The Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

Cathedral
OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT
SACRAMENTO
“...And a Partridge in a Pear Tree”

Who would want all the crazy gifts listed in the carol “The 12 Days of Christmas”? Could it be that the lyrics are in fact a coded way to teach Catholicism to people that might be persecuted if they revealed their true religion?

The theory is that beginning with the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, when Catholicism was slowly but systematically repressed in England, this song was written to help people learn the tenets of their faith without revealing the true intent behind the song. Each number of gifts had a secret meaning, written in much the same way we use picture association to memorize long lists of information.

The unsubstantiated back-story of this famous carol has been circulating the internet for decades. The following is an article by David Emery, an urban legends expert, for about.com/entertainment: “Although no one is quite sure exactly how old the lyrics to ‘The Twelve Days of Christmas’ are, they were already considered ‘traditional’ by the time the rhyme was first published around 1780. The theory that it originated as an underground catechism song for oppressed Catholics appears to be quite modern, however. It was first proposed by Canadian English teacher and part-time hymnologist Hugh D. McKellar in an article entitled ‘How to Decode the Twelve Days of Christmas,’ published in 1979. McKellar expanded on the idea in a monograph for the scholarly journal The Hymn in 1994.

The notion was further popularized by a Catholic priest, Fr. Hal Stockert, who summarized the theory in an article he wrote in 1982 and posted online in 1995.

Unlike McKellar, who cited no sources and said his first intimations of a hidden meaning in ‘The Twelve Days of Christmas’ came from personal conversations with elderly Canadians with roots in northern England, Stockert claimed he had happened upon the information in primary documents, including letters from Irish priests, mostly Jesuits, writing back to the motherhouse at Douai-Rheims, in France, mentioning this purely as an aside. Those sources remain unverified.”

1 Partridge in a Pear Tree = Jesus Christ
2 Turtle Doves = The Old and New Testaments
3 French Hens = Faith, Hope and Charity, the Theological Virtues
4 Calling Birds = the Four Gospels and/or the Four Evangelists
5 Golden Rings = The first Five Books of the Old Testament
6 Geese A-laying = the six days of creation
7 Swans A-swimming = the seven sacraments
8 Maids A-milking = the eight beatitudes
9 Ladies Dancing = the nine Fruits of the Holy Spirit
10 Lords A-leaping = the ten commandments
11 Pipers Piping = the eleven faithful apostles
12 Drummers Drumming = the twelve points of doctrine in the Apostle’s Creed

For He hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. ~Luke 1:48~

#Mystagogya

“Los principios, las doctrinas y prácticas de la mística. “

How is Mary “The Mother of God”?

In the early fourth century, the heretic Arius taught that Jesus was not God, but rather a lesser god created by the Father. The ensuing controversy led to the first ecumenical council of Nicaea in A.D. 325 where it was determined that Christ was indeed God manifest in the flesh. The controversy did not end there until a second ecumenical council convened in Constantinople in A.D. 381 and laid the matter to rest once and for all: Jesus is fully God!

That being said, a new controversy arose. If Christ is God manifest in the flesh, how could he suffer pain, grief, sorrow, fatigue, and death. It brought many new theological questions to the fore. The heretic Nestorius resolved the issue by teaching that Christ had two distinct and separate natures, one human, and one divine. The human Jesus suffered, but the Divine Christ could not suffer in that way; moreover, the Virgin Mary gave birth to the earthly Jesus, not the Divine Christ, and therefore could not be called "The Mother of God". Cyril of Alexandria vehemently contended that if the Divine Christ did not bear our sins and weaknesses, even our sorrows and pains upon the Cross, then they are not redeemed and we are yet lost in our sins. He taught, therefore, that Jesus is a composite of the Divine and human natures in a single "hypostatic union", that is, a single individual existence, and for that reason Mary is in fact The Mother of God. The third ecumenical council convened in Ephesus in A.D. 431 to resolve these questions and determined that Christ is one single person with two distinct natures that are in no way separated. The council also defined as a dogma of faith the doctrine that Mary is indeed The Mother of God.

