



The 12 Days of Christmas!

I have a question for you.

What does December 26th mean to you, personally?

For most people, it means that Christmas is over.

Christmas *isn't* over on December 26th.

The carols, the feasting, the lights, the joy, have only just begun.

We are about to rejoice in a long celebration of the birth of Christ, our Messiah.

There is a reason why Christmas is called a *season*. It does not last for a single day. We have been preparing for it for four weeks, and the Church couldn't possibly start and end its celebration of Christ's birth in one day.

After Easter, Christmas is the most important liturgical feast in the Church calendar. Why? Because Christmas is what made Easter possible.

Without Our Lord's incarnation and birth, our redemption would not have been brought to completion, and there would be no hope for us in our fallen state.

So first, we celebrate the octave of Christmas. (The word "octave" refers to the number 8.) This means that there are eight official solemn days of rejoicing. In the language of the Church, the word "solemn" does not mean being grim, serious, or morose.

According to a simple definition:

In the Catholic Church year, a solemnity is the highest-ranking holy day possible in the Church calendar..."

Ideas for Celebrating Christmastide

1. The Worship and Spirituality Group invites you to join its members during Christmastide at St. Michael's at 10.00 am. on

Tuesday 26 th December	Thursday 28 th December
Friday 29 th December	Saturday 30 th December
Monday 1 January	Tuesday 2 nd January
Thursday 4 th January	Friday 5 th January

As these are days when there are no official services in our Benefice. This is to be a time for sharing our thoughts on the season and discussing what it means to us. All are welcome so come when you can and join us over a cup of coffee/tea to just chat.

2. This is not for everyone, most of us have the responsibilities of life in the world. Some have jobs to return to; kids to care for and bring back to school. We have family members in need.

However, there are some things you can do to keep the reality of Christ's birth present for your family during Christmastide. Keep in mind: many of us are overwhelmed just trying to accomplish daily responsibilities, so don't try to do all of the suggestions below.

Perhaps choose one or two things to do and no more.

- Don't take your decorations down.
- Keep your nativity scenes on display.
- Don't take down your tree.
- Keep your Christmas lights on each day as the day ends and the sky darkens.
- Light candles near your manger scene, perhaps while the family eats dinner.