charcoal left over is used to light the Yule log the next year.
- Finland & Sweden serve a spice star cookie which is broken in the palm of the hand while making a wish. If it breaks into 3 pieces & they are eaten silently, their wish comes true.
- Ireland calls it Women's Christmas, and all women go out to eat, shopping and receive gifts
- In some countries the Twelfth Night is the start of the Carnival season which ends on the first day of Lent which is 40 days before Easter.