To this day, many of our Protestant brethren wish to deny that Mary is the Mother of God and, consequently, fall prey in one form or another to the false arguments of the Nestorian heresy. But for the Catholic, the matter was settled centuries ago. The Fatherhood of God overshadowed the Blessed Virgin and united with Her maternal instinct to inflame it with divine love. Hence, Jesus received His sacrificial love of humanity both from His Heavenly Father and from His earthly Mother, not by an intrinsic necessity, but by a hypothetical necessity: in other words, the only necessity being that God simply willed that it should be so.

Every new mother knows how attuned she is to the sound of her child’s voice, so much so that even in a deep sleep when virtually nothing on God’s earth could awaken her, the faint sound of a neighbor’s baby crying three houses away will cause her to sit up in bed and listen. That selfless maternal instinct in Mary was imbued with divine love and fixated upon the Cross, then they are not redeemed and we are yet lost in our sins. He taught, therefore, that Jesus is a composite of the Divine and human natures in a single "hypostatic union", that is, a single individual existence, and for that reason Mary is in fact The Mother of God. The third ecumenical council convened in Ephesus in A.D. 431 to resolve these questions and determined that Christ is one single person with two distinct natures that are in no way separated. The council also defined as a dogma of faith the doctrine that Mary is indeed The Mother of God.

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For He hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. ~Luke 1:48~

O most gracious Virgin Mary, never was it know that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To thee I come, before thee I kneel, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy great clemency hear and answer me.
Happy New Year everyone!

I pray that your year 2016 was filled with blessings and that your year 2017 brings positive outcomes to all your hopes and expectations. As for me, my intention is to make 2017 a year of trust, placing what really matters into the hands of the One who really matters, through the intercession of Mary and the saints. This year I will maintain a positive and supportive attitude, knowing that through prayer, encouragement, and love, I and everyone around me will experience more clearly the Body of Christ.

Prayer: I will spend more time in prayer, allowing God to both work on me and others. I will try to make clear that we are a church, God’s body, and that who we are and what we do is about God and for God, and nothing else. “God, help us to realize that everything we do is for your glory and the spreading of your Gospel.”

Encouragement: I will seek opportunities to give strength to others. I will try not to ignore or become frustrated with others, but rather see the positive and help build up my companions in the vineyard. “I thank all of you who have worked and offered so much to the Cathedral parish. Through your ministry and prayers, I wouldn’t know where to begin in helping to keep our parish Christ-centered. To the staff, volunteers, and countless unknown, Thank You.”

Love: All of this is just empty noise without love. I will try to look beyond many things so as to find room in my heart to love. I will try to stay in the present to really “see” the people I am loving. “With a warm embrace and heartfelt gladness, in Christ, I love you.”

I will pray, encourage and love in an effort to love the God who first loved me.

~Father Michael~
TOYS FOR CHRISTMAS

By Leticia Hilbert

Following the teachings of Our Lord, "Love your neighbor..." (Mark 12:31), volunteers from the Front Door Ministry and Sister Jenny gave away toys for children from families in need, last Wednesday, December 21st. Presents were all wrapped and ready to put under each household Christmas tree.

The Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament has many parishioners that are very active in the parish life and always are available to volunteer in charitable ministry. If you would like to be on the volunteer list for the Front Door Ministry, please contact us at 916 444 3071 x 15.

A CHRISTMAS TRADITION

The Parent Group of the Blessed Sacrament, ministry for religious education for parents, organized a series of "Posadas Navideñas" form the 16th to the 23rd in the different parishioner's homes. The Posadas are a celebration of a prayer novena to Mary and Joseph looking for shelter in Bethlehem the night of Our Savior's birth. It is a beautiful way to accompany the Holy Family and reflect on the Mystery of the Incarnation. The holy rosary was prayed, a small procession was made though out the neighboring homes, there was hot food served and of course, the breaking of the "piñata", and candies for the kiddies. The posadas are a wonderful way to build the cathedral community.

