

**The Twelve Days of Christmas**  
***A Daily Devotional on Incarnating Christ in our Lives and Actions***  
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**December 26th** - This first day of Christmas is the Feast of St. Stephen when "*Good King Wenceslaus looked out...*". This is a day dedicated to giving to the poor as Stephen was a deacon who gave the wealth of the church to the poor. It is also called "Boxing Day", in remembrance of giving boxes of food to the poor. Today, box up and donate food and other things which the poor of our community may need. Read Acts 6:8-7, 44-59

**December 27th** - The second day of Christmas remembers John the Apostle and Evangelist, "whom our Lord loved" (according to the Gospel of John), who was the only one present of the Twelve at the Crucifixion, and who wrote a lot about darkness and light. It is a custom to light lots of candles today, and to bless wine because legend has it that John drank poisoned wine without harm, and because during this time of extra hospitality, wine can be a drink of joy. "*Wassail! I drink to you the love of Saint John!*" Wassail means "good health". Today is a good day to think about what you eat and drink, where it comes from, who produced it, and how it was prepared for you to consume. Remember to pray for all who had a hand in providing you food and drink today, and give a blessing for your meal before you eat or drink. Read 1 John 1:1-2:3

**December 28th** - The third day of Christmas is also the day we remember the martyrs, the Holy Innocents, and this day is often referred to as a Christmas time Ember Day. It is a good day to not only pray and fast for deserted and unclaimed children, but also a day to how we are called by God to have a respect for life. Today we remember all holy innocents of every time and place. Read Exodus 1:8-16, 22; Matthew 18:1-14

**December 29th** - The fourth day of Christmas remembers all who have been exiled and murdered for defending the rights of the Church. Pray today for missionaries, and perhaps go on-line and read their newsletters ([www.pcusa.org](http://www.pcusa.org)). Read Revelation 1:1-8

**December 30th** - Today, the Fifth Day of Christmas, we celebrate the Holy Family (Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. . . who model the familial relationship of the Trinity for us). It is a time to be reminded of the holiness in the ordinary. This is a good time to bless our families and lift them up to God in prayer. Read Ephesians 5:21-6:4

**December 31st** - New Year's Eve is the Sixth Day of Christmas. This is the day to ask pardon of those you've hurt, to extend affection to everyone you meet, to open your door to your neighbors. One tradition which comes from Scotland is that libations and gifts are handed out to all whom cross the threshold and the head of the household bless their guests in the name of Jesus. Read John 8:12-19

**January 1st** - The Seventh Day of Christmas celebrates not only the beginning of a new year and new beginnings, but is also a day to become a 'New Creation'. It is a custom today to bless all the members of your household, a day for hospitality. It is a

great day to tell stories of births and beginnings, and to reaffirm your Baptismal vows.  
Read Hebrews 2:10-18

**January 2nd** - The Eighth Day of Christmas in the Orthodox Christian tradition is celebrated with St Basil the Great in mind, who wrote: "The bread you store up belongs to the hungry; the cloak that lies in your chest belongs to the naked; the gold that you have hidden in the ground belongs to the poor. If everyone would take only according to his needs and would leave the surplus to the needy, no one would be rich, no one poor, no one in misery." Today is a day to make bread, bless it in the name of Christ, and share it. Read John 6:35-42, 48-51

**January 3rd** - The Ninth Day of Christmas we celebrate the name of "Jesus." From Apostolic times, the Church has professed that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10). Today is a day to think about names, your name, its meaning, and about your relationship with the one named "Jesus", the "one who saves." Read Colossians 2:6-12

**January 4th** - The Tenth Day of Christmas is a day to share stories. Traditionally, apocryphal stories are told to kids this day (such as the Legend of the Animals on Christmas Eve) and adults share their stories of faith with each other, which may include their Emmaus experience, when they felt the presence of God the most, or experience of angles among us. Read Genesis 28:10-22; Exodus 3:1-15

**January 5th** - On the Eleventh Day of Christmas, today would be a good day to plan and make materials needed for the feast of the Epiphany or your Twelfth Night celebration. However it is also a good day to think about your continual Christian formation and education, as well as your families. What would you like to learn or do in the New Year that would help deepen your relationship with God through Jesus? Read John 15:1-16

**January 6th** - This is the traditional Epiphany, the Twelfth Day of Christmas. Epiphany is also called "Theophany", the appearance of God. A visit from the magi and the Epiphany blessing of the home is in order. A great day to have a party. This is the climax of Christmas. Make your enthusiasm for this day infectious! Read Isaiah 52:7-10, Matthew 12:14-21

A House blessing:

Dear God,  
we thank you for this past year  
and for the year to come.  
Be with us as we fill our home with kindness,  
hospitality, and caring for others.  
Help us to dream the dream of a better world  
and to work towards that dream daily.

Hold us close to each other.  
Keep us close in spirit with those who have died or who are far away.  
May all who come to our home this year  
rejoice to find Christ living among us;  
and may we seek and serve,  
in everyone we meet,  
Jesus who is Lord for ever and ever.  
Amen.