

Sunday Q&A

Your Faith in Focus



CHRISTMAS: A DAY AND MORE

Why is the Church decorated for so long after Christmas Day?

It's simple—because Christmas hasn't ended at all!

This excerpt from an article by Nicholas LaBanca explains how Catholics' liturgical season of Christmas extends beyond December 25.

Lights Out?

You've probably seen it already. Many (if not all) of your neighbors no longer have lights twinkling outside their homes. Large trees are strewn across front lawns in preparation for garbage day. The radio station that had been playing Christmas music twenty-four hours a day since November 1 suddenly stopped playing carols at 12:01 on the morning of December 26.

The world thinks Christmas has come and gone. I once walked into a hardware store on December 27 and heard "Joy to the World" playing over the loudspeakers. I was glad that a business was still celebrating Christmas. But then a regular Scrooge who worked there commented to her colleague, "Christmas is over! Why don't we turn off this silly music?"

Christmas is over for the secular world, but not for us. Even when "Little Christmas" (the Epiphany) is over, we still have a week of Christmas left! The Christmas season, according to the Church's liturgical calendar, doesn't end until the Baptism of Our Lord. (This Christmas season, that's on January 11, 2026.)

Even after December 25, Christmas continues. If you don't want Christmas to end, you've found good company with the Church.

Keep Your Light On!

If we extend the season in our lives, we serve as a light to our secular friends and peers. Pope Benedict XVI put it beautifully in his general audience on December 17, 2008, titled "Spiritual meaning of Christmas":

Because of the atmosphere that distinguishes it, Christmas is a universal celebration. In fact, even those who do not profess themselves to be believers can perceive in this annual Christian event something extraordinary and transcendent, something intimate that speaks to the heart.

At Christmas, therefore, we do not limit ourselves to commemorating the birth of a great figure: we do not simply and abstractly celebrate the birth of the man or in general the mystery of life; even less do we celebrate only the beginning of the new season. At Christmas we commemorate something very tangible and important for mankind, something essential for the Christian Faith, a truth that St. John sums up in these few words: “The Word became flesh.”

In turn, let us not allow ourselves to put a limit on the Christmas celebration. It didn't end on December 26, and it's not over today.

This is truly the beauty of our Catholic Faith. We cannot confine the joy of Christmas to one day. When a single moment has the ability to change the course of human history, we can't blame ourselves for wanting to commemorate that event for a long period of time. Feel free to keep on giving those you encounter a hearty “Merry Christmas!”

Ponder and Pray

- How are you continuing to celebrate Christmas now that all the buildup to Christmas Day has passed?
- What is your best memory of Christmas that took place after Christmas Day?

Make It Your Own

There are several Christmas feasts after Christmas Day. Some in 2025 and 2026 are listed. Use the lines to write down how you might celebrate and pray with your family.

Feast	Ideas for prayer and celebration
The Holy Family (today)	
Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God (January 1)	
The Epiphany (January 4, traditionally January 6)	
The Baptism of the Lord (January 11)	

Tip of the Week

Listen to Christmas carols with new ears this week as we continue to celebrate the season of Christmas.

Dive Deeper

For Nicholas LaBanca's full article on this topic, scan the QR code or visit: <https://media.ascensionpress.com/2019/01/07/continuing-christmas-new-year/>.