BROWN BAG LUNCH COLLECTION

December 31 and January 1

Put your faith into action by donating food to the BBL ministry this month. As many as 170 guests come daily for lunch and the demand is great.

For some of these people, our lunches are their main or only meal, so we make them as nutritional as possible. We try to include:

1. “Main Course” protein non-perishables like Bumble Bee tuna or chicken boxes*
2. Raisins or Fruit Cups
3. Granola Bars
4. Peanut Butter or Cheese Crackers
5. Potato Chips
6. Cookies or similar snack for dessert
7. 16 oz. Water

You may bring the above items packed individually in brown bags, or unassembled for the volunteers to bag. You may also donate money at the rectory or on the cathedral's website under "Community Programs." 100% of your donation goes directly to feed the poor. Checks should be made to "The Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament" with "BBL Ministry" in the memo line. All donations are tax deductible.

*NOTE: BBLP has found the tuna/chicken boxes tend to be expensive for some people at $1 each. We suggest purchasing the small flip-top Vienna sausage cans at 40-55 cents each. Other great options are Chef Boyardee flip-top cans of beef ravioli, at about 64 cents each, or packs of 3 peanut butters from the dollar store, and we can divide them up.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

We want to give a special thank you to Virgil and Helen Palmer for their tireless work as ministry leaders for the Brown Bag Lunch Program. They have contributed countless hours and resources to maintain the strength of this ministry. They are stepping down and handing over the responsibility to Jerri Rush. Volunteering for the Brown Bag Lunch Program is a challenging but rewarding ministry. To donate or volunteer, please contact Jerri Rush (916)216-9702 or email Jerrirush@comcast.net. We are currently in need of volunteers for weekday shifts from 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’ ~Matthew 25:40~
THE BIBLE TIMELINE: Matthew
JANUARY 4 to JUNE 29, 2017

Come study the Gospel of Matthew with us! Matthew: The King and His Kingdom is a Catholic Bible study that brings the history of Christ to life through Matthew’s Gospel. You will see Jesus as the awaited Messiah who fulfills the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament, establishes the New Law, and inaugurates the Kingdom of Heaven.

This is the third year of this popular bible study program. The study will include a series of twenty-four videos presented by Jeff Cavins. Each video will be preceded by a lively group discussion. Each week participants can attend on Wednesday at Holy Family in Citrus Heights, or on Thursday at The Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament downtown. We will meet from 7pm to 8:30.

Attendance is free. We will also provide materials. Although there are some helpful online materials that are made to go with this presentation that you may purchase to supplement your learning, it is not required. Please join us for a life-changing journey through the Bible! We only have room for 40 in each location. To register, contact Sister Jenny at 916-444-5364, or jenny@cathedralsacramento.org.

Sleeping Bags Needed! Winter is almost here with freezing temperatures. We welcome your donation of sleeping bags new or used for our homeless brothers & sisters. They can even be purchased for less than $15 from Amazon! Our target is 100! Please kindly drop them off at the Cathedral Rectory or call 916-585-3044. Thanks for your generosity!

~It's hard to get in shape spiritually if you only work out on Sunday.~

Pray For One Another

Let us pray for you or your loved ones. Submit your prayer request on cathedralsacramento.org or email: cbsprayer3@yahoo.com

The Solemnity of Mary, Holy Mother of God
We seek God’s blessing as did Mary. Because of her Son, we can confidently call God, “Abba”!

N心血 6:22-27 Ps 67:2-3, 5-6, 8 Gal 4:4-7 Lk 2:16-21

Sts. Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Religious

St. John Neumann, Bishop

St. Andre Bessette, Religious

St. Raymond of Penyafort, Priest

St. Mary, Mother of God

The Vigil for the Epiphany of the Lord is celebrated this evening.

