

Dear Padre,

How is Twelfth Night related to Christmas?

Twelfth Night is another name for the Epiphany, which traditionally occurred on January 6, the twelfth day after Christmas. Since the 1980s, United States Catholics have celebrated the Epiphany on the first Sunday after January 1, which is why we're celebrating it today instead of Thursday.

Liturgical celebrations are distinguished as solemnities, feasts, and memorials according to their importance. The two greatest solemnities, Easter and Christmas, continue for an octave (eight days). Since the octave of Christmas runs from December 25 through January 1 (the solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God), it's not affected by the transfer of the Epiphany celebration.

Christmas is the great gift-giving day in the United States. In other cultures—for example, the Latino community—the anticipation and excitement of gift-giving is saved for Epiphany, the day the Magi brought their gifts to Jesus.

We often complain about how frenzied Christmas is—how much shopping, wrapping, and baking there is to do. But Christmas should be a time of worship and acknowledging the gift God gave us by sending his Son.

Epiphany, on the other hand, is made for celebration, gift-giving, going all out. Perhaps someday we can return to the traditions of Epiphany and restore Christmas as a day of rejoicing and worship.



A woman holds a figurine of the Christ Child during Mass on the feast of the Epiphany.

CHRIS DAVID MERCADO, REUTERS

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A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

[The Lord] is our light: a light that does not dazzle but accompanies and bestows a unique joy. This light is for everyone, and it calls each one of us....At the beginning of each day we can welcome this invitation: arise, shine, and follow today—among the many shooting stars in the world—the bright star of Jesus!

ANGELUS ON EPIPHANY SUNDAY, JANUARY 6, 2017

Calendar

Monday

JANUARY 3
Christmas Weekday
1 Jn 3:22—4:6
Mt 4:12—17, 23—25

Tuesday

JANUARY 4
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton,
Religious
1 Jn 4:7—10
Mk 6:34—44

Wednesday

JANUARY 5
St. John Neumann,
Bishop
1 Jn 4:11—18
Mk 6:45—52

Thursday

JANUARY 6
Christmas Weekday
1 Jn 4:19—5:4
Lk 4:14—22a

Friday

JANUARY 7
Christmas Weekday
1 Jn 5:5—13
Lk 5:12—16

Saturday

JANUARY 8
Christmas Weekday
1 Jn 5:14—21
Jn 3:22—30

Sunday

JANUARY 9
The Baptism of the Lord
Is 42:1—4, 6—7
or Is 40:1—5, 9—11
Acts 10:34—38
or Ti 2:11—14; 3:4—7
Lk 3:15—16, 21—22