All nations are invited to sing the Lord’s praises, for they have been called to hear the good news and worship the long-awaited Messiah and King with the gift of their lives.

Is 60:1-6 Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-13 Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6 Mt 2:1-12
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Cathedral Kids

Craftivity

Cut the ribbon to the desired length, and make a double knot on one end. String the crucifix first, followed by these bead colors: the blue bead stands for the water of our baptism, the red bead stands for Christ’s blood, white for prayer, yellow for the golden streets of heaven, and green for growing in our faith. When you have strung them all on, make another knot at the end of the beads.

CATHOLIC TERMS WORD SEARCH

Find 3 stars, 2 bells, 1 angel, 3 crosses, 1 staff, and 2 candies hidden in the manger.

Bible Activities For Everyone by Betty DeVries and Mary Currier; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books Publisher; 1991.

BIBLE QUIZ

1. To which country did Mary and Joseph escape when Herod killed all the babies in Bethlehem?
2. What was the name of Jesus’ cousin, born six months before him?
3. Which prophet said, “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son”?

“...providing for the physical needs and spiritual needs of people is inseparable. I cannot genuinely love people and share only the gospel without also addressing their physical needs. Sharing the gospel is not just a task or ministry objective; it is also an expression of agape love for a person—the whole person—body, soul, and spirit. Agape love is the foundation of Christianity as expressed in Christ’s ultimate sacrifice. His own life is a testimony of providing for the physical and spiritual needs of others because of His love for them. Can we do anything less?”

~Mike Douris~
13th Walk for Life West Coast
Saturday, January 21, 2017
Civic Center Plaza

Join thousands of Pro-lifers in San Francisco as we proclaim to the world the sanctity of life. Let’s stand up for the unborn! Reserve your seat or buy your bus ticket today. The Respect Life ministry will be outside the church after masses to give you more information or contact Veronica Avina at (916) 205-0713.

Rally starts at Civic Center Plaza, walking down Market St. (2 miles). Ends at Justin Herman Plaza/Ferry Bldg.

SPEAKERS:
Pam Tebow: Prolife advocate and mother of Heisman Trophy winner Tim Tebow
Reggie Littlejohn: Founder and President, Women’s Rights Without Frontiers
Melissa Ohden: Abortion survivor
Rev. Clenard Childress: Founder, Black Genocide.org

WalkforLifeWC.com
### This Week:

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<th>Day</th>
<th>Mass/Intentions</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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<td><strong>Saturday 31st</strong></td>
<td>5:00 pm</td>
<td>10:00 am CFF Classes</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sunday 1st</strong></td>
<td>7:30 am 9:00 am 11:00 am 1:00 pm Spanish 3:00 pm Chinese 5:00 pm 7:00 pm Spanish</td>
<td>9:00 am RCIA class for children and teens 9:30 am RCIA Breaking of the Word 11:00 am Liturgy of the Word for Children 11:15 am Spanish CCD classes</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Monday 2nd</strong></td>
<td>12:10 pm 5:10 pm</td>
<td>6:30 pm RCIA Evening Prayer 7:00 pm RCIA Class</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday 3rd</strong></td>
<td>12:10 pm 5:10 pm</td>
<td>7:00 pm English Confirmation classes</td>
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<td><strong>Wednesday 4th</strong></td>
<td>12:10 pm 5:10 pm</td>
<td>7:00 pm Communion &amp; Liberation 7:15 pm English Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm Spanish Choir for the 1pm Mass</td>
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<td><strong>Thursday 5th</strong></td>
<td>12:10 pm 5:10 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Friday 6th</strong></td>
<td>12:10 pm</td>
<td>7:30 pm Rosary Recitation at St. Junipero's Statue in Capitol Park</td>
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**S.I.- Special Intentions**

+ Deceased

**READINGS: PAGE 5**

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**Check our website for more information**

**CATHEDRALSACRAMENTO.ORG**